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SERBIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

ON SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, AND CHALLENGES
TO INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Dušan Spasojević, Ivan Ivanov, Predrag Pavličević

Wiktor Hebda, Veljko M. Đogatović, Ema Kraktus, Boban Marjanović

ESSAYS

Ana Čović, Ana Knežević Bojović, Primož Krašovec

REVIEWS

Dejan Bursać, Bojana Sekulić



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SERBIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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THIS ISSUE'S THEME

**ON SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, AND CHALLENGES
TO INTERNATIONAL ORDER**

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UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL SECURITY: PUBLIC POLICY AND COVERT ACTIONS OF THE U.S. IN GREECE DURING THE COLD WAR

Abstract

The subject of this paper is the political penetration of the United States into Greece during the Cold War, with a particular emphasis on the role and position of the Greek military in this process. The aim of the study is to explore, describe, and explain the causes, *modus operandi*, and consequences of the manipulation of the political systems of smaller countries by great powers, particularly from the perspective of their subjugation, dependency, and incorporation into an international order based on the division of spheres of influence. The paper examines this phenomenon through a synthesis of theoretical concepts from international politics and civil-military relations as the most significant institutional component of defence policy and a crucial aspect of national security policy, utilising methods of qualitative analysis, triangulation, and process tracing through the case study methodology. The research findings indicate that the armed forces and the Central Intelligence Service of Greece, as targets of US political penetration, became key instruments for maintaining an undemocratic order through political interference and reduced combat readiness in favour of US foreign policy goals. The conclusions underline the importance of strengthening

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institutional capacities as essential conditions for defending national sovereignty and democracy.

Keywords: international relations, security, civil-military relations, hierarchy, political penetration, sovereignty, democracy, Cold War, USA, Greece

INTRODUCTION

Foreign influence represents a major political and security problem, as it directly calls into question concepts of sovereignty, autonomy, and the balance of power within the international system. External interference can lead to the undermining of internal political independence, the erosion of democracy, the weakening of national security, and the subjugation of states within hierarchically organised international structures dominated by great powers. The case of Greece during the Cold War provides a compelling example of this process, as its geopolitical position made the country a strategic focus of the United States' (US) efforts to strengthen its influence in a region critical to Western security architecture. Although scientists bear significant responsibility "when security is at stake" (Milošević and Stojadinović 2024, 28), the illegitimate influence of great powers on the development, organisation, and interrelations of democratic and security institutions in smaller countries has not often been addressed in the academic literature on international relations and security studies. In this regard, the case study of Greece offers valuable insights into how political penetration by a great power can lead to the erosion of sovereignty and the long-term implications such dependency can have on democracy, institutional stability, and national security.

Theoretical generalisation is insufficient for a thorough understanding of this phenomenon. It is impossible to fully grasp the geopolitical and strategic interests of the US at the dawn of the Cold War, the decision-making rationale of this great power when handling key policies, or the *modus operandi* of its implementation, nor establish a direct link between decisions made in Washington and developments occurring in Greece, without resorting to historical narration. For this reason, archival records served as the most valuable data sources. Primarily, these included published documents from the US security and foreign policy apparatus (Foreign Relations of the United States [FRUS]) and

unpublished materials stored in the Serbian state, military, and diplomatic archives, which are particularly relevant due to Yugoslavia's active role in the given context and period. Yugoslav diplomatic and military representatives were uniquely positioned to gain in-depth insights into the circumstances at the time.

Using the methods of qualitative analysis and triangulation of various sources, types, and categories of data, as well as tracking processes, this study investigates the causal relationship between: (1) the policies and actions of the US towards Greece immediately before and after the adoption of the Truman Doctrine, and (2) the development of an institutional framework governing democratic civilian institutions and their relationship with security organisations, as well as the everyday practices, specific actions, procedures, and behaviours in US interactions with Greek civilian and security elites. The aim of the study is to examine, describe, and explain the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of the US establishment of dominance over Greek national institutions during the early Cold War period from the perspective of shaping a hierarchical international system. A theoretical framework is presented to explore the influence of a great power on the development of democracy and civil-military relations (CMR) in a country situated within its sphere of interest. The subsequent discussion includes an analysis of the geopolitical and strategic reasoning behind US actions towards Greece, assessing their consequences for the institutional framework, everyday democratic practices, and CMR within the studied context.

The central thesis of the study posits that at the dawn of the Cold War, the US—guided exclusively by the pursuit of its geopolitical and strategic security interests—aimed to achieve hegemony by employing instruments available within the framework of agreed spheres of influence. With a high degree of intensity, these actions negatively impacted the development of democratic institutions and CMR in Greece, seeking to mould their character to align with US interests and objectives. In other words, the inherent features of the international system, in which great powers possess an insatiable drive for power and aggressive intentions, result in the exploitation of hierarchically organised spheres of interest to serve the security of leading nations. In smaller countries subjected to the zones of influence of great powers, depending on the degree of their geopolitical significance and the entrenched strength of indigenous national institutions, this process can not only disrupt the established balance in CMR but also challenge the democratic character and independence of national institutions.

POLITICAL PENETRATION AND DEMOCRATIC CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE MILITARY IN DEPENDENT SOCIETIES

Firmly rooted in the maxim that “during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man” (Hobbes 1985, 185), the realist perspective on international politics starts from the fundamental assumption that the structure of the international system is anarchic (Morgenthau 2006; Waltz 1979). The absence of a supreme authority compels states, particularly great powers whose ultimate goal is hegemony, to insatiably increase their power (Mearsheimer 1990: 1994–1995; 2001). A slightly different view on relations between states finds its roots in the creation of the Athenian League before the Peloponnesian Wars (Thucydides 2010, 33–47), the concept of sovereignty as a permissive right not based solely on brute force but on a just, reasonable, and reciprocal obligation between a sovereign and their subjects (Bodin 1992), and the principle that “nations are not primarily ruled by laws, less by violence” but rather “by a knowledge of their temper, and by a judicious management of it” (Burke [1874] 1999, 70–71). These notions underpin the perspective that the international system is not exclusively a state of anarchy and that great powers tend to construct hierarchical order through a social contract that grants them legitimate authority, establishing dominance over weaker states (Lake 1996; 2007; 2009). While recognising that legitimate authority based on “positive consequences” for other states is often more effective than coercion (Walt 2005, 163–166), realist scholars predominantly agree that great powers typically favour traditional methods. Among these methods are the exertion of illegitimate influence over smaller states through specific tools of great power policy: international bribery—offering economic and military assistance that renders the recipient dependent—and political penetration, which manifests as the manipulation of smaller states’ political systems (Walt 1985; 1990).

Regarding civil-military relations (CMR), the developmental construct of the garrison state suggests that prolonged international tensions can lead to the dominance of military elites and the militarisation of society. In such a state, all societal activities are subordinated to war preparations, and its elite maintain power through fear of war (Lasswell 1937; 1941; 1997). The institutional theory emphasises objective civilian

control, achieved by professionalising the military and distancing it from politics, which simultaneously ensures subordination to civilian authority and combat readiness. In contrast, subjective control involves the inclusion of the military in politics, which paradoxically reduces civilian control (Huntington 1957; 1968). The convergence theory highlights that the expansion of military size and the military's political responsibilities disrupt traditional concepts of professionalism. The modern military assumes a more openly political character, becoming integrated into society, politically aware, sensitive to broader contexts, and oriented towards maintaining international balance rather than exclusively achieving victory (Janowitz 1960; 1964; 1977). Finer (Finer 2017) also rejected the argument that professionalism guarantees the military's political neutrality, asserting the opposite – that professionalism often encourages military intervention in politics. According to him, military interference in politics is more likely in states with less developed and less mature political societies.

This broad theoretical framework enables a synthesis of fundamental assumptions through which the causes and consequences of a great power's policy can be understood as a dialectical interdependence between the dynamics and logic of power. This interdependence leads to the creation of highly hierarchical alliances and the militarisation of society, which simultaneously undermines both democratic civilian patterns and professional military norms. This theoretical *mélange* is particularly useful for analysing the impact of great power policies on the democratic civilian control of the military in smaller states, as it sheds light on the structural causal relationship between increased tensions among great powers and the strengthening of military power at the expense of civilian institutions. It highlights the profound implications of external influence on local security and societal structures, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the geopolitical and strategic aspects of great power policies towards smaller states, the militarisation of society, and the potential erosion of democratic principles and civilian authority in the decision-making process.

ESTABLISHING HIERARCHY THROUGH AGREEMENTS BETWEEN GREAT POWERS

On the threshold of the Cold War, the great powers were afflicted with “geospatial rapacity” (Stepić 2019, 76), extending their “security

umbrella” to safeguard strategically significant geographical locations (Blagojević 2025, 42), seeking opportunities to gain power at the expense of their rivals and believing that the best way “is to achieve hegemony now” (Mearsheimer 2001, 35). This was exemplified by a pivotal event that initiated the adoption of the Truman Doctrine and drove the US to take control over Greece. The event occurred on 7 August 1946, during the Paris Peace Conference, when the Soviet Union (USSR) submitted a request for a revision of the Montreux Convention, demanding oversight of the Black Sea Straits. This prompted Dean Acheson, the acting US Secretary of State, to present a memorandum to President Harry Truman on 15 August. The key conclusion of the memorandum was that “the primary objective of the Soviet Union is to obtain control of Turkey,” that if Moscow succeeded in its objective, “it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prevent the Soviet Union from obtaining control over Greece and over the whole Near and Middle East” and that once it has “obtained full mastery of this territory, which is strategically important from the point of view of resources, including oil, and from the point of view of communications, it will be in a much stronger position to obtain its objectives in India and China” (FRUS 1946). Truman adopted Acheson’s recommendation and decided that the US should rapidly provide substantial military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey (Acheson 1969; Ristović 2016). This marked “the first clear and indeed vivid statements of the containment doctrine,” a sort of “axiomatic construct” and a point of no return from which all subsequent interpretations and assessments arose concluding that the USSR was not a great power operating within the established framework of the international system, but rather a revolutionary state bent on overthrowing that system (Yergin 1977, 234–235).

At the same meeting, Acheson (1969, 195) emphasised the strategic connection between Greece and Turkey, stating to Truman that everything that transpired in Turkey would have a direct impact on Greece and, ultimately, on the entire Middle East, which, on the eve of the Cold War, “held special significance for American foreign policy, primarily because of energy security but also as an important geopolitical arena” (Pavković 2019, 64). All of this led the US to articulate its policy by viewing Greece and Turkey as two interconnected entities, “Siamese twins” crucial for safeguarding American security interests; as well as to the transformation of Greece into “the alternative option” in US foreign policy in the region in case of a deterioration in US-Turkish relations

(Roubatis 1987, 25, 56). The Truman Doctrine was formally announced on 12 March 1947 in a speech before both houses of Congress, during which Truman mentioned democracy no fewer than six times as the *raison d'être* for providing military and economic aid to Greece (NA, USHR, RG-233; Truman 1955). By 23 March, Yugoslavia's ambassador in Washington, Sava Kosanović, had assessed in a report that Truman's speech had initiated a process that "could have major consequences for political development" that were "much farther-reaching than what the potential aid to Greece of several hundred million dollars might imply" (AJ, ZSK, 83, K-8).

From "the military point of view," the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) considered that "Turkey is strategically more important than Greece since it dominates major air, land, and sea routes from the USSR to the Cairo–Suez area and to the Middle East oil fields" (FRUS 1948b). The JCS also estimated that "even with considerable military and economic assistance from the United States, Greece will in all probability never have the capability of successfully resisting attacks in force which the USSR and/or her satellites could launch against her long northern frontier," while also noting that "Greek military spirit is now woefully lacking" (FRUS 1948b). Based on these considerations, the US JCS offered the Secretary of Defence the following definition of the long-term US strategic interests regarding the Greek military: "a) Greece: A Greek military establishment capable of maintaining internal security in order to avoid the communist domination of Greece" (FRUS 1948b). Based on the assessments and deliberations of the military establishment, the US National Security Council (NSC) adopted a document at the end of March 1949 that became the cornerstone of a decades-long US policy towards Greece. Entitled "US Objectives with Respect to Greece and Turkey to Counter Soviet Threats to US Security" (FRUS 1949), this document relegated the mission of the Hellenic Armed Forces (HAF) to maintaining internal security while assigning Turkey's military the traditional mission of defending the country from external military threats through deterrence and the protection of its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

When, two years later, the US intelligence and security community proposed Turkey's membership in NATO (FRUS 1951b; 1951c), Greece was automatically included alongside Turkey, following the logic of the "Siamese twins," albeit as a passive actor. Thus, Greece did not become a member of NATO by its own initiative but rather through the convergence

of US and Turkish interests in countering the Soviet threat. The fact that the US structured its sphere of influence in the Balkans as a three-tiered hierarchy—with Greece situated below Turkey and at the very bottom of the hierarchical ladder, atop which the US itself stood—raises questions about the conventional conception of hierarchy as a dyadic relationship between two units within the international system (Lake 1996; 2009). In this sense, I would argue that hierarchy in international relations can also take the form of a triadic or polymeric relationship, representing an interaction between a great power and multiple smaller states organised in an asymmetrical ranked order. This ranking is stepwise—from the highest position to the lowest—according to the value and significance those smaller states hold for the actor at the top of the hierarchy.

The construct of hierarchy in international relations is founded upon the notion of legitimate authority and the premise that the subordinate party voluntarily agrees to submit to the domination of the stronger party (Lake 1996; 2007; 2009). However, this was not the case for Greece. Its inclusion in the American sphere of influence, including its subsequent accession to NATO, was not based on the free will of the Greek people. Greece was, in fact, an object of hierarchical structuring of the international system, shaped by agreements between great powers. Initially, Greece was subordinated to Great Britain as part of a “horse trading” agreement between Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill (Kissinger 1994a, 413–414) and subsequently passed into American hands – again, involuntarily (Kennedy-Pipe 1995; Kissinger 1994b). The Greek Civil War (1946–1949) was merely the immediate trigger for the Truman Doctrine, the political penetration of the US through economic and military aid, and Greece’s admission into NATO. This is evidenced by the fact that the USSR never firmly supported the Greek communists. Stalin remained committed to the agreement he reached with Churchill between 9 and 10 October 1944 in Moscow regarding the division of spheres of influence in the Balkans, under which Greece fell under the dominant influence of Britain and the US (Churchill 1953). What is more, Stalin “rigidly refrained from using his vast trouble-making capacity in the Greek cauldron and left Churchill a free hand to deal with the Communist guerrillas there” (Jenkins 2002, 760).

That Greece fell under US domination through an agreement between the great powers, and that the USSR adhered to the agreement for reasons of *realpolitik*, is further confirmed by Stalin’s last conversation with the Bulgarian and Yugoslav leadership prior to the Cominform

Resolution, held in Moscow on 10 February 1948. As recorded first at the meeting itself (AJ, KMJ, 836, I-3-b/651) and later in the memoirs of Milovan Djilas (Djilas 1983, 135; 2014, 128), Stalin stated that the uprising in Greece should be ended as soon as possible and remarked: "What do you think, that the United States, the most powerful state in the world, will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean Sea! Nonsense. And we have no navy." This direction of the conversation was also confirmed by Edvard Kardelj (Kardelj 1982, 107–108), who noted that once he heard Stalin's views, it became clear to him why Soviet assistance to the Greek uprising "remained a matter of words, with only a token material effort."

On the threshold of the Cold War, the international security environment was not favourable for American support of democratic governance in Greece. The US, which "had important strategic, political, and economic motives" to assume a comprehensive global role (Lundestad 1999, 195), was preoccupied with preparing to confront the USSR in order to protect and expand its sphere of influence. The main reason used to justify the suppression of democracy and the intervention of the Greek military in politics was the fear of communism. As a result, until 1974, Greece remained "the only country in which personnel from the resistance movement played no role in the political life of the nation" (DA, PA, K-40, f. 15, d. 44962). In such circumstances, which Lasswell (Lasswell 1997, 58) identified in his aggregate hypothesis as "the fundamental conditions of a garrison system," preserving an anti-communist Greece as a staunch ally firmly bound to the Western bloc was far more important than establishing a democratic regime.

In this respect, the most significant causes of the Greek military's influence on politics were not military but political in nature. They did not reflect the social or organisational characteristics of the military establishment but rather the political and institutional structure of the hierarchical order established by agreements between the great powers. Democratic governance in Greece was an obstacle to the effective implementation of American interests in the broader Eastern Mediterranean region, and the undue influence of the military on politics was a logical extension and consequence of "the Position of the United States With Respect to Greece," which stated that it was "a deterrent to communist subversion and has encouraged the observance of democratic, constitutional political practices as well as the protection of civil liberties to the extent compatible with the security of the State" (FRUS 1951a).

Since security took precedence over democracy and freedom, the same decision by the US NSC also stipulated that “the objective of military assistance to Greece was to provide support to a Greek military establishment which would be capable of maintaining internal security and affording Greece, through certain limited accessories, a modicum of prestige and confidence” (FRUS 1951a).

ESTABLISHING HIERARCHY THROUGH POLITICAL PENETRATION

The hypothesis that providing military and economic aid, coupled with political penetration, grants donors significant leverage over recipients (Walt 1985; 1990) is confirmed by the overt interference of the US in Greece’s domestic politics. This interference began in mid-July 1947, immediately following the arrival in Athens of Dwight Griswold, the head of the American Mission for Aid to Greece (AMAG). The key task that Secretary of State George Marshall assigned to Griswold was that “we see in Greece a government whose members are firmly united in their loyalty to Greece and who are primarily interested in keeping their country from falling under Communist control or Soviet domination,” while also granting him authority, in collaboration with the US ambassador, to reconstruct the Greek government, dismiss Greek officials, and remove them from office to achieve the mission’s objectives efficiently (FRUS 1947a). That Griswold, as the “most powerful man in Greece,” zealously carried out Marshall’s instructions was reported by the American press (Schmidt 1947), noted by the head of the Yugoslav delegation at the United Nations’ special session (AJ, ZSK, 83, K-8), and corroborated by a detailed report sent from Athens to the Yugoslav leadership on 23 August 1947, describing “the open interference of Americans in the purely internal political matters of Greece” (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-16, IX, 33/VI-44).

American interference soon reached such proportions that, by late October 1947, disputes among various US representatives over authority in managing the Greek government were discussed by the NSC. A directive was subsequently sent to Athens, delegating authority for all decisions in the domain of high politics to the US ambassador. It is highly likely that no better description exists of the extent of American interference in Greece’s internal affairs during this period than the instructions that placed under the US ambassador’s jurisdiction the following responsibilities:

“any action by US representatives in connection with a change in the Greek Cabinet, any action by US representatives to bring about or prevent a change in the high command of the Greek armed forces, any substantial increase or decrease in the size of the Greek armed forces” (FRUS 1947b). The same instructions also gave the ambassador authority over “any major question involving the relations of Greece with the United Nations or any foreign nation, any major question involving the policies of the Greek Government toward Greek political parties, trade unions, subversive elements, rebel armed forces, including questions of punishment, amnesties and any question involving the holding of elections in Greece” (FRUS 1947b).

Unlike interference in civilian matters, American penetration into military affairs—personnel and organisational decisions, as well as the very mission of the Greek military—began just days after the Truman Doctrine was announced. As early as 17 March 1947, Dean Acheson endorsed the consensus reached by the Department of War and the State Department, stating that the mission of the Greek military should be changed “from one defending the border against possible aggression by its neighbours, to one of maintaining internal security by overcoming the dissident armed bands” (Roubatis 1987, 43). The administration of the military component of the aid programme was entrusted to the United States Army Group Greece (USAGG), and beginning in early summer 1947, no organisational or personnel changes in the HAF could take place without the prior approval of US representatives (AJ, KMJ, 836, I-3-b/263). The General Staff of the HAF found itself “under the direct control of USAGG, which appointed and dismissed officers,” while “American officers directed the operations of the Greek military” (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-17, IX, 33/VI-62). Decisions regarding retirements and promotions were made by the US ambassador, the head of AMAG, and the American general in charge of USAGG. The decision-making process typically unfolded as follows: the Americans would prepare lists of names of Greek generals, and the Greek prime minister would select from those lists whom to retire and whom to promote (Roubatis 1987). With the arrival of a new ambassador in Athens in late July 1948, US authority in Greece “became virtually unlimited” – the head of USAGG would announce the dismissal of Greek generals, and the Supreme Military Council would officially execute those dismissals the very next day (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-17, IX, 33/VI-68). The extensive scope of US interference in Greek military affairs is further confirmed by a special report entitled

“Anglo-American Interference in Greek Military Affairs,” sent from the Greek capital to Yugoslav authorities (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-16, IX, 33/VI–44).

In all major areas of Greek policymaking, prior approval from American personnel was required, which very often initiated decisions themselves (Amen 1978; VA, JNA, K-374, f. 1). “The US changed Greek governments at its discretion, dictated their actions, determined their foreign policy orientation—in short, it became the primary driver of Greek politics” (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-17, IX, 33/VI–62). Alongside their official involvement in staffing the Greek government and military, the Americans maintained secret and extra-institutional contacts with extremist anti-communist elements within Greek politics and the armed forces, who held real power in the military and ensured its ideological uniformity (Καραγιάννης 1963; Τσουκαλάς 2020). Control over the Greek military was viewed by the US as the easiest and most efficient means to ensure internal support for Washington’s policies. This was deliberate, as the Greek military had been transformed into a “fighting machine directed not against possible external threats to the territorial integrity of the country, but, instead, the citizens of the country it was supposed to protect” (Roubatis 1987, 54).

The definitive confirmation of the US policy of “progressive autonomization” of the HAF vis-à-vis civilian authorities came at the beginning of 1948 (Alivizatos 1978, 37). Specifically, on 12 February, when the NSC adopted the decision that “the Greek Government which rests on a weak foundation,” where exists “friction among short-sighted political factions, selfishness and corruption” as well as “a dearth of effective leaders,” should not interfere in the operations carried out by its own military (FRUS 1948a). The implementation of this decision, namely, the institutional confirmation of the military’s *de facto* autonomy and its supremacy over civilian authorities, took place in early 1949 under American pressure, when the HAF “became a state within a state,” with General Alexandros Papagos (Αλέξανδρος Παπάγος) assuming effective dictatorial powers (Τσουκαλάς 2020, 209). On 20 January 1949, Papagos was first reinstated, promoted to the rank of Field Marshal, and appointed Commander-in-Chief of the HAF (AN 882/49; ΠΥΣ 62–63/49). Shortly after, on 27 January, he was granted the authority to make decisions regarding HAF operations and organisation without prior consultation with the government or any other branch of authority (AN 884/49). His appointment “essentially represented the suppression of the government and the establishment of the

Commander-in-Chief as an autonomous authority” (Ζαφειρόπουλος 1956, 86–88). The powers of the newly formed War Council with respect to the Commander-in-Chief were minimal (ΝΔ 1089/49), and its membership consisted of “all the leaders of the political parties participating in the government, ministers of war, and the US ambassador Grady” (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-17, IX, 33/VI–82).

Considering that great powers often implement their policies through intelligence institutions (Trbojević and Svirčević 2025), it is impossible to examine US political penetration into Greece following the adoption of the Truman Doctrine without paying special attention to the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) “as the routine instrument of American intervention abroad” (Schlesinger 2002, 455). One of the CIA’s first covert operations began in Greece, and as early as 1948, it assisted in the establishment of the Greek Central Intelligence Service (*Κεντρική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών [ΚΥΠ]*), with which it “clearly had a relation of great intimacy” that “entirely excluded the official US embassy” (Woodhouse 1985, 7). In addition to being headed by high-ranking HAF officers, the majority of ΚΥΠ personnel were military members who had spent significant portions of their careers detached from their regular units serving in secret political police while maintaining close ties with the US intelligence service. The close relationship between the CIA and ΚΥΠ is further evidenced by a top-secret report from the Yugoslav military attaché in Athens, warning his superiors in early August 1954 that ΚΥΠ was collecting intelligence on behalf of the CIA regarding the visit of a Yugoslav Army delegation to Thessaloniki, led by General Rade Hamović (VA, JNA, K-375, f. 1).

The CIA station in Athens numbered more than 200 agents and other permanent staff, with its personnel stationed at several different locations, including the Greek royal palace (Roubatis and Winn 1978). CIA officers infiltrated all sectors of Greek society and established direct contacts with the royal family, which concluded that the shortest path to the White House led through the CIA station in Athens. The CIA’s penetration of the royal palace was so profound that, at one point, one of its agents served as the tutor to the crown prince and spent almost every day at the Royal Court (*Παπαχελάς* 2017). Greece was one of the countries where the CIA exerted the greatest influence, which is supported by the fact that Athens was home to the CIA’s third-largest station in the world. Additionally, a report on its covert operations, prepared upon the request of President Dwight Eisenhower by David

Bruce and Robert Lovett, highlighted Athens as the capital where the chief of the CIA station wielded more influence than the US ambassador (Grose 1994; Schlesinger 2002).

Particularly indicative of the degree of US influence over the HAF and KYII is the fact that one of the Greek officers who participated in joint operations with the CIA in Greece during the 1950s was then-Lieutenant Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos (Γεώργιος Παπαδόπουλος), the future leader of the military junta (1967–1974). The leader of the 1967 coup spent a significant amount of time during the 1950s with CIA agents stationed in Greece and “had a habit of confiding in them about his conspiratorial plans and the need for military intervention in political life, while in their contacts with him, they did not hide the US’s fear of the consequences of the left coming to power” (Παπαχελάς 2017, 272). As an officer of the HAF seconded to KYII, Papadopoulos was involved in various political activities and intrigues, prompting the Commander of the Ground Forces to demand his expulsion from the HAF “for conspiring against the state” (Κανελλόπουλος 1975, 37–40). Papadopoulos was one of the key figures behind coordinated actions by the HAF and KYII to manipulate election results and weaken the outcome of centrist and leftist parties in parliamentary elections (Katrīs 1971; Παπαχελάς 2017). The fact that the HAF intervened in political life on behalf of US interests is further confirmed by the later testimony of Konstantinos Karamanlis (Κωνσταντίνος Καραμανλής), who stated that the military, fearing that his government’s policies would weaken Greece’s commitment to NATO, “hurriedly prepared a conspiracy against the same government, which, just a year earlier, they had actively supported by participating in election fraud to ensure its victory and continued tenure in office” (IKA 1977).

Ultimately, the persistence of US influence over Greece’s security apparatus, established during the initial years of the Truman Doctrine’s implementation, is evidenced by the fact that the CIA, a month and a half before the *coup d’état* carried out on 21 April 1967, “knew all the details (codes, codenames, and specific tasks of various units) of the plan to execute the military coup” (Παπαχελάς 2017, 293). The Yugoslav ambassador in Athens, Mihailo Javorski, reported on 4 February 1967 that democratic forces in Greece “faced significant opposition from major forces, including EPE, the royal court, and the US,” further noting that the CIA and the Pentagon operated independently of the US embassy, “pursuing their own agendas and advocating, when necessary, more radical solutions, often receiving support—among

others—from the Queen Mother” (DA, PA, K-40, f. 15, d. 44962). At the end of March, three weeks before the military coup, Javorski informed Belgrade that “the CIA and its operatives are connected with the junta” and that “they are working to postpone the elections and bring about a far-right government” (DA, PA, K-40, f. 15, d. 411539).

DESOVEREIGNISATION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF POLITICAL PENETRATION

The rhetoric of the Truman Doctrine was full of high-minded language about free institutions, representative government, freedom of speech, and other lofty goals. Its implementation in Greece, however, had little in common with these ideals. In the months following Truman’s speech, Greece became one of the greatest victims of the policy of active and aggressive involvement of great powers in the internal affairs of smaller states in Europe in the second half of the 20th century. The pervasive involvement of the US “gradually came to be felt in all fields of public life, profoundly affecting not just the state but the entirety of Greek society” (Spasojević 2022, 252). Direct US interference in military affairs stripped Greece of what little sovereignty had remained after the application of the Truman Doctrine. Particularly after the signing of the agreement between the US and Greece on how military and economic aid would be received, which “allowed the US government to practically take control over the entirety of Greece’s economic and financial life,” Greece effectively ceased to be a sovereign state (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-17, IX, 33/VI–61). Its “government ceased to function as a governing entity and came under the administration of the State Department, whose officials issued orders to Greek ministers, replaced individual ministers, entire governments, military commanders, and dismissed civil servants” (AJ, SKJ, 507, K-17, IX, 33/VI–60). The Greek economy was in the hands of American experts, political parties rose to and fell from power only at the discretion of the US (VA, JNA, K-17, f. 4), and “foreign policy, while conducted by the Greek foreign minister, was formulated in the halls and offices of the American embassy and AMAG” (Roubatis 1987, 53). Institutionalised American penetration into Greece’s political and military structures had profound consequences not only for US-Greece bilateral relations but also for the legitimacy of the Greek nation-state as an independent and sovereign actor. The case of Greece “suggests the demise of the nation-state in this sense,” as it was practically “incorporated

into the political process of the United States and became an appendage of American policy” (Amen 1978, 112–113).

One of the institutional consequences of US political penetration into Greece’s internal affairs, which occurred under the guise of providing nearly unlimited military and economic assistance, was the unconstitutional and unilateral strengthening of executive power at the expense of legislative authority. This state of imbalance, or dysfunction of parliamentary democracy, persisted until the fall of the military junta in 1974. The result of US interference was the creation of a political system that operated under the façade of democratic procedures and served as a guarantee for US strategic interests in the region. The guarantor of the survival of such a political system, as well as the key lever of American influence within it, was the Greek military. Its primary mission was neither the defence of the country from external threats nor subsidiary involvement “in the implementation of the foreign policy” of its own country (Blagojević 2023, 166); rather, it was the transformation of Greece into an alternative option for US foreign policy in the region, in case of a deterioration in US-Turkey relations. Greece “had virtually become an American colony” (Woodhouse 1985, 6), which, under the pressure and influence of this major power and an externally imposed ideology, “blindly followed foreign interests” (Spasojević 2019, 71).

From a sociological standpoint, Greek society found itself in a confrontational relationship with the armed forces (Janowitz 1964). This was primarily because the US had turned the Greek military into a politically conscious elite imposed on the rest of society. Serving US interests, this elite held primacy over civilians. Since the mission of the HAF, as defined by the US, was limited to maintaining internal security, they willingly entered the political arena, with Greek officers continuously participating in political intrigues and conspiracies. Although “no elite behaves simply on the basis of its social origin” (Janowitz 1960, 81), the Greek case confirmed the author’s later view that, in developing countries, social origins have a greater influence on shaping the political views of the military than in Western countries (Janowitz 1964; 1977). Greek officers saw themselves as guardians of the flame, in this case, of anti-communism, ensuring the continuity of the established regime through a system of recruitment and ideological indoctrination, which involved direct participation in the ruling order (Janowitz 1964). However, there was a significant difference: in the Greek case, the ruling order and

ideology had been imposed by agreements among great powers and were supported through external political penetration.

The unrestricted influence that the US achieved in Greece simultaneously confirms and ties together several important hypotheses. These include the idea that political penetration, as the covert manipulation of a state's political system by another state, is most successful "when states lack established government institutions, and may be more vulnerable to pressure, especially if they are forced to rely on foreigners" (Walt 1990, 48); that the military is more inclined and capable of interfering in politics in states with less developed or less mature "political culture" (Finer 2017, 22); and that penetration by a foreign power can ensure *de facto* control, as states vulnerable to external interference are not "important players on the international stage" (Walt 1985, 33). For all these reasons, from the perspective of the construct of hierarchy in international relations, the relationship between the US and Greece can be characterised as an "informal empire", as the US established *de facto* control over Greece's security, foreign, and economic policies, while Greece retained its *de iure* international legal personality and nominal independence (Doyle 1986, 38–40; Lake 2009, 57–58).

The case of Greece further confirms the hypothesis that in establishing and maintaining hierarchical relationships between states, interest groups play an important role by acting on behalf of the superior state to "restrain insubordination and defiance" (Lake 2009, 32). In the Greek case, that interest group was the military, including HAF officers seconded to the secret police, KYII. The US' accurate assessment that the HAF would be the most suitable instrument for maintaining an informal empire in Greece validates Finer's (Finer 2017) central thesis that "the armed forces have three massive political advantages over civilian organizations: a marked superiority in organization, a highly emotionalized symbolic status, and a monopoly of arms" (6). Under the influence of and acting on behalf of the US, the Greek military was "steadfastly loyal to NATO, at times, even to the detriment of its own country's national interests" (Danopoulos 1985, 273). This was especially evident in the Cyprus issue, where Greek officers publicly expressed support for unifying Cyprus with Greece while secretly supporting US and NATO policies aimed at resolving the issue by effectively partitioning the island with Turkey (Danopoulos 1984; Παπαχελάς 2021). Meanwhile, as the HAF sought to sustain conservative and pro-NATO elements of the Greek political spectrum through intimidation, deceit,

electoral manipulation, and even direct intervention, the primary goal of US defence policy towards Greece was “the reduction of Greece’s capacity to fight a defensive or offensive war against Turkey over the issue of Cyprus” (Roubatis 1979, 49). All of this indicates that, from the perspective of institutional theory, the HAF were effectively under the subjective control of the US. This represents “the antithesis of objective control,” as it progressively undermines democratic civilian control, involves the military in politics, and reduces its combat readiness (Huntington 1957, 80–85).

CONCLUSION

The case of Greece during the Cold War serves as a clear example of how the military, as an instrument of political penetration, can be used to establish and maintain a hierarchical order in international relations. Acting as an interest group serving the superior power, in this case, the US, the HAF not only assisted in sustaining the informal empire of the US but also acted contrary to the interests of its own people and state. The United States’ political penetration into Greek society during the Cold War demonstrated the profound dependence of politically immature societies and institutionally underdeveloped states on dominant powers within the international hierarchy. Through direct control of Greece’s military, the US established an informal imperial system that enabled the preservation of an undemocratic regime in Greece while simultaneously eroding national sovereignty and democratic institutions. The Greek military, as an instrument of US influence, played a central role in maintaining the existing order, primarily through ideological indoctrination and the intimidation of the opposition. These processes illustrate the critical role of institutional weakness and social vulnerability as key factors enabling political penetration by an external power. The case of Greece confirms that military involvement in politics, aimed at maintaining a hierarchically established international order, degrades the military’s ability to defend national interests and highlights the need to strengthen institutional capacities and democracy in order to protect smaller states from domination by great powers in hierarchically structured international relations.

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ПОДРИВАЊЕ ДЕМОКРАТИЈЕ И НАЦИОНАЛНЕ БЕЗБЕДНОСТИ: ЈАВНА ПОЛИТИКА И ТАЈНО ДЕЛОВАЊЕ САД У ГРЧКОЈ ТОКОМ ХЛАДНОГ РАТА

Резиме

На студији случаја Грчке рад истражује како су Сједињене Америчке Државе на почетку Хладног рата политичком пенетрацијом обликовале хијерархијски поредак у својој интересној сфери. Тежиште анализе посвећено је улози Грчких оружаних снага, које су под утицајем САД постале инструмент очувања недемократског режима и одржавања структуралне зависности. Коришћењем теоријских концепата из области међународних и цивилно-војних односа, чланак истражује како је институционална слабост допринела рањивости Грчке на спољни утицај. Грчка војска била је носилац три кључне функције у овом односу: (1) обезбеђивања политичке стабилности кроз идеолошку индоктринацију и застрашивање опозиције, (2) легитимисања доминације стране силе у унутрашњој политици, и (3) редуковања одбрамбених капацитета у корист страних политичких интереса. Уз помоћ грчке војске национални интереси земље били су подређени спољнополитичким циљевима и геополитичкој стратегији САД. Резултати истраживања показују да је неформална империја САД, у виду *de facto* контроле над безбедносном, спољном и економском политиком Грчке, одржавана кроз институционалне слабости и недостатак демократске цивилне контроле војске. Закључци чланка указују на интегралну потребу за јачањем демократских и институционалних капацитета како би се спречила политичка пенетрација и осигурао суверенитет држава у сличном политичком и економском контексту. Ова анализа нуди значајан допринос разумевању односа између хијерархијских структура, међународног утицаја и институционалне независности у времену преовладавања великих сила. Контекст политичке и

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институционалне пенетрације САД у грчко друштво и војску јасно илуструје како међународна хијерархија проистиче не само из економских и војних ресурса доминантне државе, већ и из способности да се обликују институције и политички систем подређене државе. Грчка војска, као главни гарант интереса САД, деловала је против националних и државних интереса и демократских вредности у корист одржавања хладноратовског поретка. Последиčna деградација грчког суверенитета и демократије потврђује да политичка пенетрација у slabим државама често води дугорочним негативним последицама по њихову политичку стабилност и независност.

Кључне речи: међународни односи, безбедност, цивилно-војни односи, хијерархија, политичка пенетрација, суверенитет, демократија, Хладни рат, САД, Грчка

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE POLITICAL WEST'S STRUGGLES: CHALLENGES TO POWER AND SUPREMACY

Abstract

This paper explores the transformation of global power structures in the context of the perceived decline of American hegemony and the liberal international order. It critically assesses the internal and external pressures reshaping the U.S.-led global framework, including ideological fragmentation within liberal democracies, the strategic rise of non-Western actors such as China and Russia, and the growing challenges to the legitimacy of multilateral institutions. The concept of the “Political West” is used to describe the alliance of liberal democracies committed to open markets, democratic governance, and rule-based international norms. By analyzing key theoretical perspectives and geopolitical developments, the study aims to evaluate whether the current world order is undergoing a temporary adjustment or a more enduring systemic transition toward multipolarity.

Keywords: liberal international order, American hegemony, Political West, global powershift, multipolarity

INTRODUCTION

Today, theorists of modern political thought are arguing about two theses: whether there is an alternative to Western supremacy (and

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whether there is a need at all for a hegemonic force) and second, whether the Political West itself is aware of its erosion and is ready to give up the primacy to another center of power? This raises the question of whether the current so-called *interregnum*¹ will ultimately favor Western civilization, that is, whether the West, with internal reforms and internal structural transformation, will survive the ravages of time and continue its “hegemony” or the whole world order will find a new non-Western paradigm. Alternatively, could a symbiotic world order emerge, shaped by the coexistence of multiple centers of power? This paper uses the term “Political West” not as a strictly geographical construct but as a value-based alliance of states – primarily North America and Western Europe – that share commitments to liberal democratic norms, market-based economies, and multilateral cooperation. While the term can be contested, it serves here as a practical shorthand for those actors historically aligned with U.S.-led internationalism since 1945. Equally central to this analysis is the concept of the “liberal international order.” This term refers to the post-World War II global system built around open markets, democratic governance, institutional multilateralism, and rule-based international norms – principles institutionalized in organizations like the United Nations, NATO, the WTO, and the IMF (Ikenberry 2011). Although related to “liberal democracy,” “liberal economy,” and “liberal internationalism,” the liberal international order encompasses a broader system of global governance and reflects the normative and institutional architecture of U.S. hegemony. This paper distinguishes these concepts while focusing on the liberal international order as the central framework through which American power and its global legitimacy are evaluated.

According to Ismail Serageldin (Serageldin 2016), the current world order goes through five contradictions. The first contradiction in the current world order is due to the fact that the whole set of concepts and ideas that are dominant today are entirely Western creations. Most of the rest of the world accepted them but did not participate in their

¹ According to Ivanov (2023, 107): “There are numerous definitions of the term *interregnum* and, at the same time, numerous interpretations that have been the product of various historical contexts. Depending on the needs, the term itself and its application offered explanations of current, temporary, and irregular events caused by a variety of symptoms, trends, historical ordeals, personalities, and so on. In general, the *interregnum* is a time interval indicating the interruption of a certain continuity. This time interval between two periods (what was and what is coming) is most often used in defining the temporal space from the end of the reign of one sovereign ruler until the coming to power of another, that is, its successor.”

creation and implementation. The second contradiction concerns Muslim extremism, with forces disrupting stability and order in countries across the globe (Serageldin 2016, 40). As Serageldin (2016, 40) argues, today, they are a threat to Europe and America, as well as the whole world, and aim to overturn the current world order and establish a religious state based on a barbaric, fanatical ideology. The challenge here is ideological and reminisces the rise of totalitarian ideologies, such as communism, in the 19th and 20th centuries. A third contradiction is the very nature of the state. A foreign policy based on soft power cannot be effective and deliver results in times of crisis, and EU members lack commitment to a unified strategy (Serageldin 2016, 40).

The fourth contradiction is the one between politics and the economy, while the fifth contradiction is the apparent obsolescence of the UN design and the absence of another alternative design of a forum where major powers discuss significant issues and bring solutions, not only declarative decisions and consents (Serageldin 2016, 40). Similarly, Niall Ferguson talks about the Four key components (which he calls black boxes that need to be opened) of our civilization: democracy, capitalism, rule of law, and civil society, and the same ones that are the pivot of the Western institutions are degenerate (Ferguson 2013, 19). He implies that they are often taken for granted, with the assumption that they function properly without questioning their inner functionality. However, on closer reflection, Ferguson argues that these institutions are experiencing decay or corruption, leading to a decline in Western dominance (Ferguson 2013, 19).

This paper will explore the ongoing crisis of the Western-led world order by analyzing key contradictions within its ideological, economic, and military frameworks. It will examine whether these challenges signify an inevitable decline, a potential transformation, or the emergence of a multipolar world. Drawing on the perspectives of theorists such as Ikenberry, Ferguson, and Huntington, the paper will examine whether the West can adapt to new global realities or whether alternative power structures will reshape the international system.

To guide this inquiry, the paper proposes the following hypothesis: the current liberal international order, though not in terminal decline, is undergoing a multidimensional transformation driven by ideological fragmentation, economic decentralization, and the erosion of Western-led geopolitical authority. This hypothesis will be explored through three interrelated dimensions: (1) the ideological and institutional crisis of the

liberal order, (2) the geopolitical and economic rise of non-Western actors, and (3) the strategic contradictions and identity crisis of U.S. foreign policy. Each section will examine these dynamics through the lenses of key theorists and case studies, ultimately assessing whether the West can retain leadership in a shifting multipolar world.

CRISIS OF THE (WESTERN) INTERNATIONAL (NEO)LIBERALISM

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized the vulnerability of the liberal international order in the face of rising geopolitical tensions and ideological fragmentation. Zimmermann describes the decline of the liberal international order as rapid and striking, noting that “from apparently inexorable and triumphant ascent to defensive and fractured gloom, [it] has been quite swift” (Zimmermann 2024, 1304). This swift erosion reflects not only external challenges posed by revisionist powers like Russia and China but also internal inconsistencies within the order itself. Trubowitz and Burgoon (Trubowitz and Burgoon 2024) similarly argue that the foundational support for liberal internationalism – rooted in post-Cold War triumphalism has significantly weakened. They highlight the erosion of democratic norms, growing protectionism, and the increasing disillusionment among Western electorates as key factors undermining the cohesion and legitimacy of the liberal order (Trubowitz and Burgoon 2024). Together, these accounts underscore a transition from a previously stable, rule-based global order to one marked by contestation, fragmentation, and ideological realignment.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a critical stress test for the liberal international order, exposing deep structural weaknesses in global governance and multilateral cooperation. As Whichelo (Whichelo 2020) observes, the crisis did not create these vulnerabilities but accelerated pre-existing trends of fragmentation and distrust among liberal democracies. The absence of coordinated international responses, combined with rising nationalism and protectionism, underscored the declining capacity of Western-led institutions to manage transnational crises (Whichelo 2020). This erosion of global solidarity has contributed to a more contested international landscape, further complicating the West’s efforts to maintain its leadership and normative influence.

According to some theorists, such as John Ikenberry (Ikenberry 2011), the world’s most powerful nation began to undermine the order

it established initially. He argues that the transfer of power and wealth from the North and West to the East and the South is underway, with the United States and Europe opening up space for non-Western countries on the rise (Ikenberry 2011). Ikenberry wonders what kind of global political order will emerge once the wheels of power shift and their consequences unfold – “Some anxious observers argue that the world will not only look less American – it will look less liberal [...] The notions of liberal internationalism – openness and rule-based relationships protected by institutions such as the United Nations and norms such as multilateralism – could give way to more contested and fragmented systems of blocks, spheres of influence, mercantile networks and religious rivalries” (Ikenberry 2011, 56). Over the past seven decades, the United States has played a central role in sustaining the liberal international order, leveraging its global leadership strategic alliances, economic power, and dominance in the currency system. Perhaps exactly what is happening today, Ikenberry concludes, is a “crisis of transition” that could lead to a post-Western and post-American world order, which can, in fact, be regarded as a deep crisis of the very liberal internationalism itself, whose erosion can lead to protectionism, nationalism, spheres of influence and regional projects of the Great Powers (Ikenberry 2011, 56). Therefore, according to some, the determining factor for the existence and survival of liberal internationalism is the Western and American hegemony, whose dominance is undermined. He argues that the future of this system hinges on two key factors: whether the United States and other liberal democracies can reclaim their progressive political direction and whether the US and its longstanding allies can expand and strengthen a broader coalition of states committed to cooperation within a reformed global order (Ikenberry 2011, 56). Achieving this, however, requires ensuring the survival of liberal democracy itself.

While much scholarly attention has focused on external geopolitical challenges to the liberal international order, an equally important dimension of the crisis lies within Western democracies themselves. Santarelli argues that the malaise affecting liberal democratic societies is not solely the result of populist backlash or institutional fatigue but stems from deeper and more systemic issues (Santarelli 2025, 157). In particular, he highlights how entrenched commitments to traditional economic models such as austerity, market liberalism, and technocratic governance, have alienated large segments of the population (Santarelli 2025, 158). These frameworks, often presented as neutral or “evidence-based,” have

in fact failed to address growing inequality and social fragmentation, thereby weakening the legitimacy of democratic governance. Santarelli's analysis suggests that the crisis of Western democracy is as much about a crisis of imagination and adaptability as it is about political dysfunction, calling for a reevaluation of the ideological assumptions underpinning policymaking in liberal societies (Santarelli 2025).

According to Michael J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington, and Fumio Watanuki, "the vulnerability of the democratic government in the United States is not primarily caused by threats from the outside, although they are real, and neither from the internal subversion with the left and the right, although the two possibilities exist, but primarily from the internal dynamics of democracy itself in the highly educated, active and participatory society" (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki 1975, 115).

Robert Kagan argues that many believe the decline of American dominance does not necessarily signal the end of the liberal international order. There is an expectation, if not an assumption, that key aspects of this order, such as democracy, prosperity, and peace among major powers, can endure beyond the waning influence of the United States. In contrast, Ikenberry maintains that the fundamental principles of a liberal international order will persist and continue to develop (Kagan 2012).

For generations, thinkers have recognized a recurring pattern in which political systems often contribute to their own downfall. Long before Arnold Toynbee's assertion that not one empire dies from murder but from suicide (Toynbee 1987), John Adams had already warned democracies are inherently short-lived (Adams 1851). Adams wrote: "[...] democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide" (Adams 1851). According to Michael Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuki "this suicide is, above all, the result of overindulgence than of anything else" (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki 1975, 115). It is precisely such overindulgence in the form of decadent stagnation that is an inevitable element for empires, democratic states, and superpowers. The same is what Adams wrote two centuries ago: "Power always thinks it has a great Soul and vast Views beyond the comprehension of the Weak. This is the deep root of the combination of savagery and self-justification that infuses the imperial mentality – and to a certain extent, any structure of authority and domination" (John Adams cited in: Chomsky 2007, 287).

However, are these warnings that scholars believe will emerge from the twilight of liberal internationalism in the early decades of the

21st century no longer present and inflaming from within the West? Paul Berman hypothetically asks what the meaning is of the claim that the 20th century did not end in 1989 and that in the modern age, there were still present and survived those impulses that caused harm because, as vile tyrants, they always cause a certain problem. In the 20th century, various new movements emerged, presenting radical and apocalyptic visions embraced by the masses, leading to widespread violence against enemies and allies. These movements arose from a deep frustration with the shortcomings and perceived naivety of liberal civilization. Despite their destructive nature, they were deeply influenced by some of the most profound literary and philosophical achievements, tapping into fundamental aspects of human nature that gave them significant power (Berman 2005). It seems as if we are witnessing an absurd situation in which even though we have a good reason to be scared, it is not a good idea to be scared. "Oh, how much I would like," Berman says, "to show that the world can be explained rationally – that Chomsky is right – and to show that all evil comes from bad oil companies and their allies from the media or some other plague that can be identified" (Berman 2005, 240).

According to many realists such as John Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer 2001), Stephen Walt (Walt 1987), and Kenneth Waltz (Waltz 1979), the West not only loses the primacy of a tangible front-runner, but we can also feel its weakening in ideological domination because of the growth of other world powers. China's economic growth as the leading Asian giant has almost doubled compared to Western democracies. On the other hand, mild authoritarian regimes mark significant economic growth compared to other pro-Western democracies. Democracy undoubtedly offers greater openness to societies but not always greater economic effectiveness than other political orders (Schmitter and Karl 1991). From an analytical standpoint, it appears that the democratic prosperity of Western industrial states such as Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy is increasingly under pressure, as weakened leadership and political fragmentation limit the capacity of these governments to deliver effective solutions. It is a long-held belief that a state's strength is measured by the number of decisions it can make. However, the more decisions a modern state must handle, the more powerless it becomes. Decisions bring not only authority but also exposure to risks. A key vulnerability of European states lies in their tendency to yield to blackmail tactics (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki 1975).

Namely, US foreign policy seeks definitive outcomes in international relations, aiming to resolve issues and neutralize threats. Their approach favors unilateral actions rather than working through international institutions like the United Nations (Kagan 2004). Cooperation with other nations is limited, as they remain skeptical of international law and often choose to act independently when necessary or beneficial (Kagan 2004). In other words, when a US foreign policy has set a clear goal in front of itself, it is driven exclusively by the premise that “the goal justifies the means.” *While Machiavelli is often associated with the idea that “the end justifies the means,” his writings suggest this is only justifiable when the survival of the state is at stake – not for pursuing selfish or unjust causes* (Machiavelli, 2019).

According to Robert Kagan, the American foreign policy, like the very system of the liberal international economy, survives its identity crisis (Kagan 2012). Kagan portrays the USA’s foreign policy in the following way: “They are reluctant, then aggressive, asleep at the switch, then quick on the trigger, indifferent, then obsessed, then indifferent again. They act out of a sense of responsibility and then resent and fear the burden of responsibility they have taken on themselves. Their effect on the world, not surprisingly, is often the opposite of what they intend. Americans say they want stability in the international system but are often the greatest disrupters of stability. They extol the virtues of international laws and institutions but then violate and ignore them with barely a second thought. They are a revolutionary power but think they are a status quo power. They want to be left alone but cannot seem to leave anyone else alone. They are continually surprising the world with their behavior, but not nearly as much as they are continually surprising themselves” (Kagan 2012, 240).

WHERE DOES POWER LIE?

Stratfor founder George Freedman is critical of American foreign policy. The British have the “Colonial Office,” the Romans had a “Proconsul,” and the United States has a chaotic array of institutions that deal with foreign policy. There are sixteen intelligence services with overlapping responsibilities. The State Department, the Defence Department, the National Security Council, and the National Intelligence Director all turned towards resolving the same issues, coordinated only to the extent that the President coordinates them all (Friedman 2012).

Friedman advises that the US apparatus of international relations needs to rationalize faster in the next decade before it gets out of control and is too late (Friedman 2011). It can be concluded that American foreign policy is in a state of contradiction and hypocrisy because, as Friedman concludes, they want to blame everyone for their problems except themselves. "At the very root of the problem is that there is no consensus in the United States about whether it has an empire and what to do with it" (Friedman 2012, 242). Arguing for the mere fact that the United States inadvertently grew into an empire, Friedman points to the conclusion that the empire poses a profound threat to the republic. If that moral basis is lost, the empire would have no point. In his forecast for the next 100 years on how the 21st century will look, Friedman thinks that the events shaping this century will rotate around the United States (Friedman 2011). Because we are currently in an America-centric era, if we would like to understand the 21st century, we must understand America and its culture, which is both young and barbaric and will be the one that will define how the world will live and think (Friedman 2009).

Friedman may be right. It is undisputed that America is and will be the supreme world leader, and it is very little apparent that another power could replace it. However, what precisely do the concepts of power and force mean? According to realists, the most fundamental divisions of power are military, economic, and cultural. For now, America is superior in one, is leading in another, and is under threat in the third. The one in which it leads is the cultural.

(a) The United States of America and the West, in general, are cultural leaders and a superpower, essentially a lifestyle force. However, that culture, as Pitirim A. Sorokin explains, rests on laurels (Sorokin 1957). Europe and the United States still dictate many cultural and social flows, but the question is how original and innovative they are today. On the other hand, the educational process that is later reflected in social life seems to go through a process of "incestuousness" (Thompson 2017).

There is no conflict of ideas, and the criticism of liberal ideas and their values by the right is perceived as a threat to democracy, freedom, and human rights. A system that wishes to be inclusive suffers precisely from an overdose of inclusive tendencies with no tolerance for what is outside of it. This should not mean the denial of the rights of cultural minorities to exercise their civil rights and freedoms. Exactly the opposite. This was evident in the rise of the woke movement and cancel culture, both gaining significant traction. However, these dynamics may shift in response to

the policies and influence of the recent Trump administration. However, what worries is the pretentiousness that leads to the tendency that only liberal ideas are universal and valid in this global order, and everything opposite is retrograde and wrong. The pretentiousness of liberal leaders towards creating a world and order that necessarily has to be prone to neo-liberal logic is an occasion for an even greater disintegration of the societies themselves, primarily within their democracies. However, is the universalization of Westernization a legitimate act?

Civilizations such as Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Confucian, or Japanese have distinct cultural and historical traditions that shape their perspectives, which may differ from those of Western civilization. The world is a conglomerate of differences, particularities, and specifics of different communities and identities, which, instead of trying to create an international order of coexistence, are often guided by the desire for unification of values. Values for which the West independently agreed to be universal. The order of international relations, implemented through the main subject embodied through national states, was essentially a product of the Westphalian Peace Treaty. A treaty in which European states, as leaders of the Western world, agreed on something that should apply to the rest of the world.² However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the ideas of the Western world, such as liberalism, brought with it the ideas of freedom, democracy, free market, human rights, constitutionalism, and individuality aimed at creating a “universal civilization.”

The idea of creating a “universal civilization” that represents an attempt at creating a Western civilization is simply impossible with the very existence of other civilizations and their fundamental differences with the West. Universal civilization is possible only as a symbiosis of values from all civilizations and their proportionate placement in the equilibrium of the international community. It should not be forgotten that there are values that have their historical continuity and that people constantly desire to live in communities that are subject to natural law and the realization of fundamental human interests and rights. These values

² In his book *World Order*, Henry Kissinger notes that these concepts were later extended beyond Europe, influencing global perspectives on international relations. He also reflects on how viewing the world solely through a Western lens can lead to challenges when engaging with regions with different historical experiences and cultural contexts. This expansion of the Westphalian model to the rest of the world sometimes resulted in tensions, as non-Western societies were introduced to a system that did not always align with their traditional structures (Kissinger 2014).

are deeply related to the morality and ethnicity of every society and the original distinction between what is good and evil and right and wrong. Similar to the cosmopolitan consciousness of universal affiliation, where the individual is a citizen of the world. The starting point for realizing this idea is the moral dimension or the cosmopolitan moral ideal.

Many question the West, its' neo-liberalism and interventionism, and its' belonging to the sphere of good and right, which time will show. Fern, as described by Haber (Haber 2002), dissociating himself from the liberal tradition, will conclude that no universal community consists of rational creatures. Every individual belongs to multiple communities, each with its own dynamics. These communities are not fixed or unchanging entities but rather diverse and fluid (Haber 2002). Starting from this aspect and understanding, Fern argues that "any applicable political theory must be capable to accept the view that the subject is never singular or autonomous, but that he or she always exists as a member of a community;" the subject is "subject-in-community, which is the basis for his theory of emancipation" (Haber 2002, 8).

The formulation of "universal civilization" has its roots in V. S. Naipaul (Naipaul 1991), who considers Western civilization the most suitable for people's lives. He is delighted with the "beauty of the idea of the pursuit of happiness" (Naipaul 1991). This idea is at the core of civilization's attractiveness to those on the periphery.³ Tony Blair's 2001 statement that these values are not merely Western but universal marked a significant shift in rhetoric (Blair 2001). Rather than being seen as characteristics of Western culture, they were now framed as the only acceptable values. This perspective reflects a form of cultural dominance,

³ Nevertheless, it is illusory to think that the superiority and universality of Western civilization lies in the fact that it is only capable of pursuing and spreading happiness. The pursuit of happiness, freedom, and life are the three well-known pillars of the American Declaration of Independence that represent the inalienable rights of every US citizen. However, the idea of searching for happiness is not an original American creation, which should only be considered a benefit to Western civilization and the United States. Before the emergence of Western domination, many civilizations and empires were aware of this concept. The source is assumed to lie in the Epicurus Philosophy, in whose understanding of the world lies the hedonistic ethics as the basis for man's wisdom. Unlike the Stoics, who see the path to that wisdom through their obligations, the Epicureans see it through the enjoyment. Epicurus sees the man as an individual, who, in contrast to the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, is not primarily a "political subject" or *ζῷον πολιτικόν* and a citizen of the polis but only an individual who is searching for happiness, who as a private person should not live publicly, but exemplarily.

suggesting an ongoing ideological struggle where one culture seeks to replace others until it is universally adopted. The following day, *The Times of London* reinforced this idea, asserting that these fundamental values should be applied equally to all (Pirs 2014).

Regarding the universal civilization, Huntington concludes that “this idea can refer to some things that are deep but irrelevant, to things that are essential but not deep, as well as to things that are irrelevant and superficial” (Huntington 1996, 57). At the same time, universal civilization “can refer to the assumptions, values, and teachings that many currently adhere to in Western civilization and some in other civilizations,” which he refers to as “The Davos Culture” (Huntington 1996, 56; 56-59). Namely, as he emphasizes, to all participants in the forum in Davos and, in fact, the same thing common to people of Western civilization: political democracy, individualism, and belief in market economies. The participants at the forum “control virtually all international institutions, then many of the world’s governments as well as most of the world’s economic and military capacities ... but globally, how many share that culture?” (Huntington 1996, 57).

According to Huntington (1996, 57) “outside the West, probably less than 50 million people or 1% of the world’s population, and perhaps only a tenth of 1% of the world’s population. This culture is far from universal culture... this common intellectual culture exists, as Hedley Bull emphasizes, only at the level of elites: its roots are shallow in many societies... it is questionable whether, even at the diplomatic level, it embraces in itself what was once called a common moral culture or a set of common values, unlike a common intellectual culture”.

(b) According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS 2023, 45), the United States is still the dominant actor and leader in global military affairs. Although the United States faces no direct military threat to its primacy, the rise of China’s economic power has introduced a new form of strategic competition. While some argue that China’s ambition remains primarily economic, other scholars highlight its’ growing naval presence and assertiveness in regions such as the South China Sea as evidence of broader geopolitical ambition (Kaplan 2010). These developments suggest that any shift in China’s strategic priorities could eventually challenge the military dominance of the United States. The United States, as a dominant global power, emerged as the central force in the war on terror following the 9/11 attacks, an outcome that, as Friedman describes, was “unintentional” (Friedman 2012, 241).

This role reinforced the perception that its presence is essential, as many view it as the only power capable of confronting such a formidable threat. However, if we continue to live in a permanent and prolonged war against the Islamic world, and if the threats that are not only dangerous to liberal democracy but also to humanity, in general, are genuine, the United States as the main counterpart of that dangerous world have already lost “because there is no way to pacify more than a billion Muslims” (Friedman 2012, 241). However, this assumption is mainly due to imagination.

The United States is often perceived by international relations scholars, especially realists like Mearsheimer, as a superpower that prioritizes the attainment of its strategic goals – even when doing so may override ethical considerations (Mearsheimer 2001). It can be argued that the United States pursues its interests in ways that align with a misreading of Machiavellian principles. This perception suggests that, in pursuit of strategic interests, particularly abroad, the United States may employ coercive or interventionist tactics without regard for moral limits. But does this always translate to the genuine defense of its national borders and citizens? Realism – the recognition of national egoism – more easily leads to everybody’s understanding of the interests and ideas of others rather than the idealism or the cult of abstract principles. Reinhold Niebuhr, if not Hans Morgenthau, would add that realism should not be cynical and that “the remedy for the arrogant idealism, which imagines that it knows about the future of people more than the mortals are given to know, is not selfishness. It is a concern for themselves and others” (Aron 2001, 585). Henry Kissinger was a proponent of conservative realism, advocating for pragmatic diplomacy that prioritized national interests, even if it meant engaging with various regimes (Kissinger 1994). Historically, the United States has formed strategic alliances and taken covert actions to counter governments that were not aligned with its interests. According to Douzinas (2007, 144), at times, this included support for certain authoritarian regimes, which facilitated actions against adversaries. Additionally, US foreign policy has sometimes involved decisions that pushed the boundaries of international law, contributing to local conflicts and major wars, such as those in Korea and Vietnam, which resulted in significant casualties (Douzinas 2007). Chomsky and Robinson (Chomsky and Robinson 2024) argue that U.S. foreign policy, under the guise of idealism, has often destabilized regions rather than promoting global order. They challenge the narrative of American

exceptionalism, linking it to a pattern of interventions that exacerbate conflict (Chomsky and Robinson 2024).

That need for domination has resulted in numerous hotspots far from the American continent and several open questions whose consequences are still felt. Especially after Vietnam, the world has changed – as always, not because of the gifts of benevolent leaders but because of the deeply committed popular struggle, which, according to Noam Chomsky (Chomsky 2007), developed too late but was ultimately successful. According to him, the world is in a terrible state today, but it is much better than yesterday in terms of unwillingness to tolerate aggression and many other ways we are inclined to take for granted. The lessons of that transformation should always be taken into consideration. According to Chomsky (Chomsky 2007), “it is not surprising that as the population becomes more civilized, the systems of power become more extreme in their efforts to control the ‘great beast’ as Alexander Hamilton called the people “The great beast” (Chomsky 2007, 151).

Today, countries such as Syria and Iraq continue to face profound internal fragmentation and weakened central governance. The question arises whether the countries of the Middle East will disintegrate as Yugoslavia did. The methods of Western influence, military interventions, and sanctions that have already been tried will not be important in this case. They have never even been helpful. New concepts are sought, but Western brain trusts cannot offer more than sad reports of the downfall of the liberal world order or restraining the role of the United States as a global policeman. This world order was liberal only for those who conceived and supported it (Liders 2016).

Today, wars are not fought as before. There are no front lines, there are no trenches, there are no battlefields. There is a new reality dictated by new technologies and advanced weapons, in which Clausewitz would not have been very helpful. Artificial intelligence, drones, nuclear weapons, long-range missiles, and other sophisticated methods have entirely changed the image of the war. Hence, it is logical to conclude that the one who controls the technology and is superior to it will be the most significant military force on the planet. Elon Musk, Henry Kissinger, and Eric Schmidt agree that AI could fundamentally reshape global politics and military power, suggesting that nations controlling AI would have a significant advantage and that whoever dominates will shape the future of global power (Kissinger, Schmidt, and Huttenlocher 2021, 52).

However, according to George Friedman (Friedman 2012), the most important factor for the power of the United States is the oceans, and their domination and control allow it to intervene where it is needed and give it control over international exchange. Friedman concludes that the one who controls the global exchange controls the oceans. "The balance of power strategy is a form of maritime war, preventing triggers that create forces that can threaten the American control of the seas" (Friedman 2012, 240). In other words, the colonial power that ruled through the control of the seas centuries ago is depicted today in the image of the United States. Nevertheless, the colonization the US wants to implement today does not need the oceans. According to many, the new colonialism of the United States today is financial.

(c) Therefore, we come to the third parameter of power – the economy. Often, non-Western countries are susceptible to criticism that if they do not adjust and adapt to the self-declared universal values, they will threaten the free world or at least regress and be marginalized by modern social trends. Kaplan points out that developing nations do not always have the choice but to adapt to a game guided by the rules of the West. However, according to him, the material and ideological domination of the West, which is put into question, gives space for other nations to accept Western rules of play only if their domestic values and socio-economic orders converge with those of the West. If the West wants to preserve its position, the progress of modernization in developing countries must lead to a more uniform global community shaped by Western models. However, the problem, according to Kaplan, is that liberal democracy, industrial capitalism, and secular nationalism, as defining pivots in the West, do not experience their replicas in the developing regions that are being modernized. He argues that rising countries like China, Turkey, India, and Brazil, due to their traditions, domestic orders, and ideological orientations, have their own cultural and socio-economic features different from those of the West. The difference is also evident in their perceptions of the basics of political legitimacy, the nature of the concept of sovereignty, the rules of international exchange, and the relations between the state and the society. Kaplan concludes that as their material strength gains momentum, they will seek to re-examine the international order in the sense that they will seek an order that will give preference to their interests and ideological preferences. The very development of these emerging countries would be an alternative to the

Western way, not a long-term bypassing of the path to global hegemony (Friedman 2012).

As of January 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects global economic growth to be 3.3% in 2025 and 2026, with an upward revision for the United States offsetting downward adjustments elsewhere. (International Monetary Fund [IMF] 2025a). For China, the IMF has slightly increased its 2025 growth forecast to 4.6%, attributing this adjustment to the anticipated effects of recent stimulus measures (IMF 2025b). Regarding India, the IMF's January 2025 update maintains the country's growth projection at 6.5% for the 2025–2026 and 2026–2027 fiscal years, reinforcing its position as the fastest-growing major economy (IMF 2025c). Standard Chartered anticipates a slight deceleration in global economic growth, projecting a decrease from 3.2% in 2024 to 3.1% in 2025 (Standard Chartered 2024). This outlook considers factors such as looser financial conditions and expansionary fiscal policies, which may be partly offset by protectionist trade measures and sustained high interest rates in regions like the United States. These projections indicate that while the United States and China are expected to experience moderate growth, India is poised for more robust economic expansion in the coming years.⁴ The above parameters point to an existing tendency that slowly draws attention to new, fast-growing power centers. In the new multipolar world, we are yet to see if they must again function in a hegemonic order or a conglomerate of several forces.

In his capital work *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy raises the question of whether the rise and fall of the great powers in the anarchist world order always lead to war, although for many authors, the “war” and “the system of great powers” go hand in hand (Kennedy 1989). However, according to Kennedy (Kennedy 1989), there is a pattern in which the transformation in the balance of power is

⁴ Namely, according to estimates conducted in 2010, Standard Chartered projects China's GDP growth to reach 24.6 trillion dollars by 2020 (Standard Chartered 2010). Projections do not favor the United States, which is expected to grow its GDP to 23.3 trillion dollars. Comparatively, China's GDP in 2010, which was 5.7 trillion dollars, is significantly lower than that of the United States, which amounts to 14.6 trillion dollars. If we take the growth trend from 2010 to 2020, both countries are progressing, but things favor China. That is, in 10 years, China will reach the United States and surpass it. The third place in the first three economic powers is also expected to change. The Standard Chartered predicted that India would take the place held by Japan, with a GDP of 9.6 trillion dollars by 2020 (Standard Chartered 2010).

realized in much more accelerated dynamics than before. Namely, first, the transformation is subject to a gradual process that implies a change in total world production and military expenditures on a global level and their distribution and shift between the “pentarchy.”⁵ History knows of many turning points when leadership and initiative have crossed from one group, from one part of the world to another: the period of the rise of the modern state and the shift of the center of power from the Mediterranean to Western Europe, and the period of the French Revolution, are noticeable examples of this. Such periods are always times of fierce turmoil and struggle for power. Old authorities weaken, old orientations disappear, and a new order emerges from a fierce clash of ambitions and exasperation (Carr 1967). We are going through an *interregnum* in which the states should revise their position.

How does the foreign policy of the United States and the West, in general, relate to this transformation, and how could they lead the struggle for their survival? According to Machiavelli, there are two ways of struggle: one with the help of the laws and the other with the help of force. The first is worthy of the people, and the other is for the beasts. However, since this first one is often insufficient, it is necessary to turn to the other. Therefore, the ruler must understand how to pull out from him both the beast and the man (Machiavelli 2015). However, in international relations and Western hegemony, the question is often, how much humanity is left to achieve the goals? Even in the first lines of his “Social Contract,” Rousseau bravely and directly points out that many consider themselves to be masters of other people, yet they are bigger slaves than them as long as people are forced to subjugate and as long as they subjugate, they do well; but as soon as they can liberate themselves from the yoke, and they do, it is even better; because by regaining freedom through the same right they were denied it – they either have the right to continue it or there is no justification for their deprivation of it (Rousseau 2002).

CONCLUSION

Uncertainty will define the times ahead, and control over global developments will no longer rest solely with traditional centers of power. The era dominated by the United States and its allies established

⁵ Paul Kennedy believed that in the short term, no country would be able to join the five superpowers: the USA, USSR, China, Japan, and the EEC (Kennedy 1989).

after 1945 and reaffirmed in 1989 is gradually fading. New centres of power are emerging, both old and new, shaping a multipolar world with unpredictable dynamics. This shift is driven by evolving alliances among states, nations, civil society organizations, non-governmental entities, transnational criminal and terrorist networks, supranational actors, global corporations like Amazon and Google, and intelligence agencies competing for power and influence. According to Lüders (Liders 2016), today's allies can quickly become tomorrow's adversaries or even enemies. With the rise of China, not merely as an emerging power but as an established force, the existing world order is increasingly unsustainable (Liders 2016, 183). Lüders provocatively suggests that it might not be possible even if Beijing wished to uphold the old order (Liders 2016, 184). He argues that navigating this lack of transparency will require diplomatic skill, intellectual rigor, and pragmatic decision-making (Liders 2016, 184).

Francis Fukuyama's grand narrative from 1989, according to Müller, was shaped to some extent by the influence of American political philosopher Allan Bloom, under whom Fukuyama studied. Bloom, in turn, was influenced by the Russian émigré and French Hegelian thinker Alexandre Kojève (Müller 2011). Müller suggests that Fukuyama's views are intertwined with the same cultural pessimism that inspired Bloom. He raises a critical question: Could it be that in liberal democracy, Nietzsche's "last men" prevail – obedient, self-satisfied, and unremarkable suburbanites, far removed from the full potential of what human beings can truly be? Fukuyama acknowledged this scenario's bleakness, stating, "The end of history will be a very sad time... In post-history, there will be no art nor philosophy; there will only be an eternal preservation of the museum of human history" (Müller 2011, 239). The idea that collective political entities and their actions could counterbalance such a development has been discredited in both the East and the West. Müller argues that political philosophy in the future will bear the burden of demonstrating that no single value – whether autonomy, stability, or another ideal – will be sufficient to ensure the future of European democracies. Müller concludes his debate on democracy's uncertainties: "Totalitarianism seeks once and for all to secure certainty, whereas democracy, on the other hand, institutionalizes uncertainty" (Müller 2011, 242).

The future remains uncertain, but the West can still maintain its dominance if it transforms itself and returns to the core principles of democracy. This means revitalizing democratic institutions, fostering civic engagement, and reaffirming the values of freedom, equality, and

the rule of law. If the West fails to adapt, it risks being overtaken by an unpredictable and unstable world order shaped by forces that may not share the same commitment to democracy and human rights. The choice is between renewal or decline, between a future where the West reasserts its leadership or one where uncertain alternatives take hold. In other words, it is not whether change will occur but whether the Political West will shape or be shaped by it.

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НЕКИ АСПЕКТИ НАСТОЈАЊА ПОЛИТИЧКОГ ЗАПАДА: ИЗАЗОВИ МОЋИ И СУПРЕМАТИЈЕ

Резиме

Овај рад истражује текућу трансформацију глобалне расподеле моћи, фокусирајући се на борбу „политичког Запада” да одржи своју супрематију. Испитује да ли се либерални поредак под вођством Запада налази у привременој кризи или у неповратном паду, вођен идеолошким контрадикцијама, економским променама и геополитичком нестабилношћу. Студија се ослања на теоријске перспективе Икенберија, Хантингтона, Фергусона и Кагана како би анализирала ерозију западне доминације и појаву алтернативних центара моћи, нарочито у Азији. Методолошки, рад користи компаративни и аналитички приступ, процењујући војне, економске и културне динамике како би оценио одрживост западне хегемоније. Налази показују да, иако Запад и даље има значајан утицај, његова идеолошка кохезија слаби, економско вођство је угрожено успоном нових сила, а војна доминација ограничена је променљивим стратегијама ратовања. Резултати указују на то да будући светски поредак неће бити обележен потпуним падом Запада, већ променом ка мултиполарности, у којој ће коегзистирати више центара моћи. Рад закључује да ће способност Запада да се прилагоди и реформише одредити да ли ће остати доминантна сила или ће препустити место новим алтернативама. Без стратешког реструктурирања, идеолошке обнове и прилагођавања политичких приступа, либерални поредак би могао бити фрагментиран, што би довело до неизвеснијег и конфликтнијег међународног система.

Кључне речи: западна хегемонија, глобална промена моћи, либерални међународни поредак, мултиполарност

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GLOBALIZATION, CRISIS AND DISCOURSE ON TERRORISM**

Abstract

In this paper, I examine the discourse on terrorism in the context of contemporary globalization trends. The goal is to test the validity of the hypothesis that the evolving geopolitical landscape is providing an opportunity to expand and deepen the understanding of the concept of “state terrorism.” Bearing in mind the wide implementation of the mechanisms of securitization by states and other actors of international relations aimed at gaining support in public opinion, this paper emphasizes the need to research factual knowledge in place of the securitization policy agenda. The issue stems from manipulative qualifications that fail to establish the truth. The problem lies in qualifications not acquired through procedures that lead to an objective view of reality. Prejudicially selected facts and discourse-contextualized information are postulated as true to support the pre-set qualifications, thus legitimizing strategic goals and justifying certain methods and means of further actions. The goal of this work is to determine potential challenges and important elements that may arise in the process of rational decision-making regarding the promotion of the discourse on terrorism. In the context of the defined problem, this paper first indicates some theoretical models of interpretation of globalization and terrorism, then presents the concept of discourse, and then explores the concept of crisis. The basic method

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applied in the research is functional analysis, while content analysis and discourse analysis are operational methods. The crisis of globalization, as a pivotal global process, unequivocally reveals key aspects that encompass our research focus. It compels us to critically examine the characteristics of theorizing about today's international environment, and consequently, rational decision-making. The obtained results show that globalization flows have expanded the possibilities of terrorist activity due to the multidimensional process of global interdependence (overcoming the time and space component as a key feature of globalization), the universalization of values, the changed character and role of mass and new media, and the enormous progress and expansion of the application of new information technologies. It is concluded that the actualization of the phrase state terrorism is particularly noticeable in the context of armed conflicts in Ukraine. The results we have gathered lay a solid foundation for concluding that the discourse surrounding the armed conflict in Ukraine heralds profound changes on the global stage. This conflict has reshaped the factors that influence the trends in globalization, creating a landscape marked by significant upheaval and realignment of geopolitical and security trends. The key conclusion that was drawn is that overcoming the problem of discourse requires the process of rational decision-making, and, thus, effective setting up and action in an international environment. The overwhelming impression, however, is that the stated setting is difficult to implement in decision-making practice due to the dominant influence of a series of supranational mechanisms, which makes this topic relevant for more in-depth research.

Keywords: narrative, information space, securitization, geopolitical constellations, rational decision-making

INTRODUCTION

Research on the discourse on terrorism is actualized in the context of contemporary globalization trends, especially if the point of view is supported that securitization mechanisms are widely applied at the global level (Ejdus 2012, 106–113) – and on that basis, with the application of the desired methods and means, enables the realization of goals of national and strategic interests. Considering the widely applied securitization mechanisms by states, as well as by other actors in international relations,

aimed at gaining support in public opinion, this paper emphasizes the need for research into factual knowledge instead of the securitization policy agenda.

The aim of the paper is to identify potential challenges and important elements that may arise in the rational decision-making process regarding the placement of discourse on terrorism. In the context of the defined problem, the paper outlines certain theoretical models of interpreting globalization and terrorism, then presents the concept of discourse – with an emphasis on the discourse on terrorism, explores the concept of crisis, and finally, the problem of rational decision-making.

DETERMINATION OF CENTRAL CATEGORIES

Terrorism and state terrorism

We start with the following definitions. First, terrorism is “a complex form of an organized group, and less individual or institutional, political violence, marked not only by physical and psychological intimidation but also sophisticated technological methods of political struggle, as a means with which whoever usually, especially during the political and economic crisis and rarely during economic and political stability of the society, systematically attempt to achieve ‘great goals’ in a morbidly spectacular way, inappropriate to certain conditions, such as social situation or historical possibilities of those who practice it as a political strategy.” (Simeunović 2009, 80). Also, precisely in the context of our topic, it is necessary to know: “The socially threatening description of terrorism includes the threat of force within the framework of intensive psychological and propaganda activities, the misuse of the Internet for terrorist purposes, kidnappings, blackmail, psychophysical abuse, assassinations, sabotage, diversions, suicide attacks, individual and mass political murders and the intention to manifest itself less often against real and potential political opponents, and more often against representatives of the system and innocent victims.” (Simeunović 2009, 80).

Secondly, “[t]he term state terrorism is usually used to refer, with strong moral and political condemnation, to terrorist acts that are organized, instigated, or logistically supported by a state. State terrorism is usually carried out against hostile regimes in order to destabilize or pressure them or to intimidate their own population. It is carried out by members of the intelligence service, special forces, or mercenaries.” (Simeunović 2009, 81).

Globalization and (state) terrorism

It should be pointed out right away: “Globalism is an ideology, globalization is a process, and the new world order is a system.” (Simeunović 2014, 116). Each of the three basic theoretical orientations for understanding the phenomenon of globalization – hyperglobalists, skeptics and transformationists (Held 2003, 48–60) – carries segments of truth, emphasizing with greater or lesser validity certain dimensions of this multivalent phenomenon. Therefore, even when the author of this paper somewhat more strongly supports certain theses of the transformationists,¹ it is necessary to respect different perspectives. Contemporary tectonic shifts that can be interpreted from the perspective of geopolitics and geoeconomics justify long-standing models of analysis of globalization trends: “Thus, the first significant consequence of a globalized economy would be the fundamentally problematic nature of governing it [...] The main difficulty is to create both effective and compatible patterns of national and international state policy in order to master global market forces. The systemic economic interdependence of countries and markets would by no means necessarily lead to harmonious integration in which the world’s consumers would benefit from truly independent, distributedly efficient market mechanisms. On the contrary [...] Then interdependence would readily support *disintegration*, i.e., competition and conflict – between regulatory forces at different levels.” (Hirst i Tompson 2003, 124).

Namely, although it seems that the key factor is “there is no separation without the separatists relying on the greatest powers of the ‘new world order’” (Simeunović 2014, 143), considering all the factors

¹ In the sense that Held conceptualizes them: “[...] Globalization is the central driving force behind the rapid social, political, and economic changes that are reshaping modern societies [...] governments and societies around the world must adapt to a world in which there is no longer a clear division between international and domestic, foreign and domestic affairs [...] However, the existence of a single global system is not taken as evidence of global convergence or the advent of a single world society [...] The global social structure can be represented in the form of three rows of concentric circles that intersect national borders and represent elite, middle, and marginalized strata [...] The reshaping of patterns of global stratification is linked to the growing territorialization of economic activities [...] they argue that a ‘new regime of sovereignty’ has replaced the traditional conception [...] sovereignty can now be understood ‘less as a territorially defined boundary and more as a political bargaining over resources within a complex transnational network’ [...] governments have become more external observers as they follow corporate strategies in creating international regulatory systems“ (Held 2003, 55–60).

that drive tectonic geopolitical shifts requires a much broader scope and deeper analysis, and we highlight: “Globalism sees *nationalism* and the *nation-state* as its main *opponents* [...] However, the main problem arises in the form of *informal resistance*. It is not nation-states that can stop the onslaught of globalization simply because they are a smaller force than the countries that are the bearers of globalism. The problem is created by ethnic and religious *extremists* who position themselves as defenders of *faith and nation*, using violence, primarily in the form of *terrorism*, which has itself become *globalized*.” (Simeunović 2014, 105).

It is clearly shown that globalization trends have expanded the possibilities of terrorist action due to the multidimensional process of global interdependence, overcoming the temporal and spatial components as a key feature of globalization (Vuletić 2006, 19–25; 53; 78–81), then (reactions and resistance to) the universalization of values (Vuletić 2006, 216–228), the changed character and role of mass and new media (Mitić 2020), and the enormous progress and spread of the application of new information technologies.

The problem of terrorism is, moreover, increasingly present in contemporary geopolitical shifts and the global information space as a problem of state terrorism. Let us start from the observation “that the absence of state terrorism from academic discourse functions to promote particular kinds of state hegemonic projects, construct a legitimizing public discourse for foreign and domestic policy, and deflect attention from the terroristic practices by Western states and their allies” (Jackson 2008, 1).

However, state terrorism has been the subject of scientific interest for a long time. Conceptualization comes first (with the refutation of the argument that terrorism is committed only by non-state actors), typologies are analyzed – and it “has been identified as a useful tool for the satisfaction of elite economic interests, including maintaining access to external resources or markets, or the suppression of socially progressive reform movements [...] state terrorism has also been linked to political and strategic interests [...] Thus, it may be employed to destabilize the ruling regime of a competitor state”; also, the framework of analysis consists of “a number of recent studies situating state terrorism within the power relations of the global political economy [...] they refocus the analyst’s gaze away from particular acts of terrorism and toward ‘deeper’ structural and material relations that encourage and facilitate this form of violence [...] present an effort to correct the perceived dominance

of constructivist or discursive analyses within much recent ‘critical’ literature on terrorism” (Jarvis and Lister 2014, 46–48).

Discourse and discourse analysis

The term discourse is complex and fluid, sometimes indefinite, carries a wide range of meanings, and is derived from several sources. The meanings are:

- a mode of social interaction, a communication event (it enables, it is the general framework of communication);
- a system of ideas (a privileged form of spreading ideas) and practices (regulatory practice – implies control, a mode of organization);
- or denotes the discourse of an entity, even an individual;
- a typical, common narrative, mainstream;
- generally accepted conventions and norms, codes, and rules of functioning;
- an institutionally shaped system of statements and practices;
- a space or process in which are created and focused meanings (of social relations) by using symbolic forms – and is a meaningful symbolic activity, encompassing meanings and encompassing sense that is subject to interpretation;
- discourse is the relationship of elements, the choice of sources of meaning, and the way of designing;
- form of expression of a point of view, determining the way in which a certain topic is treated;
- subtext – discourse is not only form but also content because it determines the content;
- socially constructed way of relating and presenting;
- form of social action;
- way of exercising power – expresses one’s power, authority, and dominance;
- way of inclusion and exclusion (Perović 2014; Pavličević 2020, 284–291; Ejđus 2012, 99).

From one theoretical perspective, “discourse analysis aims primarily to illustrate and describe the relationship between textual and social and political processes. It is concerned with the politics of representation – the manifest political or ideological consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another [...] I am concerned with the ways in which state terrorism is represented – or not represented, which is itself a kind

of representation” (Jackson 2008, 2–3). Moreover, discourse analysis encompasses “an understanding of language as constitutive or productive of meaning; an understanding of discourse as structures of signification which construct social realities, particularly in terms of defining subjects and establishing their relational positions within a system of signification; an understanding of discourse as being productive of subjects authorized to speak and act, legitimate forms of knowledge and political practices and importantly, common sense within particular social groups and historical settings; an understanding of discourse as necessarily exclusionary and silencing of other modes of representation; and an understanding of discourse as historically and culturally contingent, inter-textual, open-ended, requiring continuous articulation and re-articulation and therefore, open to destabilisation and counter-hegemonic struggle” (Jackson 2008, 3). The research includes textual analysis, namely:

- an immanent critique that “uses a discourse’s internal contradictions, mistakes, misconceptions, and omissions to criticise it on its own terms and expose the events and perspectives that the discourse fails to acknowledge or address” (Jackson 2008, 3);

- “A second order critique entails reflecting on the broader political and ethical consequences – the ideological effects – of the representations [...] an exploration of the ways in which the discourse functions as a ‘symbolic technology’ that can be wielded by particular elites and institutions, to: structure the primary subject positions, accepted knowledge, commonsense and legitimate policy responses to the actors and events being described; exclude and de-legitimise alternative knowledge and practice; naturalise a particular political and social order; and construct and sustain a hegemonic regime of truth” (Jackson 2008, 4).

Also, note that discursive analysis does not have to be incompatible with other paradigms. It is also noted that discourse is used within a range of “different epistemological paradigms – poststructuralist, postmodernist, feminist, and social constructivist” – making “a set of theoretical commitments” (Jackson 2008, 3).

THE CONCEPT OF CRISIS AND THE UKRAINIAN CRISIS

The crisis in Ukraine is developmental – it is not accidental – it is a set of changes in many spheres within the state of Ukraine – in a compound international context, global interdependencies, and complex

geopolitical constellations, in the sequence of events that led to increasing instability, which ultimately led to a special operation, armed intervention, and war. Concerning the events in Ukraine, one should consider the motives, doctrinal and ideological frameworks, the way of acting of the actors, the influence of a foreign factor, and geopolitical aspirations – which collectively have determined the crisis.

Namely, a crisis is not only a threat and a disruption, a special state and a deviation from the usual (way of functioning), a disruption of the regular sequence, and the collapse of the desired order (as well as the neoliberal global order). A crisis is a reflection, a manifestation of the factors that trigger it. The crisis is made up of causes – the consequences are human reactions – and in the global world of interdependence, the causes are multivalent and complex. When the crisis is deliberately provoked by systematic external and internal factors and influences, the beginning of the crisis is in the projects of its initiation. While the intention is – noticeably by nurturing the discourse of state terrorism – to show that the crisis (of global security, energy, supply chains) was caused (almost) only by a special operation of the Russian Federation or that, on the contrary, it is only a product of the strategic interests of the USA and the Political West. The discourse of the crisis is accompanied by an effort to show that only the Russian Federation (or the USA) aims to achieve geostrategic aspirations – which again indicates that the establishment of the desired new order produces the crisis. The epistemological framework is not only to analyze this crisis as a development of threatening factors, to see destabilizing changes leading to armed conflict – which should then be reacted to according to the principles of securitization, but to show that the order was precisely intended to collapse systematically (inside and outside) to establish the desired new project. Or rather, before new projects – which highlights the objective determinants of the causes of the crisis – because projects are a response to the reality of the global order. The basic problem is recognized in the fact that in some cases (on the occasion of international and domestic events, processes, or trends), qualifications are registered without establishing the factual situation, or that exactly the opposite – based on tendentiously selected facts and discourse-contextualized information – the truth is postulated in a way that supports the securitization agenda (qualifications are in function), and thus influences the further decision-making process, legitimizes further action and strategic action.

The discourse related to state terrorism of the actors involved in the crisis in Ukraine is an indicator, as well as an instrument of strategic projections and a relatively effective mode of action aimed at covering the information space, building public opinion perceptions, and creating a global media image of the adversary (Đorđević i Miljković 2025). It is also the basis for operational action – for example, raising issues in the Security Council, intensifying armed actions, or delivering armed and other assistance (*Politika* 2023).

The crisis in Ukraine is not accidental; it is a result of various changes within the country, influenced by global interdependencies and complex geopolitical factors. This instability has led to armed conflict. To understand the crisis, we need to examine the motives and actions of the involved parties, the impact of foreign influences, and broader geopolitical ambitions. All these elements played a role in shaping the situation. A crisis is more than just a threat or disruption; it reflects the underlying factors that cause it. The causes of the crisis are complex, and when intentionally provoked by internal and external forces, they can often be traced back to the projects that initiated the crisis. Discussions around state terrorism suggest that the crisis in global security and energy arises mainly from Russia's actions or the strategic interests of the U.S. and the West. This narrative implies that only certain countries aim to achieve geostrategic goals, indicating that the current order may have been designed to create this crisis.

We should not only view the crisis as an outcome of threatening factors or armed conflicts needing securitization. Instead, we should recognize that the existing order may have been set up to collapse, paving the way for new projects that respond to the realities of the global situation. A significant issue arises when international and domestic events are evaluated without a factual basis. There are also instances where selectively chosen facts support a narrative that aligns with a securitization agenda, impacting decision-making and legitimizing further actions. *Discourse is not only a carrier of meaning but also a geopolitical, geostrategic instrument. Therefore, the discourse on terrorism will also change (focusing on new targets, simultaneously producing and reflecting problems) in correlation with changes in the global power structure, strategic positions, and goals.*

CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE ABOUT STATE TERRORISM: UKRAINE CASE

The *expansion of the conceptual scope of the syntagm state terrorism* in global discourse is evident if we accept the view that the discourse on Ukraine has exceptional significance and influence on a global level. *Expanding the conceptual scope of the syntagm state terrorism concerns both the content and scope of the term – when its use is analyzed in the context of the goals sought to be achieved in a global context.*

To support the above statement we remind ourselves of the global importance of the Ukrainian conflict. Namely, based on the conclusions from the analysis of the discourse related to the mentioned conflict, they try to show the possible global outcomes, i.e., the possible impact of the change in the discourse on terrorism that accompanies the Ukrainian crisis.²

Ergo, the content and characteristics of the discourse framing the crisis and the armed conflict in Ukraine are determined by several research findings: First, *the discourse on terrorism is extremely polarized due to geopolitical interests* – which causes geopolitical aspects to be tied to the phenomenon of terrorism, both causes and consequences (cf. *Novine Info* 2023; *Espresso* 2022f; Mitrović Rašević 2022a); secondly, *current strategic interests determine the narrative*.³ Moreover, in understandable foreign policy calculations, *the narrative is often covered by humanitarian reasons*;⁴ the third basis for our initial claim is *mutual accusations of state terrorism between Ukrainian and Russian officials are an implied*

² The author notes that he did not form a representative research sample; a comprehensive analysis was conducted on news articles, reports, and announcements from various newspapers. Although not every relevant source is listed in this paper, it's important to emphasize that the media often featured authoritative statements from officials and official state bodies, including those from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the USA and the EU. Insights from leading scientists specializing in terrorism were also included. Furthermore, I consulted significant scientific discourse on the subject, ensuring a well-rounded examination of the issue.

³ For example: "Interestingly, the New York Times reported last week that the Ukrainian government was responsible for the murder of Darya Dugina and that the US had no involvement in the attack, either by providing intelligence or other assistance, and that it was not aware of official Kiev's intentions because it would have opposed it." (Mitrović Rašević 2022b).

⁴ For example: Powell 2022.

topos;⁵ fourth, *when the aim is to enhance meaning, change the character of news, or mitigate media damage and failure, state terrorism qualifies as nuclear terrorism* (Walz 2022), energy terrorism (Nedeljnik.rs 2022; Beta 2022), and the phrase telephone terrorism also appears (Sputnik 2019) – and even it *reveals geopolitical constellations* (Aloonline.ba 2022b); fifth, *actions of the armed forces are characterized as terrorism*.⁶

Let us turn to the final statement, where we analyse the following points: Attacks on strategically important sites, such as the Kursk nuclear power plant and the Crimean Bridge, are of particular significance. These locations symbolize essential strategic points, delineate borders, and serve as grounds for potential retaliation.⁷ The dissemination of specific information affects the formation of values, cognitive patterns, and the perception of state-sponsored terrorism, including the targeting of its perpetrators. The discourse has clearly revealed the relationships and interests at play, both geopolitical and geoeconomic, particularly in connection with the diversion of the Nord Stream pipeline.⁸

Namely, *the Russian special military operation was very quickly characterized as state terrorism, with the inclusion and emphasis of assessments of war crimes by the Russian armed forces*. Accusations of war crimes in Bucha have been in focus since the beginning of the armed conflict, with the construction of a dichotomous model of crime and justice.⁹ *The narrative becomes the basis and calls for strategic gathering* (Espresso 2022d). At the same time, within the framework of strategic reactions, *efforts that publicly and officially stated qualifications, supported by “evidence” placed by intelligence services*, are noticeable (Espresso 2022c). *The absence of answers and reactions to questions that cast doubt on the information presented is characteristic*.¹⁰ The designated reporting model – which includes official statements such as

⁵ For example: “Russia’s only strategy is terrorism” (Aktuelno 2023) versus “Ukraine has chosen terrorism instead of peace, said Russian President Vladimir Putin” (BN 2016).

⁶ For example: “The Ukrainian Defense Ministry shared an image on the social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter), showing the damage caused by a Russian drone strike in the Chernihiv region. “Their only strategy is terrorism,” the ministry said.” (Al Jazeera 2023).

⁷ See: Mitrović Rašević 2022b; Reuters 2023; FoNet 2023.

⁸ See: Sputnik 2023; Novinska agencija Republike Srpske [SRNA] 2023; Bilten.rs 2022; Okvir 2023; RT Balkan 2023; RT Balkan 2024.

⁹ For example: Espresso 2022e.; Espresso 2022g.

¹⁰ For example: Aloonline.ba 2022a; Espresso 2022a; Espresso 2022b.

„EU: Russia’s attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine are terrorism“ (Anadolu Agency [AA] 2022) – is a particularly effective mode since the global public does not have relevant information to assess, nor is it intended to broadcast it.

Neither the public nor the discourse analysis requires verification of truthfulness – what matters is the effect and achieving the goal of demonizing the enemy. As Jackson points out, immanent critique of discourse is carried out with the aim not necessarily “to establish the ‘correct’ or ‘real truth’ of the subject beyond doubt, but rather to destabilise dominant interpretations and demonstrate the inherently contested and political nature of the discourse” (Jackson 2008, 3). Additionally, as Jackson warns: “It is crucial to recognise that discourses are significant not just for what they say but also for what they do not say; the silences in a discourse can be as important, or even more important at times, than what is openly stated” (Jackson 2008, 4).

Here we recall one of the definitions of state terrorism: “It is similar to non-state terrorism in that it involves politically or ideologically or religiously inspired acts of violence against individuals or groups outside of an armed conflict. The key difference is that agents of the state are carrying out the violence.” (Hewitt n.d.). Thus, the contemporary discourse on state terrorism knows no bounds “*outside of an armed conflict.*”

However, we need to indicate that “the term ‘state terrorism’ entered scientific circulation after the 102nd plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on 17 December 1984, where the Resolution ‘Inadmissibility of the policy of State terrorism and any actions by States aimed at undermining the socio-political system in other sovereign States’ was adopted.” (Krupenya and Podriez 2023, 248). The following statements and assessments are certainly not surprising, keeping in mind the authors’ affiliations: “The Geneva declaration on terrorism indicates that state terrorism manifests itself in: police state practices against its own people [...] (e.g. in the case of Russia – kidnapping and killing of Crimean Tatar activists in Russian-occupied Crimea [...]); the introduction or transportation of nuclear weapons by a state into or through the territory or territorial waters of other states or into international waters (e.g., Russia has deployed 39 nuclear weapons carriers on the territory of occupied Crimea); military exercise manoeuvres or war games conducted by one state in the vicinity of another state for the purpose of threatening the political independence or territorial integrity of that other state [...]; the armed attack by the military forces of a state

on targets that put at risk the civilian population residing in another state (e.g., the bombings of Mariupol, Irpin, Bucha and other cities of Ukraine), the creation and support of armed mercenary forces by a state for the purpose of subverting the sovereignty of another state (e.g., Private Military Company Wagner funding by Russia); assassinations, assassination attempts and plots directed by a state towards officials of other states or national liberation movements, whether carried out by a military strike, special forces units either through covert operations by ‘intelligence forces’ or their third party agents (e.g., since the beginning of the largescale war, Russian special services have attempted 12 times to assassinate the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy); covert operations by the ‘intelligence’ or other forces of a state which intend to destabilize or subvert another state, national liberation movements or the international peace movement (e.g., the Russian dictator announced the start of a ‘special military operation’ against the ‘Kyiv regime’ rather than a war against Ukraine); disinformation campaigns by a state, whether intended to destabilize another state or to build public support for economic, political or military force or intimidation directed against another state [...]; arms sales which support the continuation of regional wars and delay the search for political solutions to international disputes (e.g., since 2014, Russia has openly supported the armed formations of the terrorist organizations ‘DPR’ (Donetsk People’s Republic) and ‘LPR’ (Lugansk People’s Republic).” (Krupenya and Podriez 2023, 248–249).

When we look back at some of them, including the statement from the quote above (related to ‘DPR’ and ‘LPR’), without entering deeper analysis, it seems important to recall some provisions from General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX), Definition of Aggression, Adopted by General Assembly, 2319 plenary meeting from December 14, 1974: “Article I: Aggression is the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, as set out in this Definition. [...] Article 3 [...]: (a) The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack, or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof, (b) Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State; [...] (g) The sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or

mercenaries, which carry out acts of armed force against another State of such gravity as to amount to the acts listed above, or its substantial involvement therein.” (UNGA, A/RES/3314(XXIX)).

We note that the same (violent) acts or (armed) actions that are often labeled as terrorist in the discourse related to Ukraine are constructed by invoking the Geneva Declaration. Some of the acts defined in this instrument should be differentiated from the acts of aggression defined in the General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX).

A simple theoretical starting point for the distinction would be the goals of the activity, the perpetrators, and then the targets. It is difficult to argue that the basis for the distinction will always be political motivation among terrorists because geopolitical motivations are necessarily present in military strategic (and even tactical) actions. It is perhaps easier to distinguish the bearers of the activity, but only at first glance – not only because of special operations and false flag actions. The problem is also when it is not easy to separate citizens under the pressure of terror from the same citizens when they engage in armed actions and establish ties with foreign services in order to defend themselves from terror. It is also clear that in the Ukrainian conflict, we register “The sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries.” (UNGA, A/RES/3314(XXIX), Article 3). They participate in armed acts; thus, their political motifs and causing fear are irrelevant to their actions; on the contrary, their actions follow the military goals.

Thus, we conclude that public international law is necessarily within the framework of great power policies, while the modes of implementation depend on the circumstances and options for realizing geostrategic interests. The discourse on terrorism here fluctuates between aggression and terrorism depending on the moment and the narrator, obviously expanding its content.

Discourse frames and the accompanying narrative have *almost vulgarized communication between great powers*.¹¹ The construction of a certain narrative about terrorism aims to produce fear (as do the actions of terrorists themselves), but here, terrorism portrayed in the media as state violence is only an intermediate link in the information space within the framework of a strategic approach, with the main goal of mobilizing for action. Not only are certain state behavior and acts qualified as terrorism but the state, its policies, and especially the actions of the armed forces are labeled as terrorism. This is not such a new

¹¹ For example: *Beta* 2014; *Logično.com* 2023.

strategy, nor is it even so new that such a discourse has become necessary. Using the qualification of state terrorism linked to the above-mentioned frameworks of state actions is a communication act (as is terrorism itself), but in global communication state actions become primarily a violent criminal form (and then qualify as a war crime) of strategic enemies – where the emphasis is on the state and not on terrorism.

RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING

Rational decision-making must respect the irrational determinants in the actions of the actors involved. This requirement is particularly necessary in the response to terrorism due to the nature of this phenomenon and its carriers, as well as when the discourse on terrorism is a strategic instrument – because strategies can also have irrational elements.

The problem of control (of crisis) and decision-making (concerning it) must be transformed into an effort to achieve a model of coordination accompanied with the rules (which strive for law) whose scope of validity will be not only the respect of power but also of interests to the limits that indicate the collapse of the security of the actors involved. In the current geopolitical constellations, the power game for the establishment of general rules is the direction in which the unipolar world is likely to change. Respect for multiple poles (the areas of control bearers) and centres of power is the direction.

The discourse on terrorism reflects the need to resolve many problems at the global level in several areas (economy, finance, energy, sustainable development, the character and effectiveness of international institutions, international law, and international security). The extremes in understanding discourse are whether discourse is socially determined or creates order. Specifically in the field of terrorism, it seems sustainable judgment that discourse exerts an influence on identities, social and political relations, beliefs, and systems of understanding reality – with the knowledge that it is simultaneously a practice of representing and constructing reality. However, constructing only one segment of reality, with the awareness that it occasionally gains great importance. Rational decision-making must accompany discourse as a regulatory practice – but in contrast to the targeting produced by the agenda and discourse of securitization, it is necessary to adopt a perspective that emphasizes the need for research into factual knowledge based on clear and proven procedures for establishing truth. Obviously, there's growing importance

of artificial intelligence whose multiple uses we are registering in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict (Đorić i Glišin 2023).

CONCLUSION

This work is preliminary research – this is because “Employing a ‘grounded theory’ approach, the analysis was considered complete when the addition of new texts did not yield any new insights or categories” (Jackson 2008, 3) – its limitation is that it only provides some research guidelines. However, the validity of the basic research problem was confirmed, and further possible problems were indicated. The results obtained provided good *initial grounds* for confirming the validity of the initial hypothesis: that current geopolitical shifts have influenced the actualization of the scientific applicability and expansion of the conceptual scope of the syntagm state terrorism in global discourse. Also, the analysis led to the conclusion that the actualization of the syntagm state terrorism is particularly noticeable in the context of the armed conflict in Ukraine, and that the discourse related to the armed conflict in Ukraine signifies tectonic shifts on the international stage and significantly changed determinants that determine globalization trends.

The key conclusion is that overcoming the discourse problem requires multi-sectoral involvement in the rational decision-making process and, thus, effective action in the international environment. However, it seems that the above-mentioned position is difficult to implement in decision-making practice due to the dominant influence of a number of supranational mechanisms, which makes this topic relevant for more in-depth research.

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ГЛОБАЛИЗАЦИЈА, КРИЗА И ДИСКУРС О ТЕРОРИЗМУ**

Резиме

У раду се истражује дискурс о тероризму у контексту савремених глобализацијских токова. Проверава се основаност хипотезе да су актуелна геополитичка померања утицала на актуализовање научне примењивости и ширење појмовног опсега синтагме државни тероризам у глобалном дискурсу. Проблем је препознат у чињеници да се у низу случаја јављају квалификације без утврђивања чињеничног стања на основу јасних и проверених поступака утврђивања истине – напротив, тенденциозно изабраним чињеницама и дискурсно-контекстуализованим информацијама постулира се истина тако да подржава коришћене квалификације, чиме се легитимишу стратешки циљеви и оправдавају одређени методи и средства даљег деловања. Циљ рада је да се утврде потенцијални изазови и битни елементи који се могу јавити у поступку рационалног одлучивања поводом пласирања дискурса о тероризму. Основни метод примењен у истраживању је функционална анализа, док су анализа садржаја докумената и анализа дискурса основни оперативни методи. Тачније, назначују се неки аспекти у којима се испољава криза глобализације као глобалног процеса да би се истраживачка пажња усмерила на истраживање карактеристика феномена теоризма у савременом међународном окружењу, и на крају проблем рационалног одлучивања. Добијени резултати показује да су глобализацијски токови проширили могућности терористичког деловања услед вишедимензионалног процеса глобалне међузависности, универзализације вредности, промењеног карактера и улоге масовних и нових медија, огромног

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** Основне идеје изложене у овом апстракту присутне су и у Aleksandar Lukić, pr. 2023. *Knjiga apstrakata Srpski filozofski simpozijum SOFOS Filozofija i sloboda, Trebinje, 29.6–2.7.2023.* Beograd: Srpsko filozofsko društvo i Institut za političke studije.

напретка и ширења примене нових информатичких технологија, да је актуализовање синтагме државни тероризам посебно уочљиво у контексту оружаних сукоба у Украјини – који означавају тектонска померања на међународној сцени и битно измењене детерминанте које одређују глобализацијске токове, а да превазилажење проблема дискурса налаже мултисекторско укључивање у процесу рационалног одлучивања и тиме ефикасно постављање и деловање у међународном окружењу.

Кључне речи: наратив, информациони простор, секуритизација, геополитичке констелације, рационално одлучивање

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ENERGY SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY – POLAND’S POWER SECTOR CASE

Abstract

Ensuring a nation’s energy security is crucial to its overall functioning. The current geopolitical realities have clearly undermined the energy stability of many European countries, including Poland. Moreover, the complicated international situation has made the process of modernization and energy transformation difficult. Poland has been implementing decarbonization for many years, which involves the gradual abandonment of hydrocarbons in favor of low- and zero-emission energy sources. One of the initiatives strengthening energy security is also increasing the efficiency of the power sector. In this case, not only the modernization and reconstruction of the electricity generation structure, but also the transmission grids are necessary. Reducing the energy intensity of the economy remains an important priority of the energy policy not only for Poland but also for every developing country. This paper aims to explore the Polish electricity sector in relation to its significance for national security and the urgent requirement to boost energy efficiency in the years ahead. The findings suggest that establishing new energy sectors is essential; without dynamizing modernization and decarbonization of the power sector, achieving a stable and efficient energy system will be difficult to achieve.

Keywords: energy security, energy efficiency, Poland, power sector, energy transformation

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INTRODUCTION

Energy transformation is a serious challenge not only for Poland but also for many other countries that are characterized by an outdated energy system. In such countries, the energy sector is often based on one dominant source, which is fossil fuels. In Poland, coal has been such a source for decades, and in recent years, it has provided as much as 60-70% of electricity production (Dusiło 2024, 35). Unfortunately, coal is becoming unprofitable, especially in the context of the EU's climate policy being implemented. Poland has been decarbonizing its energy sector for many years now, but these actions are too slow. It must not be forgotten that this is due to the fact that Polish coal resources are very large, and the coal industry is well-developed. Thus, coal was and still is the most important source for the power industry and the country's energy security. Maintaining high coal production is associated with decreasing efficiency, which is why the Polish energy strategy indicates the need for a deep reconstruction of the electricity generation structure. Initially, decarbonization is to take place by increasing the consumption of natural gas, and then coal and other fossil fuels are to be reduced in favor of renewable energy sources. The leading role in this process is to be played by wind energy, especially offshore, but also by another sector that does not exist yet – nuclear energy. Investments under consideration will contribute to improving energy security and promoting energy efficiency in Poland.

This paper aims to explore the Polish electricity sector in relation to its significance for national security and the urgent requirement to boost energy efficiency in the years ahead. The findings suggest that establishing new energy sectors is essential; without dynamizing modernization and decarbonization of the power sector, achieving a stable and efficient energy system will be difficult to achieve.

The first part of the article refers to the theoretical aspect of the energy security and efficiency concepts. Then, the current state of the Polish power industry is discussed, with an emphasis on the structure of electricity generation and challenges resulting from its operation. The next part of the text refers to improving energy efficiency in the context of security in the power sector in Poland. Attention is drawn to key projects aimed at ensuring energy security while increasing efficiency in the process of transformation of the Polish energy sector.

ENERGY SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Energy security has recently become an important field of national activity. In this context, we cannot forget that awareness of society increases and, therefore, the pressure on political makers grows. Therefore, authorities in individual countries are taking intensive measures to ensure the proper functioning of the economy. It is obvious that without effective power engineering, the state is unable to carry out its tasks. With the above in mind, it is essential to make a few theoretical remarks relating to energy security. In scientific and specialist literature, one can find many definitions of the above concept, and their differentiation is the result of a multidimensional approach. When short-term perspectives are taken into account, issues related to the risk of interruption of energy carrier supplies by major producers are evaluated, among other things. It is defined differently in the scope of discussions on long-term issues, such as the depletion of raw material reserves and the increase in their prices. In this connection, it should be emphasized at the outset that there is no single universally accepted definition of energy security. This concept is so broad that it would be highly difficult and also pointless to attempt to capture it in some synthetic, universal form. Nevertheless, one can identify many valuable attempts to explain what energy security is. It is most often defined as providing energy in the right quantity and quality at economically justified prices (Yergin 1988, 111; Kalicki and Goldwyn 2005, 9; Bordoff, Deshpande, and Noel 2009, 214; Hebda 2019, 17–24). At this point, it is also worth referring to the definition proposed by the International Energy Agency (IEA), in the light of which energy security is understood through the implementation of the so-called four factors: availability (the ability to ensure constant and sufficient access to energy, both quantitatively and qualitatively), affordability (ensuring that energy costs are at a level that makes it accessible to all social and economic groups), acceptability (the ability to meet social needs and expectations in the field of energy security) and responsibility (ensuring the responsibility of countries and other entities in the energy sector for their actions and decisions in order to ensure security) (Strojny *et al.* 2023, 11).

It is worth noting that in recent decades, special attention has been paid to environmental protection, which also reflects European tendencies to perceive energy security through an ecological prism.

This view is consistent with the European Green Deal, in which energy security is understood as the provision of clean and affordable energy (European Commission [EC] 2019). This is not a universal concept because there are many countries that place particular emphasis on the economics (profitability) of their energy sector, ignoring threats to the natural environment. Undoubtedly, energy security in the 21st century will continue to be understood from the perspective of realizing the vital interests of individual countries, which is why it will be difficult to ensure it from a regional, and even more so global, perspective.

Energy efficiency is defined as the ratio of obtained results, services, goods, or energy to energy input (European Parliament, Council of the European Union [EP, CEU] 2012). Efficient use of energy aims to reduce the amount of energy needed to provide products and services. In other words, reducing energy consumption and reducing energy losses are the main goals of energy efficiency, and improving energy efficiency consists of increasing the use of final energy thanks to technological, economic, or behavioral changes of all energy users (Gillingham, Newell, and Palmer 2009, 597–600). Energy efficiency is a concept with a broad meaning and can apply to both energy consumers and producers. The most popular projects in the field of increasing energy efficiency by energy recipients include, among others, modernization of heating installations, heat recovery from industrial processes, modernization of heating boilers, thermal modernization of buildings, energy-efficient lighting of rooms and public spaces, energy-saving devices, electrification of vehicles. In the case of energy producers, we are talking primarily about electricity, which is why efficiency is understood as reducing losses incurred in the process of its production and distribution. In this context, energy efficiency is associated not only with the modernization of power plants and transmission grids but, above all, with increasing the share of low-emission or zero-emission sources in electricity production (Jaffe, Newell, and Stavins 2004, 79–83). This means decarbonization, i.e., abandoning fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy sources and nuclear energy. As can be seen, similarly to the case of energy security, energy efficiency (especially in highly developed countries) is understood through the modernization of the energy sector towards modern technologies that are conducive to the natural environment.

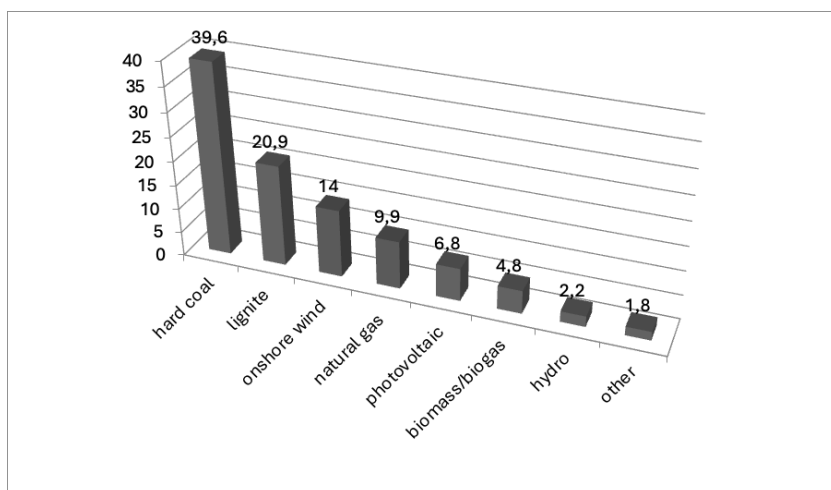
POLAND'S POWER SECTOR – CURRENT STATUS

Poland has been modernizing its power sector for many years, primarily in the direction of increased diversification of strategic fossil fuels (Hebda 2021, 3; Wierzbowski, Filipiak, and Lyzwa 2017, 55–59). During this period, significant dependence on the Russian Federation was noticeable, which is why intensive investments were made in infrastructure that would allow for greater diversification of suppliers of oil and natural gas (Hebda 2022, 177–182). The opening of the LNG terminal in Świnoujście in 2016 and the systematic increase in the transshipment capacity of Naftoport in Gdańsk were certainly of key importance for the diversification of hydrocarbon supplies. Thanks to these investments, Poland could import natural gas and crude oil from any country by sea. Despite the growing number of investments in the fossil fuel sector and renewable energy sources (RES), the Polish power industry at the end of 2023 was still characterized by the dominance of coal. This raw material (hard coal and lignite) accounted for as much as 60.5% of electricity production (Dusiło 2024, 33). However, it should be noted that over the last dozen or so years, the use of coal has generally been decreasing (in 2010: 86.6%, in 2021: 71.2%) (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska, Agencja Rynku Energii S.A. [MKS, ARE] 2022, 71). The opposite trend can be seen in the natural gas sector, which met about 10% of electricity demand in 2023 (Dusiło 2024, 33). Natural gas consumption has increased significantly compared to previous years, not only in the power industry but also in households (which is a result of intensive gasification and the replacement of coal boilers with gas boilers). Unfortunately, Polish natural gas resources can only meet about 20% of demand, which is why the remaining quantities are imported (until 2022, mainly from Russia, currently from Norway, Qatar, and the USA) (Hebda 2024, 2–4). In terms of fossil fuels, we cannot forget about crude oil, which, although not used by Polish power plants (apart from the CHP plant in Płock), is a key raw material for transport.

Poland's energy transformation is taking place not only through the increased use of natural gas but primarily through renewable energy sources, which are to replace fossil fuels in the next few decades (Hassan, Manowska, and Kienberger 2025, 654–657). The dynamics of the green energy sector are evidenced by the fact that in the energy mix in 2011, it accounted for less than 10% (Główny Urząd Statystyczny [GUS] 2012, 62), while in 2023, it was already 25% (GUS 2024, 30). The largest increase in

generating capacity was achieved in wind energy (especially in the years 2010-2016) and solar energy (after 2018) (GUS 2021, 37). In 2023, onshore wind farms provided 14%, photovoltaics 6.8%, biomass, and biogas (including biomass co-firing) 4.8%, and hydropower plants (including pumped-storage) 2.2% of electricity (Dusiło 2024, 33). Undoubtedly, the greatest contribution to the development of green energy was made by investments in wind energy, which is a consequence not only of technological progress but also of the considerable potential located in Poland (Hebda, Leśniak, and Stolorz 2025, 197–199).

Figure 1. Structure of electricity generation by source in 2023 (in percent)



Source: author based on (Dusiło 2024)

IMPROVING ENERGY SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE POWER SECTOR OF POLAND

In relation to the climate and energy goals for 2030, the European Union has maintained the priority importance of energy efficiency, committing to 32.5% energy savings at the EU level compared to forecasts, with different contributions from Member States (EP, CEU 2018). Poland belongs to the group of countries that, due to the electricity sector still dominated by the coal sector, need more time to transform. Based on the analysis of the effects and impact on GDP and the savings potential, the Polish energy policy has set a national target for improving energy efficiency by 2030 at the level of 23% in relation to the forecasts of

primary energy consumption developed by the European Commission in 2007 (Ministry of National Assets [MNA] 2019, 29). It is worth noting here that the Polish economy has recorded a reduction in energy intensity by approx. 30% over the last three decades (Ministry of Climate and Environment of the Republic of Poland [MCERP] 2021a, 74).

Improving energy efficiency also indirectly affects energy security due to the reduced demand for fuels and energy and the import of raw materials. The undertaking of pro-efficiency activities has been proven to result in a reduction of energy consumption and more flexible utilisation of energy resources. The priority goal is to minimize the impact of the energy sector on the environment by reducing emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases, reducing the exploitation of domestic resources, and reducing waste and their reuse in a circular flow (MNA 2019, 21–50). In the power sector, it is assumed that the efficiency of existing conventional sources will be improved, as well as the efficiency of electricity generation and distribution (Khatib 2012, 334–339). In addition, there are plans to increase production from renewable energy sources, but also from distributed energy sources. Energy storage and the use of intelligent solutions will be of great importance (Lepszy 2020).

One of the pillars of Polish energy policy, among others in the scope of improving efficiency, is to achieve a low-emission energy system understood by reducing its emission intensity. Thus, it is planned to implement nuclear energy and offshore wind energy and increase the role of distributed energy while ensuring energy security through the transitional use of energy technologies based on, among others, natural gas (Hebda 2021, 5–6; 17).

In order to implement the above-mentioned process, it is necessary to expand the electricity generation and grid infrastructure. In this respect, Poland will strive to meet its energy demand with its own resources wherever possible. Although domestic coal deposits will remain an important element of Poland's energy security, the increase in demand will be covered by sources other than conventional coal-fired power. "The share of coal in the structure of energy consumption will reach no more than 56% in 2030, and with increased prices of CO₂ emission allowances, it may even drop to 37.5%" (MCERP 2021a, 8). Ultimately, coal will be completely phased out by 2050, but this is dependent on the geopolitical situation. The development of renewable energy sources, with a particular focus on photovoltaic and wind energy, will be key to decarbonisation. The level of RES in the structure of domestic electricity consumption will

be no less than 32% in 2030, but the implementation of this goal must be correlated with the development of network infrastructure, energy storage technologies, and the expansion of gas units (MNA 2019, 26–28). The implementation of nuclear energy in the 2030s will certainly be of great importance in this respect. As a result of the investment, an electricity system will be built based on low- and zero-emission sources (MCERP 2021a, 8).

As mentioned earlier, the implementation of nuclear energy is assumed to be part of the scope of the expansion of the electricity generation infrastructure. Thus, this issue has once again found itself among the goals of the Polish energy policy (previously in the Energy Policy of Poland until 2030). It is worth adding that the first attempts to launch the nuclear sector in Poland date back to the 1970s and 1980s. After the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, the construction of the first nuclear power plant in Żarnowiec was suspended, and this investment was not resumed. The current nuclear energy development program assumes the commissioning of 6 nuclear units by 2043. The planned launch of the first nuclear unit has been set for 2035 (originally, it was supposed to be 2033); however, due to the current delays related to the start of the investment, it is indicated that this date will be postponed to the second half of the 2030s. The launch of new production capacities involving nuclear power plants will allow for balancing Polish electricity needs in connection with the decommissioning of coal-fired power plants. As a result, the stability of electricity generation will be ensured, and importantly, with zero air pollution emissions. A significant part of the nuclear program will be implemented with the participation of Polish companies (Hebda and Miśik 2024, 9–10).

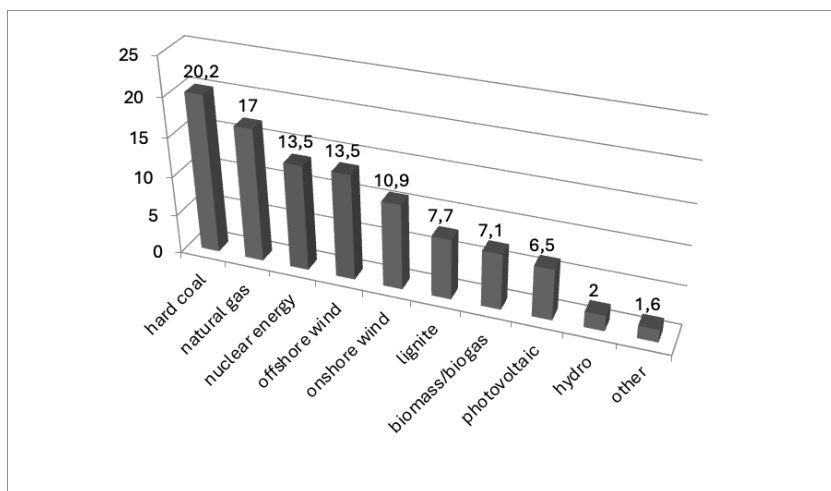
Certainly, another goal, which is the development of renewable energy sources, is of great importance in the context of achieving zero-emission energy. From a technological point of view, the growth in the importance of green energy is to be ensured primarily by offshore wind farms (Sawulski, Gałczyński, and Zajdler 2019) and photovoltaics (Błaszczuk, Matuszak-Flejszman, and Nawrocki 2024). The focus on these two sources is indicative of Poland's potential in the field of wind and solar energy, which is more advantageous than other renewable energy sources, such as geothermal energy. It is also worth mentioning here that thanks to RES, it will be possible to achieve a higher level of distributed energy (through the development of local infrastructure),

which will relieve the currently functioning centralized energy and affect its higher efficiency (MCERP 2021a, 10).

The flagship project will be the implementation of Baltic Power, which involves putting into operation one of the largest offshore wind farms in Europe. This investment includes the construction of 76 wind turbines with a total capacity of 1.2 GW at a distance of approx. 20 km from the coastline of the Baltic Sea. It is worth emphasizing that the generation capacity of offshore wind farms is planned to increase to 11 GW by 2040, which will significantly “increase the share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix” (Nawrot and Manowska 2024, 6). Photovoltaics is being developed in parallel, and its current potential is already over 21 GW, but due to its very large dispersion (micro-installations constitute approx. 19 GW) and low efficiency (resulting from the lack of an appropriate transmission grid and limited energy storage capabilities), it generates relatively small amounts of electricity (Rynek energetyczny 2025). Thus, it is planned to put emphasis on investments in medium and large solar power plants. In addition, taking into account the huge potential of agriculture and forestry, the development of the biomass sector will be accelerated (Wyszomierski *et al.* 2025, 15). Currently, wood biomass and agro biomass are used, among others, in combined heat and power plants, especially in small and medium-sized installations.

The Polish energy policy until 2040 predicts that the power sector will undergo a profound transformation in the next fifteen years. In fact, coal will still be an important source (totalling about 28% of electricity generation) in 2040, but not at the current high level (Sobczyk and Sobczyk 2021, 11). The importance of natural gas will increase (17%); however, considering the current EU policy towards this raw material, it may turn out that the development in this sector will not be as impressive (Hebda 2024, 11). Two emerging energy sectors, namely offshore wind farms and nuclear power plants, are poised to assume paramount significance in the energy transition. These sectors are projected to contribute 13.5% to the total decarbonization efforts, underscoring their potential role in shaping the energy landscape. In the remaining sectors, it is assumed that the potential for electricity generation will be maintained, i.e., onshore wind turbines (10.9%), biomass (7.1%), and PV installations (6.5%) will support the Polish transformation of the power industry (MCERP 2021b, 24). Developing a more diversified structure of electricity generation will ensure the security and stability of the country, but will also significantly increase energy efficiency.

Figure 2. Planned structure of electricity generation by source in 2040
(in percent)



Source: author based on (MCERP 2021b, 24)

The expansion of the transmission infrastructure is also of great importance for the efficiency of the energy sector, which will allow the evacuation of power from existing and new sources (including wind and nuclear power) and improvement of the reliability of supply, as well as the increase of the possibilities of cross-border exchange while maintaining the principle of self-sufficiency of generating capacity in Poland (Dołęga 2018, 95–100). Developments in distribution systems, such as grid reconstruction and medium-voltage network cabling, will improve the quality of supplies to end consumers. This means that energy supply interruptions will be shorter. In addition, investments will contribute to the gradual transition of the passive (one-way) grid into an active (bi-way) network (MCERP 2021a, 9).

In order to enhance the efficacy of operations in emergency scenarios, a digital communication system between distribution system operators is to be established. Furthermore, the infrastructure is to be equipped with control devices. In addition, smart power grids will be implemented to integrate the behaviors and activities of all entities and users connected to them (MCERP 2021a, 9). The necessity for the development of energy storage technologies is becoming increasingly apparent for three principal reasons. Firstly, the volume of RES connected to the distribution and transmission grid is growing. Secondly, the

importance of distributed energy is growing. Thirdly, the profile of electricity consumption is changing, including the development of electromobility (MCERP 2021a, 44). Energy storage is a key component in the integration of RES with the power grid (Denholm *et al.* 2010). Renewable energy, like solar or wind energy, is often unstable and variable depending on weather conditions. Energy storage allows for capturing surplus energy generated during periods of intense sunlight or strong wind. The use of energy storage from renewable sources includes various technologies, e.g., electrochemical batteries (lithium-ion, lead-acid), which store energy in the form of chemical energy in a battery or pumped hydroelectric power plants, which use excess energy to pump water to a reservoir located at a higher level, and when necessary, this water flows back through turbines (Pawłowicz and Jasinowski 2025). Considering the underdeveloped hydropower industry in Poland and the large dispersion of renewable sources, batteries are a more effective source of energy storage.

When considering the issue of energy efficiency, the hydrogen sector cannot be ignored. The Polish hydrogen strategy until 2030, with a perspective until 2040, involves establishing a hydrogen economy from scratch. This will be achieved by implementing hydrogen technologies in the energy and heating sectors, supporting the decarbonisation of industry, and providing an alternative fuel for transport (MCERP 2021c, 3–4). Currently, projects are being implemented to increase the use of hydrogen in transport, including the purchase of hydrogen buses for public transport. In the coming years, the aim of the project will be to create so-called hydrogen valleys, which will allow the construction of a comprehensive hydrogen economy through the production, transport, storage, and final use of hydrogen in industry. Investment projects will be carried out in the valleys, which will contribute to cooperation between local, national and foreign stakeholders (Dowejko 2023, 1922–1926).

CONCLUSIONS

Ensuring energy security in the current geopolitical realities is a significant challenge for most European countries. It should be noted that energy security is associated with the need to transform the power sector, which in the case of many countries is related to decarbonization. This means reducing the consumption of hydrocarbons, i.e., coal, oil, and natural gas in favor of low- or zero-emission energy

sources. Systematic improvement of energy efficiency is certainly also crucial in the modernization process. It will not only reduce energy consumption (energy intensity of the economy) but also reduce energy losses (especially in the distribution of electricity). Poland is one of the countries experiencing profound economic and social changes in recent years. The energy transformation has clearly accelerated, which has increased the threat to maintaining the stability of the power sector. Particular attention is being paid to balancing the generating capacities of Polish power plants. This is the result of the consistent withdrawal from coal in connection with the development of renewable energy sources and planned nuclear power. Hydrocarbons will continue to be an important source for the Polish power industry over the next two decades, but their role will clearly decrease. It seems that investments in wind energy and the launch of a new sector – nuclear energy – are to be the most important undertakings towards ensuring security and increasing energy efficiency. To this end, it is necessary to expand the transmission grids, increase the capacity for energy storage and put hydrogen valleys to use. Achieving the assumed goals will certainly strengthen the Polish power sector, especially in the context of growing social needs and political and economic uncertainty in the region.

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ЕНЕРГЕТСКА БЕЗБЕДНОСТ И ЕФИКАСНОСТ – СЛУЧАЈ ПОЉСКОГ СЕКТОРА ЕЛЕКТРИЧНЕ ЕНЕРГИЈЕ

Резиме

Обезбеђивање енергетске безбедности једне нације је кључно за њено целокупно функционисање. Тренутне геополитичке реалности су очигледно поткопале енергетску стабилност многих европских земаља, укључујући и Пољску. Штавише, компликована међународна ситуација је отежала процес модернизације и енергетске трансформације. Пољска већ годинама спроводи декарбонизацију, што подразумева постепено напуштање угљоводоника у корист извора енергије са ниским и нултим емисијама. Једна од иницијатива за јачање енергетске безбедности јесте и повећање ефикасности електроенергетског сектора. У овом случају, неопходна је не само модернизација и реконструкција структуре за производњу електричне енергије, већ и преносних мрежа. Смањење енергетског интензитета привреде остаје важан приоритет енергетске политике не само Пољске, већ и сваке земље у развоју. Овај рад има за циљ да истражи пољски електроенергетски сектор у односу на његов значај за националну безбедност и хитну потребу за повећањем енергетске ефикасности у годинама које долазе. Резултати сугеришу да је успостављање нових енергетских сектора неопходно; без динамизације модернизације и декарбонизације електроенергетског сектора, постизање стабилног и ефикасног енергетског система биће тешко постићи. Енергетска ефикасност у пољском енергетском сектору је кључни елемент у тежњи ка одрживом развоју и смањењу емисија, али и безбедности у ширем смислу. Тренутни енергетски систем Пољске углавном се заснива на фосилним горивима, посебно домаћем угљу, који задовољава већину енергетских потреба земље. Стога ће се повећање енергетске ефикасности у овом сектору током наредне две деценије одвијати кроз систематско смањење потрошње угља. У случају природног гаса, предвиђа се његова употреба као

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горива за стабилизацију пољског енергетског сектора. Процес декарбонизације повезан је са потребом пуштања у рад нових енергетских капацитета. У овом аспекту, кључна инвестиција биће изградња нуклеарне електране (у 2030-им) и повећано коришћење обновљивих извора енергије. Што се тиче зелене енергије, највећи потенцијал у Пољској представља енергија ветра, стога је стратешка инвестиција изградња приобалне ветроелектране и повећање капацитета копнених ветроелектрана. Од мањег значаја је соларна енергија или биомаса. Горе наведене инвестиције су неопходне не само да би се осигурала стабилност и ефикасност енергетског сектора, већ пре свега енергетска безбедност земље.

Кључне речи: енергетска безбедност, енергетска ефикасност, Пољска, сектор електричне енергије, трансформација енергије²

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SECULARISM IN THE SHADOW OF HINDUTVA: RELIGION AND THE 2019 AND 2024 INDIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS

Abstract

This study explores the impact of Hindu nationalism on the concept of secularism in India, with a particular focus on the general elections held in 2019 and 2024. In the context of the growing social and political importance of Hindu nationalism, the author analyses how this ideology influences the application and development of secular principles in political discourse and election campaigns, with a special focus on the two election cycles mentioned above. By analysing the political and social narrative, election results, and election agenda, the study explores how Hindu nationalism shapes the political landscape and contributes to the development of religious and political polarization. Special attention is paid to the role of the Bharatiya Janata Party in promoting Hindu nationalism and its impact on the development of social and religious tensions. The research findings demonstrate the significant impact of Hindu nationalism on the erosion of the pillars of secularism and the intensification of polarization in Indian society. This study also provides significant insight into the dynamics of the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary India – a topic that has been almost completely neglected in domestic scholarship.

Keywords: secularism, Hinduism, Hindutva, India, general elections, Bharatiya Janata Party, religion

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2024, the largest national elections in human history were held. In seven phases, from April 19 to June 1, about 968,000,000 Indians had the chance to exercise their right to vote, and of these, just over 642,000,000 (66.61%) did so (Election Commission of India 2024). Hindutva-inspired forces won a third consecutive mandate, establishing their own agenda and ideology as the *mainstream* of Indian party politics. The movement that began in the 19th century in the form of Hindu revisionist and revivalist groups has completely taken precedence over the previously dominant secular and modernist current led by the Indian National Congress (INC). The ideas discussed elsewhere (see: Đogatović and Krstić 2023, 59–63) were supported by around 236,000,000 voters in the last general elections, while the broader coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was supported by 283,000,000 voters. With this election result, Narendra Modi moved to third place among the longest-serving prime ministers of India since its founding in terms of prime ministerial tenure, immediately after Jawaharlal Nehru (जवाहरलाल नेहरू) and Indira Gandhi.

From a broader perspective, this paper will ask *how such a major political change came about*. In a narrower, more specific perspective, the question will be raised as to *how Hindu nationalism (Hindutva) influences the concept of secularism in India and how this influence was reflected in the outcome and dynamics of the general elections held in 2019 and 2024*. The author will attempt to cover various theoretical and empirical aspects of the research – the influence of Hindutva on secularism, the influence of Hindutva on shaping political campaigns and election results, and the reaction to the changes in the legal and political status of secularism in India that occurred through the action of this powerful religious-nationalist idea. The basic hypothesis argues in favour of the fact that *Hindutva directly and unambiguously influences the weakening of the basic postulates of secularism in contemporary India*. It will highlight a significant change in the social and political context in which the previous electoral processes took place. It will also be clearly pointed out that the number of political-religious themes has increased in the past decade (see: Jevtić 2009).¹ By changing the context

¹ The author believes that the most effective theoretical basis and scientific justification for this research would be provided by the third field of research in the political science of religion, i.e., “those ideological and programmatic contents and practices

of national elections, the forces led by Narendra Modi have managed to adapt the conditions in which the electoral competition takes place to their own ideological foundations, with which a constantly growing number of voters identify. The influence of Hindutva on political and social reality is positively correlated with the success of political parties that actively promote it. Parties led by the BJP have proven to be more successful in mobilizing voters and achieving electoral victories. One of the direct consequences of the spread of Hindu nationalism through political discourse is the increased public support directed towards Hindu issues and the decline in general interest in other topics. Something that has been discussed previously (see: Đogatović 2025a) and which will be discussed more throughout this study, is the impact of the strengthening of Hinduism on the level of social and political tensions and the development of polarization between different religious and ethnic groups in India.

From a methodological perspective, historical and institutional analysis, document content analysis, and comparative analysis appear to be a logical, methodological framework for conducting scientific research of this type. Through the activities of the most successful political parties and coalitions, their election programs and platforms, and contextual analysis, the author will provide answers to the previously posed research questions and analyse the most important ways in which the election-conducting context is shifting.

The author will also indirectly try to answer the question of *why it is important to analyse the relationship between secularism and Hinduism in the context of the general elections in India* and to point out to a serious deficiency within Serbian political science – the neglect of the Indian subcontinent in terms of electoral, comparative and institutional analyses, despite the fact that the Indian general elections represent the largest political event of the modern era and India is the most populous democracy on the planet (see also the first paper in Serbian written on this topic: Pejšković 2015). The fact that 2024 has been colloquially declared a super-election year further emphasizes the importance of this problem.

of subjects of the political system, political life and politics in general that relate to the problem of religion and religious communities, such as the relationship of political subjects towards religion and religious communities, the normative regulation of the relationship between the state and religion, the differences between the normative and the real, the use of religion and religious communities by the state, political parties, etc.” (Jevtić 2009).

Structurally, the paper consists of an introduction and five subsequent chapters. The first chapter will present the postulates of Indian secularism, the most important challenges and criticisms it faces, as well as the basic theoretical framework of this study. The second chapter will shift the focus to religious politics in the context of India and the analysis of the empirical work of Hindu nationalism. The third and fourth chapters will serve to analyse the general elections held in 2019 and 2024, with a special focus on the place of religion, the influence of Hinduism, and the consequences of the results of these two electoral processes on the state of secularism in India. Finally, in the last chapter, the findings obtained through the research will be presented.

SARVA DHARMA SAMBHAVA: **SECULARISM IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT**

The secular political order in India was formalized by the 1949 Constitution. It established India as a sovereign, socialist, secular, and democratic republic for all its citizens. Accordingly, secularism is one of the fundamental founding principles of the state itself (Kumar 2019, 128). However, the Indian context is much more than a mere enumeration of state-building principles. The commitment of Indians to the idea of tolerance is complemented by a strong commitment to non-interference between religious communities (Evans and Sahgal 2021, 3). A study conducted after the 2019 elections (Evans and Sahgal 2021, 3) found a high correlation between support for the BJP, understanding of the concept of “true Indian” in terms of language, religion, and nation, and emphasizing the importance of national identity. This will be discussed below.

In the context of the emergence and multi-millennium development of the Indus Valley civilization, the demographic landscape of this region underwent a radical change in the dominant social paradigm several times. In the Middle Ages and the modern era, the greatest impact was made by the Islamic conquerors, the British East India Company, Great Britain itself, and others. The twentieth century brought a chance for Hindu-led ideas and ideologies to once again gain the chance to regulate the course of their own social and political processes. The aforementioned several thousand years of social development also left their mark on the understanding of the idea of secularism. Directly copying the postulates from Western (non)friends would have caused more harm than good

to the young Indian state. Therefore, the Constitution writers came to form what Bhargava (Rajeev Bhargava) would later call *contextual secularism* (Bhargava 2006, 111). This type of secularism is sensitive to contextual differences, that is, to all those factors of social life that have lasting consequences for the functioning of the entire social and political system. It seems that the cultural, demographic, linguistic, and religious diversity of India provides enough reason to formulate a distinct type of secularism. The emergence of this concept also occurred because Indian secularism not only shares a history with the West but also has its own history (Bhargava 2006, 115). This type of secularism in the Indian social and legal-political context meets all the necessary conditions, namely: “(1) there is no official religion protected by the Constitution, (2) public funding of individual religious communities is non-existent, (3) there is no official religious instruction in public schools, (4) freedom of conscience and the right to (not) profess a religion are protected, (5) discrimination based on religious affiliation is prohibited, etc. – but it is much more than that” (Bhargava 2006, 106). Bhargava believes that Indian secularism differs from Western secularism in the essential understanding of the relationship between the state and the “Church.” In the case of India – there is a so-called *principled distance* between religion and the state, i.e., there is no *wall of separation* (Bhargava 2006, 99). A cultural, religious, and demographic analysis of India’s social landscape leaves room for the development of this type of secularism – one that will not favour but protect religious communities. Given the differences in values that have constituted the dominant value system throughout history – social principles have remained intact but are separate from the state itself. Values such as peace, tolerance, and constitutional protection of all segments of religious freedom represent the supporting pillars of this type of secularism. These pillars are rooted in at least four characteristics of this region-state: (1) the great diversity of religious communities, (2) the greater emphasis on practice rather than belief or dogma, (3) the existence of many religiously sanctioned social practices that are oppressive because of their illiberal and inegalitarian character and denying dignity and self-respect, and (4) the absence of an organized institution (such as the Church) in Hinduism and other religions of the region (Bhargava 2006, 108–109). This type of secularism allows the state to approach certain religions and to interfere in internal religious matters in cases where it wishes to protect certain socially important values (the examples of women’s rights, religious minorities,

or inter-caste differences are indicative) (see: Đogatović 2025b, 179–180). The existence and smooth functioning of the principle of *equality of all truths* (Sarva Dharma Sambhava) represents the ultimate imperative of this legal and political order.

However, it is not easy to refute the assumption that the Indian state treats Hindu religion and practice as part of *fundamental* Indian culture – especially given that many institutional ceremonies begin with Hindu prayers, that thousands of Hindu temples are funded by federal funds, and that federally funded television often glorifies Hindu practices and mythology (Khan and Lutful 2021, 4). In terms of social practice, Indian secularism nevertheless appears to remain *shallow* (Khan and Lutful 2021, 4). These and many other criticisms will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Challenges and criticisms

The concept of secularism, in the Indian context, faces criticism from various directions – politics, law, the East, the West, believers, atheists, etc. The multicultural society, the rich (neo)colonial history, and the linguistic-religious structure of the population further complicate the functioning of this principle. The following are the most important examples of criticism directed at this principle.

In an article on the shortcomings of secularism, Amartya Sen (Sen 2005, 297–300) writes about six main criticisms of the concept itself. *First*, some authors and citizens of India deny the very existence of secularism in the Indian context (Sen 2005, 297–300). At certain periods in Indian history, the state did indeed seem to go beyond the framework discussed in the previous chapter, protecting the Hindu majority at the expense of religious minorities (Sen 2005, 297–300). *Second*, many analysts and citizens believe that the Indian Constitution and political and legal traditions favour the minority Muslim community (Sen 2005, 297–300). By allowing the application of certain provisions of Sharia law, as well as the existence of Muslim private law, in a situation where there is no Hindu counterpart to these institutions, social relations depart from the *status quo* (Sen 2005, 297–300). *Third*, one intellectual current considers that the identity of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs is primary in relation to their Indian identity and is therefore a first-order concept (Sen 2005, 297–300). *Fourth*, one current emphasizes that “Indianness” was imposed on Hindus because Muslims failed to position themselves as

primarily Indians and then Muslims, but *vice versa* (Sen 2005, 297–300). *Fifth*, one current criticizes secularism as a concept that represents “the folly of modernism” (Sen 2005, 297–300). This criticism has been used by numerous authors and analysts in previous generations, emphasizing that religion is inseparable from politics and, therefore, from the Indian state, emphasizing its multi-religious character during several centuries in the past millennium (Sen 2005, 297–300). *Finally*, one of the currents criticizes secularism as a concept, arguing that it is entirely wrong to treat Hinduism as just one of the religions represented in India (Sen 2005, 297–300). In the following sections of this paper, special focus will be directed towards the dualism of secularism – Hinduism (Hindutva) in the context of the electoral cycles held in 2019 and 2024. Attention will be drawn to some of the greatest challenges to the secular political order that have emerged from the political actions of the ruling coalition.

THEORY AND PRACTICE – RELIGION AND POLITICS IN INDIA

The relationship between religion, religious propaganda and the electoral process is essentially defined by Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act (Representation of the People Act [RPA] 1950 according to: Sen 2010, 151), which states that “the following shall be considered corrupt practices within the meaning of this Act: Section 3 – appeal by a candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent to vote or abstain from voting for any person on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community or language or the use or invocation of religious symbols or the use, or invocation of national symbols, such as the national flag or national emblem, for the purpose of promoting the election of that candidate or for the purpose of prejudicing the election of any candidate.” (RPA 1950, Art. 3A cited in: Sen 2010, 151) and “promoting or attempting to promote feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of citizens of India on the ground of religion, race, caste, community or language, by a candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent for the purpose of promoting the election of that candidate or for the purpose of prejudicing the election of a candidate” (Sen 2010, 151). In political terms, the seven decades of Indian independence have seen the decline of secular nationalism – embodied in the work of the INC – and its replacement by Hindutva, a majoritarian worldview that has its

roots in the 1920s and is today represented by a family of organizations known as the Sangh Parivar (Baral, Nellis, and Weaver 2021, 15).

The term *Hindutva*, in this paper, will encompass all theoretical and practical elements of the activities of Hindu nationalist movements and political parties. The most representative example is the activity of the Bharatiya Janata Party and its core ideas, platforms, and public policies. Along with it, the policies of other *Hindutva* movements and parties, such as Shiv Sena, Hindu Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party, etc., are also important.

Just as Hinduism is the name of one of the most widespread religions in the world, *Hindutva* is the name for the dominant ideology in contemporary India (Sharma 2020, 43). *Hindutva* movements and political parties use the (non-)political arena to elevate the social significance and position of Hinduism to the highest level, working to strengthen the religious and political foundation of the nation-state. The dominant ideas propagated by these movements concern majoritarianism, casteism, ethnicization, racialization, the establishment of a Hindu *Rashtra*, i.e., the utopian concept of a “pure” India, and the restoration of the historical, social, cultural, and political significance of Hinduism (Đogatović and Krstić 2023, 61–62). For political polarization, in this paper, we will adopt the definition, following the scientific achievements set in this field by Jeniffer McCoy, Tahmina Rahman, and Murat Somer and presented elsewhere (Đogatović 2025a, 21), that it represents a specific socio-political situation in which two opposing social groups use all available resources to mobilize certain dimensions of their own identities – among which religious, ethnic and linguistic are dominant – in order to completely redesign the political space through collective efforts in a way that would, to the greatest extent possible, correspond to their ultimate social and political goals, which most often include the permanent removal of the opposing social group from it. On the other hand, the term *identity politics* will encompass all actions and procedures of one social group that, by exerting a direct or indirect influence on at least one of the elements of the collective identity of another social group, aim to strengthen the position of one social group in relation to the other (Đogatović 2025a, 13).

In the history of Indian party politics to date, Hindu-motivated ideas have played a significant and often decisive role in determining the winner of general elections. The extent of these “cases” ranges from the emergence, influence, and death of Mahatma Gandhi, through the

actions of his namesake Indira, the entire plethora of events surrounding the city of Ayodhya, the Shah Bano case, the politicization of the issue of Islamic private law, cases of the so-called “Love Jihad” etc. The following paper will analyse several authentic cases of the intertwining of the ideas of secularism and Hindu nationalism in the context of the general elections of 2019 and 2024.

2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS

In the general elections held in April and May 2019, 912 million Indians were eligible to vote (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019). About 67% (604 million) of them chose to exercise that right (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019). The BJP achieved its best winning result since the 1989 elections with 37.36% of the votes, or 303 parliamentary seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019). The entire coalition (National Democratic Alliance [NDA]) won 45.3% of the votes or 353 parliamentary seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019). The rival coalition (United Progressive Alliance [UPA]) won only 91 parliamentary seats, of which the INC won 52 seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019). Narendra Modi emerged as the absolute winner over his opponent, Rahul Gandhi (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2019). The backbone of these elections was made up of topics such as the state of democratic institutions and processes, economic results and inflation levels, welfare policies, the state of agriculture, security issues, issues of dynastic politics, nepotism, corruption, human rights violations, etc.

The electoral confrontation between secularism and Hindutva

While the 2014 general elections introduced a new dominant repertoire – Modi’s national populism – the 2019 elections marked a shift towards ethnic or illiberal democracy, and it can be said that India moved from the dominance of national populism to the dominance of political authoritarianism after these elections (Jaffrelot and Verniers 2020, 14). The coalition gathered around the BJP was formed exclusively on the basis of Hinduism, that is, support for the idea of strengthening the public presence of Hindu culture (Mofidi 2014, 27). The party used religious identity to appeal to its core voter base while simultaneously projecting the prime minister’s image as a protector of faith and believers (Mofidi

2014, 1). The methodology of this paper is supported by the fact that the BJP profited the most precisely in regions where the representation of the second religious community – Muslims – is the highest (Sardesai 2019, 13).

The impact of Hindu nationalism on the concept of secularism in the context of the 2019 general elections will be analysed through two dominant themes that have been brought from the periphery of party politics to the very centre of political events during the second half of the 21st century. The *first* of these themes is the increasing interference of the Hindu political elite in issues of Islamic private law. During the years preceding these elections, the BJP brought Indian politics to the peak of Islamophobia precisely through the operation of its nationalist agenda (Khan and Lutful 2021, 3). Evans and Sahgal recall that since 1937, the Islamic institution *dar-ul-qaza* has been operating in India through which Muslims can resolve family problems and inheritance issues (Evans and Sahgal 2021, 4). Despite the idea of enacting a uniform civil code (The Constitution of India 1950, Art. 44), Islamic private law, especially regulating marriage and inheritance policies, continues to function, which has been a major annoyance for the ruling party (Khan and Lutful 2021, 3). In August 2019, the Indian Parliament passed a provision that made the institution of triple talaq illegal, which represented a significant blow to the independence of the Islamic private law system.² A particularly important segment of this topic involves attacks on religious grounds due to the “practice of love jihad.” This term refers to all those actions by Muslims that BJP members and supporters consider as representations of the anti-Hindu sentiments in the sphere of marriage policies. In practice, these have most often been cases of (alleged) forced mixed marriages. Although the issue of Islamic private law and marriage policies has been in the public spotlight from time to time since the Shah Bano case (Bose 2009, 19), it was only after the 2014 elections that it intensified. The establishment of so-called anti-Romeo units, which, without any court order, investigated the intentions of spouses who were members of different religions, raised this topic to the level of national importance (see: Leidig 2020, 234). Part of the action taken against “love jihad” is the enactment of numerous laws prohibiting religious conversion in those federal units where the BJP is in power (Khan and Lutful 2021, 4–5; see:

² Triple talaq is a situation in which a married Muslim is permitted to terminate his marriage by pronouncing the word talaq (Arabic: *تالاق*) three times. This provision also prohibits other practices such as *talaq-e-mughallazah* and *talaq-e-biddah*.

Al Jazeera Staff 2024). Fear of the demographic progress of the Islamic community has led advocates of Hindutva to accuse Muslims not only of love jihad but also of population and land jihad – they are accused of “unrestricted population growth” or “ambitious land acquisition in Hindu-dominated areas” (Amarasingam, Umar, and Desai 2022, 26). In the year after these elections, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) published a special edition of its own magazine dedicated to this topic, elevating it to the level of a demographic war in the years that followed (Amarasingam, Umar, and Desai 2022, 17). Actions in the direction of implementing “love jihad” have encouraged the other side to retaliate with the same weapon – thus, the actions of “bhagwa love traps” (saffron love trap) were initiated. A number of Muslims, most often through social networks, claimed that a certain number of Hindus were trying to lure Muslim women into mixed marriages solely for the purpose of their later conversion to Hinduism. The results of these policies remain entirely on the side of the proponents of Hindutva.

The *second* dominant theme consists of events that directly preceded the 2019 elections, which concern the terrorist attacks in the city of Pulwama (India) and the Indian military’s retaliation with airstrikes in Balakot (Pakistan). At first glance, the issue of the retaliatory bombing of a city about 160 kilometres from Pulwama concerns exclusively security frameworks and international relations. However, political science requires analysts to delve deeper into the relations between India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims, Hindutva and Islamists, and, in general, the religious-political contemporaneity of the region of Jammu and Kashmir. The Pulwama terror attack and the reciprocal Balakot airstrike occurred just weeks before the official start of the election campaign and highlighted nationalist sentiment among voters, creating a so-called “rally ’round the flag” effect in favour of the BJP (Chhibber and Verma 2019, 135). National security and the issue of relations with Pakistan are completely “owned” by the BJP, and successfully handling these issues resulted in a final voter injection into the BJP’s body (Chhibber and Verma 2019, 135). With this move, Modi managed to present himself as the protector of Hinduism and India itself and practically as the only politician capable enough to manage complex ethno-nationalist relations (see: Jaffrelot and Verniers 2020, 4). Although the retaliatory attack on the camp of the Islamist organization (Jaish-e-Mohammed) was executed swiftly and served merely as a “show of strength,” politics, primarily seen as a performance of public appearance, once again revealed itself

in its full light. According to one survey, support for Modi increased by 7% after the Balakot bombing (Anklesaria Aiyar 2020, 8). Elevating himself to the position of protector of Hinduism and India, especially at crucial moments in the context of the political game, proved to be skillful management of Prime Minister Modi's religious-nationalist policy.

In addition to these two topics, it is important to mention several others that will not be sufficiently explored in depth in this study but which certainly contribute to the confirmation of the previously proposed hypothesis: (1) the increased importance of mass religious gatherings (e.g., Kumbh Mela) and the process of Sanskritization (see: Baral, Nellis, and Weaver 2021), (2) the adaptation of electoral law to Hindutva-like interpretations (see: Kumar 2019), (3) the strengthening of the vote bank, typical of the South Asian region (see: Mofidi 2014), and (4) actions aimed at protecting the cow (cow vigilantism) as a sacred animal (see: Natrajan 2022). A systematic analysis of these topics and their effect on the results of the 2019 elections can identify the Hindu narrative and its dominance of political and social discourse. This was intended to highlight the influence of Hindutva (and, indirectly, Hinduism) on the results and party politics before, during, and after these elections. The results of the National Election Study (NES) proved that the election result was largely a consequence of the consolidation of votes along religious lines, especially among Hindu and Muslim voters (Sardesai 2019, 13). With this study, we have pointed out some of the causes of this voter grouping.

2024 GENERAL ELECTIONS

The general elections in India were held in the wake of the so-called super-election year of 2024. However, despite the fact that India is the most populous country and democracy in the world and that these general elections are the largest political elections of all time, they have nevertheless remained largely ignored by the world public. In the words of Eviane Leidig – the world's largest democracy is currently governed by a right-wing extremist party, but this same party is completely invisible in the literature on right-wing extremism (Leidig 2020, 216). Political regrouping after three and a half years of the pandemic, renewed war tensions and strained relations with Pakistan, the change in India's regional and global role, the changing state of its own economy, the increasing number of migrants from surrounding countries, the return of the BRICS

alliance to the centre of world politics, still remained the insufficient reason for any serious analysis by domestic political scientists. On the other hand, the somewhat surprising election results, the pre-election agenda, and the post-election uncertainty certainly deserve the attention of the scientific community. The role of Hinduism in the entire process should be analysed as well.

The elections were held from 19th of April to 1st of June, and 543 members of the lower house of parliament were elected in seven phases (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2024). Modi managed to secure his third consecutive term as prime minister, this time with the help of two smaller parties the Telugu Desam Party (dominant in Andhra Pradesh) and the Janata Dal – United (dominant in Bihar). More than 968 million citizens were eligible to vote, and 642 million exercised their rights (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2024). The BJP competed as part of an existing coalition, against the newly formed INDIA (Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance) coalition led by the INC. The BJP won 240 seats with about 236 million votes, or 36.56% of the total number of voters, while the entire coalition won 42.5% of the votes, or 293 seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2024). On the other hand, the INDIA coalition, led by Mallikarjun Kharge of the INC, won 40.6% of the votes, or 234 seats, while the INC itself won 137 million votes (21.19%) which it transposed into 99 seats (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2024). It is interesting to note that Muslims consolidated their support for the INC across the state, except in Uttar Pradesh, where they supported the Samajwadi Party, while Christians supported the INC in Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland (Bhattacharya 2024).

The polarized party arena of India strives to completely alter the electoral dynamics in the years and cycles ahead. Apart from the two coalitions mentioned above, only the Bahujan Samaj Party contested this election independently. The three most prominent issues in the campaign were unemployment, electoral bonds, and the construction of a temple in Ayodhya.

The Hindutvized electoral process and the crisis of secularism

This chapter will highlight several examples of the direct influence of Hindutva on the secular framework of the electoral process conducted in 2024 and will analyse the impact of Hindutva on the very concept of

secularism through the examination of the dominant themes emphasized during this electoral process.

The *first* theme presents three essentially close sub-themes linked by a common – legal – sphere of origin. These are (1) the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which guaranteed the special status of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir in late October 2019, (2) the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in December 2019, and (3) the potential enactment of the National Register of Citizens (NRC). By deciding to revoke Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, the Modi government has fulfilled one of the intermediate steps towards achieving the idea of a “Greater India” (*Akhand Bharat*) (Leidig 2020, 235). The issue, which was regulated by the party manifesto even before the 2019 elections, was finally resolved at the end of that year in anticipation of new elections. Modi managed to preserve unity within the vast state and, with his third consecutive mandate, stabilize his rule. On the other hand, documents such as the CAA and the NCR have clear goals – a kind of pacification of fellow citizens of the Islamic faith and the deportation of a large number of non-believers. In this context, “pacification” would mean changing the cultural pattern of the Muslim population – from their given one to the one tailored in the premises of the ruling party. Particularly, this refers to the abandonment of concepts such as love, demographic, and territorial jihad, dominance in terms of population growth, the abandonment of interfaith marriages, and so on. The adoption of the CAA is a process that did not begin during this election cycle, but it represents one of Prime Minister Modi’s campaign promises and, as such, one of the most important to be fulfilled so far. The act allows non-Muslim refugees to safely seek Indian citizenship, given that they are facing religious violence in their home countries (Khan and Lutful 2021, 8). Although it is formally a legal document, in practice, it acts as a religious watershed and an amplifier of religious polarization in India. It provides a quick and easy path to citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Parsis, and Buddhists from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan – deliberately excluding Muslim refugees, even though members of this religion also suffer from religiously motivated violence (such as Ahmadiyyas or Rohingya Muslims) (Amarasingam, Umar, and Desai 2022, 7). The latter document has so far only been implemented in the federal state of Assam, where it has not proven to be the most lethal weapon against non-Muslim citizens and refugees. By 2019, the state authorities had identified 1,900,000 citizens with problems with

their legal residence status in the country, of which 1,200,000 were Hindus who lacked the necessary documents (Anklesaria Aiyar 2020, 12). However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the BJP came to power in this state promising to enact a strict Register that would serve to deport illegal Muslims (Anklesaria Aiyar 2020, 12).

The *second* topic represents, as it seems for now, the epilogue of the decades-long drama in the city of Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh). On the site of the former Hindu temple, and until recently Babur's mosque, there now stands a nearly fully constructed Hindu temple dedicated to the deity Ram. This unusual symbol of religious and political rivalry was resolved by Narendra Modi on January 22, 2024, just 6 days after the party leadership decided to once again stand united around him as the prime ministerial candidate in last year's elections. The protector of India (Balakot), the protector of Hindi (education policy), and the protector of the Indian economy (welfare politics) has now officially become the protector of Hinduism. Modi has shown that, in practice, he is a true leader, protector and miracle worker, of course from the perspective of those who are on his side. The movement launched to resolve the Ayodhya temple issue succeeded for the third time in helping the ruling party strengthen its position after having done so in the 1980s and 1990s (Mofidi 2014, 21). The role of religion in the electoral process once again proved to be extremely significant, often decisive (Mofidi 2014, 19–20). Modi fully seized the opportunity (with premeditation), just as he did before the previous elections and the cross-border bombing of Pulwama and Balakot. The political points, again, went in his favour. By fulfilling his own promise, he essentially showed what Hindu-nationalist sentiment looks like within the political sphere in India (Kishore 2019).

In addition to these two topics, it is important to keep in mind several other significant topics that can be linked to the relationship between religion and secularism within the electoral framework: (1) promotion of the Hindi language, refugee rehabilitation, and anti-Pakistan propaganda (Dasgupta 2019), (2) the caste system, the position of Dalits, Sanskritization, and racialization (Đogatović and Krstić 2023), (3) cow protection, (4) reserved seats in legislative bodies, (5) "Corona-Jihad", and (6) Hindu civilizationism (Ali Saleem 2023). Once again, the analysis of pre-election behaviour, manifestos, and agendas helped in arriving at the dominant (Hindutva) narrative. The reliance on Hindu values in political platforms is evident across the entire ruling coalition.

An increased emphasis on religious and religiously important topics is evident compared to the previous two election cycles.

CONCLUSION: INDIA AS A *DE FACTO* HINDU STATE

The previous chapters aimed to highlight the exceptional social significance that must be attributed to religion, especially when it is exploited for primarily political purposes. Starting with the defence of the Indian type of secularism, through the analysis of the legal framework and key points of contention, to the clash of the two opposing concepts, arguments were presented in favour of the previously set hypothesis, one that points to the significant role of Hindutva (and Hinduism within it) in undermining the secular Indian order. To complete the picture, it is important to emphasize that Hindutva is not the only challenge to the survival of the secular political, legal, and social order. Two particularly important arguments are pointed out in support of the hypothesis: (1) the change in the context in which national elections are now being held, which was brought about by the direct action of the ruling party to strengthen the religious foundations of its politics,³ and (2) the dominance of political-religious themes in the political and social narrative during the previous decade. In line with the results achieved by the BJP-led coalition during the previous three election cycles – the potential for further development of the political role of Hinduism has increased significantly. On the other hand, the use of religion for political purposes has led to the opening of other problems and a negative impact on the development of democratic processes in India (see: Đogatović 2025a).

It can also be said that the following statements emerged as a consequence of this study: (1) a strong connection between religion and politics is evident in India, especially in terms of religious affiliation

³ It should be made clear at this point that the aforementioned topics have not fully taken over the primacy in terms of the pre-election atmosphere, given that India is still home to one and a half billion inhabitants. Studies that focus on the reasons for the BJP's electoral victory in 2014 and 2019 undoubtedly indicate a kind of replacement of the primary importance of general economic, political and social topics with BJP-adapted topics, but also with the BJP's ideological turn, Modi's popularity, the BJP's organizational advantage, emphasized nationalist sentiments, expansive welfare policies, etc. (see: Chhibber and Verma 2019, 131–132). Elsewhere, it is argued that Modi's rise has shifted not only the BJP but the entire Indian political spectrum – from secularism to a stronger Hinduism (Anklesaria Aiyar 2020, 15).

and electoral behaviour and the shaping of political preferences and identities; (2) the use of religion for political purposes leads to increased polarization and social distance; (3) social networks have proven to be a powerful tool for spreading disinformation, hate speech, and polarization on religious grounds (indirectly leading to the strengthening of extremist views); (4) there is a noticeable weakening of the influence of relevant institutions such as election commissions and courts (see: Jaffrelot and Verniers 2020, 2), and (5) strengthening secular principles is necessary to reduce religious polarization and ensure greater social cohesion.

Although the current state of affairs does not represent a desirable balance of power, Sen believes that a political abandonment of secularism would make India far less secure than it is today (Sen 2005, 316). The rise of Hindutva's social influence has been embodied in the rulings of judges in numerous cases during the 20th and 21st centuries, in which the conclusion was the same – Hinduism is the religion of the majority of Indians and the way of life of all Indians – essentially concluding that invoking Hindu values does not violate any of the principles of secularism (Sen 2010, 164). The Indian type of secularism will allow the (legitimate) influence of religion in the political sphere, especially during the electoral process, only when the fate of the entire democratic social order does not depend on it.

What further worsens the prospects for finding a lasting solution is the situation in which South Asia remains the least integrated region on the planet, and regional organizations (such as SAARC) do not even come close to demonstrating the integrative potential that is needed (Đogatović 2022, 87). Good practices regarding the relationship between secularism and religious nationalism are lacking throughout the region. On the other hand, India can hardly survive as a non-pluralistic state, pluralism emanates from the very nature of this country; it is a choice made inevitable by Indian geography and confirmed by Indian history (Battaglia 2017, 2).

The findings presented in this study support Christophe Jaffrelot's conclusion that India is a *de facto* Hindu state in which many practices of life, from diet to permitted religious expression, are regulated in a way that grants Hinduism a privileged position (see: Sircar 2022, 90). Although authors fail to agree on the definitive state of secularism in India, it undoubtedly does not stand on stable ground. Challenges to its normal functioning come from all directions, but the one posed by Hindutva threatens to completely undermine it. Although India is not

yet a Hindu state, it is becoming less secular and more of an illiberal democracy (Anklesaria Aiyar 2020, 1). A fractured mandate may not bring political stability to India, but it could represent hope for the survival of India's secular democracy, given that it has been labeled an "electoral autocracy" and a "partially free democracy" (Singh 2024).

Different powers have taken turns at the helm of the Indian subcontinent, but the social role of the dominant religion has usually been significant. Hindutva could remain a socially dominant force in the decades ahead, regardless of whether the BJP remains in power after the 2029 elections. Divided by language, caste, and economic inequalities – Indians have found a largely present identity pattern and seem unlikely to let it go.

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СЕКУЛАРИЗАМ У СЕНЦИ ХИНДУТВЕ: РЕЛИГИЈА И ИНДИЈСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТАРНИ ИЗБОРИ 2019. И 2024. ГОДИНЕ

Резиме

Овом студијом се истражује утицај хиндуистичког национализма на концепт секуларизма у Индији, са посебним акцентом на парламентарне изборе одржане 2019. и 2024. године. У контексту растућег друштвеног и политичког значаја хиндуистичког национализма, аутор анализира како ова идеологија утиче на примену и развој секуларних принципа у политичком дискурсу и изборним кампањама, са посебним освртом на поменута два изборна циклуса. Анализом политичког и друштвеног наратива, изборних резултата и предизборне агенде, студија истражује на који начин хиндуистички национализам обликује политички пејзаж те доприноси развоју религијске и политичке поларизације. Посебна пажња је посвећена улози Баратија џаната партије у промоцији хиндуистичког национализма и њеном утицају на развој друштвених и религијских тензија. Резултати истраживања показују значајан утицај хиндуистичког национализма на урушавање стубова секуларизма и интензивирање поларизације у индијском друштву. Такође, ова студија пружа значајан увид у динамику односа између религије и политике у савременој Индији – теми која је готово у потпуности занемарена у домаћој науци.

Кључне речи: секуларизам, хиндуизам, хиндутва, Индија, парламентарни избори, Баратија џаната партија, религија

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THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW BRICS DEVELOPMENT BANK

Abstract

Establishing the New Development Bank by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and the Republic of South Africa) represents a strategic step toward building an alternative financial institution that promotes equality, multipolarity, and sustainable development. This paper aims to analyze the role and significance of the NDB's founding within the context of the global economic architecture, with particular emphasis on the Bank's decision-making mechanisms, institutional structure, and strategic priorities. The study juxtaposes the NDB with existing multilateral financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank through desk analysis and comparative methodology, highlighting key differences in governance models and power distribution. A normative structural analysis provides insight into how the NDB functions as an instrument of economic emancipation for developing countries and as a platform for financing infrastructure and sustainability projects. The paper concludes that the New Development Bank is not merely a financial alternative but also a symbol of a new approach in international

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relations that aspires toward a more equitable global distribution of resources and influence.

Keywords: BRICS, New Development Bank, global governance, multipolarity, economic cooperation, infrastructure financing, international institutions

INTRODUCTION

In the context of dynamic changes in the global economic and political architecture, new actors and institutions are emerging, seeking to challenge existing models of governance and the distribution of influence. The BRICS group, composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and the Republic of South Africa, represents one of the most significant contemporary examples of political and economic cooperation among developing countries to overcome the dominance of traditional powers in international institutions.

One of the most tangible outcomes of this cooperation was the establishment of the New Development Bank [NDB] in 2014, with the mission of financing infrastructure and development projects in member states and other countries of the Global South. The founding of the New Development Bank constitutes an institutional response to the perceived inequality within the global financial governance system, particularly within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, where BRICS countries, despite their considerable economic contribution, possess limited decision-making power.

The impetus for this paper stems from the need to assess the institutional and geoeconomic significance of the New Development Bank within the broader context of the transformation of the international order. The goal is to analyze how this Bank functions as an alternative financing mechanism and a symbol of revisionist tendencies to construct a fairer, multipolar global system.

The scholarly significance of this research lies in its effort to thoroughly examine the institutional mechanisms of the NDB, its development strategy, its impact on the global financial architecture, and the opportunities it offers developing countries to enhance their economic independence. The research contributes to the broader body of work that critiques existing global power structures and highlights

the potential of alternative institutional solutions within the ongoing change processes in the international order.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRICS MULTILATERAL DIPLOMATIC PLATFORM

The primary impetus for researching the activities of the multilateral diplomatic platform – an ongoing process of dialogue and cooperation among the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People’s Republic of China, and the Republic of South Africa, officially referred to as BRICS (based on the initials of their English names: Brazil, Russia, India, China, Republic of South Africa) – stemmed from a lack of organized and systematic academic study, on the one hand, and the prevalence of superficial and factually unfounded impressions ranging from the dismissal of its importance to an overestimation of its global significance, on the other (Kraktus 2024, 9–24).

The BRICS multilateral diplomatic platform was initiated in 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India, and China to coordinate action within the United Nations. The first meeting, attended by the foreign ministers of Brazil, Russia, and China, as well as the defense minister of India, was held in September 2006 on the margins of the 61st UN General Assembly (The BRICS Expert Russia Council 2024). In the following two years, this initiative evolved as a separate track of activity, which was formalized in 2009 through the launch of annual summits.

The acronym “BRICS” was first coined in 2001 by Jim O’Neill, an economist at Goldman Sachs, one of the world’s leading investment management firms (Kraktus 2024, 9–24). In his report published in November 2001, titled *Building Better Global Economic BRICs*, he projected that the remarkably dynamic economic growth of *Brazil, Russia, India, and China* (grouped under the acronym BRIC) would surpass the economies of the most developed G7 countries. His forecast anticipated that by 2050, the BRIC countries – representing fast-growing economies – would become significantly more powerful actors in the global economy. The “s” in “BRICS” was later added to reflect the plural form, following the inclusion of South Africa (Purushothaman and Wilson 2003, 99).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the United States enjoyed a dominant position in the global energy system as the sole superpower. The BRICS acronym drew particular attention

due to each member country's economic development and potential. O'Neill predicted that the BRIC countries – especially China – would experience substantial economic growth and ultimately emerge as dominant economic players on the international stage (see: O'Neill 2001). The key features linking BRICS countries included large populations, relatively stable governments, and the potential for significant economic advancement. By 2003, Goldman Sachs' projections had become even more optimistic, suggesting that by 2050, the BRICS economies would collectively surpass those of the G6 (The United States, The United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan), becoming the most dominant economic forces globally (see: Purushothaman and Wilson 2003, 99).

These findings only intensified debate among analysts and scholars regarding the global future of the BRICS countries – controversies that persist to this day. These countries are often cited as the superpowers of the future, primarily due to their rapid economic growth, military capabilities, influence on global politics and international relations, and the size of their markets.

It has become evident that BRICS countries have expanded their presence in other domains, and today, they play a significant role in the international arena and within various international institutions. The financial crisis of 2008–2009 greatly affected the balance of the global economy. The fact that BRICS countries managed to maintain economic growth led many theorists to reconsider the global power balance. The US is no longer viewed as the sole global superpower. In the following years, the powerful BRICS states confirmed their growing influence on the international stage.

The annual summits represent the most critical and visible events within the BRICS multilateral diplomatic framework. The first BRICS summit was held in 2009 in Yekaterinburg (Russian Federation) at the height of the global financial and governance crises. (Krakus 2024, 9–24).

The functioning and work of BRICS is based on various forms of cooperation. Due to the broad spectrum of collaboration, there is a distinction between the main summits and those focused on specific areas of interest – the so-called sessions. Only the main summits carry the status of high-level meetings. At the main summit, held once a year and attended by heads of state or government, conclusions from individual sessions are adopted, recommendations for future cooperation are made, and upcoming trends are highlighted. Thus, the main summits hold strategic significance.

An expansion was announced at the BRICS summit held in August 2023 in Johannesburg and took effect at the beginning of 2024 (Suri and Tripathi 2023). Six new countries joined: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and Argentina – the latter having initially accepted the invitation but later withdrawing due to a change in its presidential administration (see: Baunov 2024). After its expansion, BRICS has become an even more significant global actor in terms of economic indicators and political influence. With the accession of new members in 2024, BRICS's share of global GDP (measured by purchasing power parity) rose to approximately 39% in 2023 (Baunov 2024). In 2024, the IMF projected that all BRICS member states would record positive economic growth, with rates ranging from 1.1% to 6.1% (BRICS Brasil 2025). In international trade, BRICS countries account for 24% of global merchandise exchange (see: BRICS, n.d.). The bloc encompasses around 48.5% of the world's population, which tends to grow above the global average in the coming decade. Regarding territory, BRICS covers about 36% of the world's total land area (see: BRICS, n.d.).

These figures highlight the growing influence of BRICS+ as a multilateral platform striving to reform the existing institutional architecture of global governance, particularly in economic and political balance with Western blocs such as the G7. In this respect, BRICS members play a vital role in the worldwide economy in terms of total output, receiving investment capital, and expanding potential consumer markets. The economies of BRICS countries are collectively seen as engines of global economic recovery that reshape the world economy.

As a significant multilateral diplomatic initiative focused on developing markets and emerging economies, BRICS has become a key driver of global economic growth, trade cooperation, and global financial governance system reform. Aiming to enhance economic cooperation and build stronger partnerships, BRICS member states have developed a broad spectrum of collaboration in areas such as trade and investment, energy, mineral resource extraction and processing, agriculture, science, technology and innovation, finance, digital connectivity, and information and communication technologies. At the same time, mechanisms for coordination with international and regional economic organizations and forums have been established. The economies of the BRICS countries are increasingly viewed as the main drivers of global economic recovery, leading to the shaping of their new role within the world economic order.

The highlight of financial cooperation was establishing a multilateral financial institution – the BRICS New Development Bank. The BRICS New Development Bank (Brazil, Russia, India, China, the Republic of South Africa) is a financial institution of countries with the most significant market potential in a globalized world. The Bank was founded following the existing global and regional bank model but did not have a dominant position among its members.

The Role and Significance of Establishing the BRICS New Development Bank

Since the end of World War II, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have emerged as the most important international financial institutions. These institutions were established to help reconstruct war-torn economies and shape international monetary, exchange rate, and payment systems. Their roles have evolved, and today, they are viewed, among other things, as entities that dictate approaches to development aid, monitor global economies, and promote free-market policies. Commonly referred to as Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and the World Bank were established in 1944 by a collective agreement of 44 countries. The World Bank officially began operations in July 1944, and the IMF in December 1945. The original goals of these institutions were to promote international monetary cooperation, facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of global trade, promote exchange rate stability, and establish a multilateral payment system (Stojković 2016, 78). Today, the IMF is an organization of 188 countries that promotes global economic stability, aiming to support high employment, sustainable economic growth, and poverty reduction worldwide (Danns and Danns 2015, 127).

Numerous analyses indicate that BRICS's growing influence, particularly the decision by the leaders of these countries to establish the New Development Bank, represents a global alternative to the Bretton Woods institutions. The formation of this new international development bank by BRICS countries has been interpreted as a fundamental global economic and political power shift. While the global financial crisis has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, energy issues have accompanied tensions among oil- and gas-rich powers.

During the fourth BRICS summit in New Delhi in 2012, the member states signed a Framework Agreement on Financial Cooperation within BRICS Interbank Cooperation to facilitate further trade and investment

ties consolidation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012). On that occasion, the BRICS leaders agreed to explore establishing a joint development bank. As a result, at the fifth BRICS Summit, the decision was made to initiate the process of founding such an institution. It was emphasized that, following reports compiled by the finance ministers of the BRICS countries, it was concluded that establishing the New Development Bank was feasible and sustainable (BRICS Policy Center 2013).

At the sixth BRICS Summit in Brazil in 2014, the Fortaleza Declaration was adopted, which specified that the New Development Bank would have an initial authorized capital of 100 billion US dollars, with initial subscribed capital amounting to 50 billion US dollars, equally shared among the founding members. It was agreed that the first Chair of the Board of Governors would be from Russia, while the first Chair of the Board of Directors would be from Brazil (Sixth BRICS Summit-Fortaleza Declaration 2014). The leaders of the BRICS member states signed the Agreement on establishing the New Development Bank. The distinguishing feature of the NDB is that it is a multilateral development institution owned equally by the BRICS countries, which all have an equal share in the Bank's governance system.

The founding agreement established that the Bank's headquarters would be located in Shanghai, China (Stojković 2016, 80). In addition to its main headquarters, the NDB will also have regional centers or offices (Stojković 2016, 80). According to the agreement made at the Fortaleza Summit, the first regional office of the BRICS bank will be opened in Johannesburg, South Africa (Stojković 2016, 80). It was also determined that each member state would be allocated one vote and that no BRICS member state would have veto power (Stojković 2016, 80). This main characteristic differentiates the NDB from the World Bank, where voting power is determined based on capital contributions (Stojković 2016, 80). The same agreement defines the purpose of the NDB, stating that the Bank will mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS and other emerging economies, complementing existing efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global growth and development. An Indian representative was elected as the first president of the New Development Bank (Stojković 2016, 80). The Bank's presidency will be rotational, with each term lasting five years (Stojković 2016, 80). The goal of the NDB is to strengthen the presence of BRICS countries in international relations and, through unity, promote a more just world order. A Goldman Sachs economist

predicted that the economies of BRICS countries would become major global economic powers by 2050, making the establishment of the NDB a sign of a new geopolitical and geoeconomic reality of the early 21st century (O'Neill 2001, 3).

The BRICS Development Bank focuses on infrastructure and development projects in the world's poorest countries, primarily in Africa. By focusing on the poorest countries at the regional level in Africa, the BRICS nations aim to institutionalize their cooperation, which is expanding through trade and economic aid, while minimizing costs for BRICS member states.

Politically, the creation of the New Development Bank is an attempt to increase the influence of BRICS in developing countries while diminishing the importance of Western institutions. The members of these countries argue that the development of this bank was necessary due to the lack of IMF reform that would create a more even distribution of power and greater inclusion.

Arrangement on Foreign Currency Reserves (CRA) is a special instrument created by the BRICS member states, with an initial 100 billion US dollars fund (Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the BRICS member States 2015). In coordination with the policy of the New Development Bank, the Arrangement facilitates the functioning of multipolarity, and "These reserves are intended to overcome the member states' short-term liquidity issues and promote sustainable growth and development." (Stojković 2019, 28). The creation of this instrument achieves "the establishment of financial stability in the international framework, thereby providing doubly secured BRICS member states" (Stojković 2019, 28). Namely, all BRICS members are simultaneously members of global organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, and other institutions (Stojković 2019, 28). Arrangement on Foreign Currency Reserves became operational in 2016 (Stojković 2019, 28). The first step in the institutionalization of BRICS was the establishment of the New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement. This kind of consolidation and deepening of cooperation and partnership, not only in the economic-financial sphere, indicates the potential of this partnership (BRICS Information Centre 2014).

Table 1. Structure of the Contingent Reserve Arrangement

Member Country	Initial total resources in billion \$ US %	Access resources	Voting power %
Brazil	18	18	18,10
Russia	18	18	18,10
India	18	18	18,10
China	41	21	39,95
South Africa	5	10	5,75
Total	100	85	100

Source: (Stojković 2016, 81)

Regarding the Bank's capital, the New Development Bank was established with the following fund and ownership structure, shown in the table below:

Table 2. Ownership Structure of the BRICS New Development Bank

Country	Number of Shares	Ownership Share	Voting Rights (%)	Subscribed Capital in USD
Brazil	100.000	20	20	10.000.000.000
Russia	100.000	20	20	10.000.000.000
India	100.000	20	20	10.000.000.000
China	100.000	20	20	10.000.000.000
South Africa	100.000	20	20	10.000.000.000
Undistributed Shares	500.000	/	/	50.000.000.000
Total	1.000.000	100	100	10.000.000.000

Source: (Stojković 2016, 86)

The table shows that the New Development Bank was founded with equal participation from all five BRICS member states. The total paid-in capital amounts to 50 billion US dollars. The Bank issued one million shares. Each member state holds 20% of the total allocated shares. The remaining 500,000 shares are unallocated and are intended for sale to non-member countries. These shares may be purchased by any international actor, regardless of whether they come from developing

countries or developed countries of the Euro-Atlantic region. The agreement also stipulates that, in the event of share purchases by third parties, the member states must retain at least 55% ownership of the Bank's capital (Stojković 2016, 86). Initial projections suggest that in 20 years, the BRICS New Development Bank will hold a leading position globally and drive development in the financial market, the real economy, and industry in general (Stojković 2016, 86). In its early phase, the New Development Bank is focused exclusively on the BRICS member states and other developing countries. Beyond economic advantages, creating financial institutions at the BRICS level may also influence the global political landscape.

Organizational Structure of the BRICS New Development Bank

The organizational structure of the New Development Bank, a financial institution established by the BRICS countries, is designed to ensure equal participation of all member states and effective management of financial flows and development projects. At the top of the hierarchy is the Board of Governors, the highest governing body, composed of one representative from each member country, typically the finance minister or central bank governor (New Development Bank 2014). The Board of Governors approves key strategic documents, adopts the Bank's budget, and makes decisions regarding the admission of new members (New Development Bank 2014). Beneath it operates the Board of Directors, which makes decisions on daily operations, including loan approvals and financial projects (New Development Bank 2014). Each country appoints one director with equal voting rights. A distinctive feature of the Bank is the absence of veto power for any country, and a qualified majority makes decisions (New Development Bank 2014).

The Bank's president performs executive functions and is appointed by the Board of Governors for a five-year term, with regional rotation among the member states. The president is supported by four vice presidents, each responsible for specific areas – finance, operations, administration, and international cooperation – with each vice president coming from a different founding country, thus ensuring geographic balance. In addition to these bodies, internal oversight and business transparency are ensured by the Audit, Risk, and Ethics Committee and the Bank's professional services, which provide technical, administrative,

and logistical support. The guiding principle of equal distribution of voting rights (20% for each founding country) is a key feature distinguishing the NDB from other multilateral financial institutions. As of 2023, the Bank's president is Dilma Rousseff, former president of Brazil (New Development Bank, n.d.). This structure reflects the BRICS group's intention to create a more equitable model of global financial cooperation, with a focus on financing infrastructure and sustainable development in developing countries.

Reasons for Establishing the New Development Bank

Developing and transitional countries have significant infrastructure development and sustainable development financing needs. The BRICS New Development Bank is widely considered to have fully justified its founding purpose, as it seeks to engage and activate a wide range of project partners, including countries that are not typically classified as developing. For the founding states and potential candidates, establishing such a financial institution strengthens their positions within the international financial architecture. It provides access to necessary resources for sustainable development.

From the perspective of BRICS member states, the founding of this bank is highly significant as it offers an alternative source of financing for sustainable development, independent of the will of the world's wealthiest nations, which play key roles in the functioning of global financial institutions.

It is believed that BRICS members decided to establish the New Development Bank for two primary reasons. First, the BRICS countries were dissatisfied with the functioning of the IMF and the World Bank and the slow pace of reforms in these institutions (Danns and Danns 2015, 125–127). After waiting more than five years for the implementation of voting quota reforms in the IMF, the BRICS countries achieved initial success in early 2016. The implementation of the IMF quota reform demonstrated why BRICS is a platform of growing significance in international relations. The 2010 reform was the first concrete example of how the BRICS countries can enhance their bargaining power in international financial institutions when acting together (Stuenkel 2020, 114).

Second, the BRICS partnership is strong enough to influence the global economy. The leaders of the BRICS countries criticized the IMF and the World Bank for not adequately fulfilling their roles in assisting countries facing economic difficulties and in promoting their long-term economic growth and development, reducing poverty, and protecting them from financial crises (Danns and Danns 2015, 127).

Although officials from these countries believed that reforming the structure of the IMF and the World Bank was necessary and that the voting power of developing countries should be increased, the reforms progressed slowly, and BRICS member states were dissatisfied with the process (Danns and Danns 2015, 126). This Bank was designed to meet the financial needs of developing countries within and beyond the BRICS framework, along with their foreign exchange reserves. It represents an alternative solution to the global banking system (IMF and World Bank), which the West dominates. In this way, a collective foreign exchange reserve and a development project financing fund will be established to meet the needs of poorer economies.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of the New Development Bank represents a turning point in the modern history of international financial institutions and global economic governance. With this initiative, BRICS has sent a clear message about the need for greater participation of developing countries in decision-making processes and the shaping of global economic policies. The New Development Bank not only offers an alternative to traditional institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank but in its very essence, symbolizes resistance to unipolar power structures and a striving to establish a fairer and multipolar world order.

Through the equitable distribution of voting rights, a focus on infrastructure development, the financing of sustainable growth projects, and support for countries of the Global South, the NDB contributes to enhancing the economic independence of its member states and reducing their dependence on Western-centric financial institutions. In this context, the role of the Bank is not solely financial but also geopolitical – it serves as an instrument through which BRICS countries articulate their development interests, affirm political and economic autonomy, and participate in reshaping the institutional architecture of global governance.

Moreover, the New Development Bank can encourage regional cooperation beyond its founding members. By providing access to favorable capital for countries that have traditionally faced structural obstacles in financing, the NDB opens the door to new forms of economic integration and promotes the concept of Global South cooperation. The admission of new members and flexibility in project policies indicate the Bank's willingness to transform into an inclusive development platform, one whose guidelines are not determined by the interests of the few but by the needs of the many.

In the long term, the importance of the New Development Bank lies in its capacity to act as a catalyst for profound structural changes in the global economy. Its existence and activities indicate the possibility of creating a parallel financial system based on sovereignty, inclusivity, and sustainability principles. Suppose it continues to build credibility, institutional transparency, and operational efficiency. In that case, the NDB can potentially become a model for a new generation of multilateral institutions that reflect the realities of the 21st century more than the legacy of the post – Cold War era. Therefore, the significance of the NDB lies not only in its institutional novelty but also in its role as a tool for the long-term transformation of global power relations, the affirmation of new values in international finance, and the promotion of cooperation among countries of the Global South. In this sense, the New Development Bank embodies a vision of the future in which economic development is accessible to a broader range of actors based on principles of equality and mutual respect.

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УЛОГА И ЗНАЧАЈ ОСНИВАЊА НОВЕ РАЗВОЈНЕ БАНКЕ БРИКС

Резиме

Оснивање Нове развојне банке од стране држава БРИКС-а (Бразил, Русија, Индија, Кина и Јужноафричка Република) представља стратешки корак ка изградњи алтернативне финансијске институције која промовише равноправност, мултиполарност и одрживи развој. Овај рад има за циљ да анализира улогу и значај оснивања Нове развојне банке у контексту глобалне економске архитектуре, са посебним освртом на механизме одлучивања, институционалну структуру и стратешке приоритете банке. Кроз примену деск-анализе и компаративне методе, истраживање упоређује Нову развојну банку са постојећим мултилатералним финансијским институцијама као што су ММФ и Светска банка, указујући на кључне разлике у моделима управљања и расподела моћи. Нормативно-структурална анализа омогућила је сагледавање начина на који НДБ функционише као инструмент економске еманципације земаља у развоју, те као платформа за финансирање инфраструктурних и одрживих пројеката. Рад закључује да Нова развојна банка није само финансијска алтернатива, већ и симбол новог приступа у међународним односима који тежи праведнијој глобалној расподели ресурса и утицаја.

Кључне речи: БРИКС, Нова развојна банка, глобално управљање, мултиполарност, економска сарадња, инфраструктурно финансирање, међународне институције

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THE LEGAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF ORGAN DONATION: BETWEEN ALTRUISM AND (DIS)TRUST***

Abstract

The Republic of Serbia is last on the list of European countries and among the last in the world when it comes to the number of performed transplants. This paper will provide an overview of the relevant legal regulations and challenges facing everyone who needs an organ transplant after the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia found the provisions of Article 23 of the Law on Human Organ Transplantation from 2018, which refer to organ donation from a deceased individual, and the provisions of Article 28 of the Law on Human Cells and Tissues, which stipulate the

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conditions for tissue donation, to be unconstitutional, and citing religious standpoints on this current legal, medical, and bioethics issue. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic saw a decrease in the number of donated and transplanted organs, while the post-COVID period saw the frequent occurrence of issues of distrust of the healthcare systems and the World Health Organization among different segments of the population, and thus the impact of this (dis)trust on the decision of individuals to become potential donors, especially in countries facing a high level of corruption in all areas, as well as war-torn areas where the possibility for unsanctioned human organ trade on the black market is high. It is the authors' conclusion that war conflicts, the (lack of a) clear and complete legal framework, and the level of trust in state and healthcare institutions, have a direct impact both on the number of donors and the transplants performed in a country.

Keywords: organ donation, bioethics, the Republic of Serbia, EU law, organ trade

INTRODUCTION

Organ donation takes place worldwide, and the organs that are most often transplanted are the lungs, heart, corneas, pancreas, and kidneys. Donation methods include altruistic donations of non-vital organs (usually the kidneys) and postmortem organ donations which can be divided into donations after brain death or donations after circulatory death. Despite starting an organ donor program, a considerable number of patients still die while on organ transplant waiting lists.

Postmortem organ transplants are possible when organs are retrieved after circulatory death, or brain death during a 24-hour window following cardiac arrest. In contrast to organs, most tissues (with the exception of the cornea) can be preserved and stored for up to five years.

Organ transplants open up numerous medical, legal, and bioethics issues, some of which include even how to define the moment of death, the possibility of transplant rejection, and an inadequate immune response from the recipient, consent for organ donation, transplant tourism, and the danger of human organ trafficking on the black market, which is linked to human trafficking and child trafficking. In addition, there is also the question of whether complete objectivity of the entire proceedings can be ensured, whereby it is necessary to take into consideration the severity of the illness of the potential recipient, the time spent on a waiting list,

any associated diseases, as well as the level of urgency, while there is also concern on the part of the citizens caused by the link between (a lack of) objectivity and (a lack of) transparency of the process and the entire procedure, as well as the level of corruption in a given society. Experts point out that there is a considerably greater possibility of us needing an organ to survive than of being organ donors ourselves.

In the Republic of Serbia, over two thousand people are waiting for an organ transplant, while only nine consents for donation were given in 2024 (Hemofarm fondacija 2025). Some people believe this to be a consequence of the prejudice that the Serbian Orthodox Church has against organ donation, as well as the fear that organ trafficking does exist, especially following the investigation into human organ trafficking on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, and Albania, known as the case of the “Yellow House” (Čarnić 2020).¹

Unfortunately, this case has still not seen a court ruling 25 years later. The Hague prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, said in 2012 that any evidence of organ retrieval from the Serbs in the “Yellow House” was destroyed when Carla del Ponte was the prosecutor and agreed that it had not been a good decision but that he was unable to comment on the decision-making process of the prosecutor (Insajder 2019). Carla del Ponte, at the time, stated that the destruction of evidence was a mistake and that it had been done without her knowledge (Insajder 2019).² Moreover, as per Muharremi and Ramadani (Muharremi and

¹ The former prosecutor for the Hague tribunal, Carla del Ponte, stated in her book “The Hunt: Me and the War Criminals” that in 1999 she found out from journalists that approximately 300 Serbs and other non-Albanians, but also Albanians who had collaborated with the Serbs (‘disloyal’ Albanians) had been kidnapped and transported to Albania, where they had their organs retrieved, which were then shipped to Italy, from where they were distributed to clinics all over Europe. The Public Prosecutor’s Office for War Crimes in Serbia, following the claims made in the book by the former Hague prosecutor, had for years worked on gathering evidence related to this case, and it was back in 2012 that they found a witness, a former member of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), who spoke about operations being carried out to retrieve human organs (Čarnić 2020).

² “As soon as I found out about the destruction of the samples, I brought the issue before the Tribunal. They then conducted an internal investigation and they are the ones who should be asked about the outcome. I know what the outcome was, but I cannot speak to you about it because I am no longer a member of the Tribunal” (Insajder 2019).

Ramadani 2024),³ the investigations into the involvement of the KLA in war crimes, including organ trafficking, on the part of the Council of Europe constituted a considerable political blow to the KLA and its permanent legacy as a symbol of resistance of the Kosovo Albanians against Serbian oppression. These developments, along with a lack of a judicial resolution of the controversy, give rise to doubts and foster a sense of insecurity among potential organ donors.

Even though Bishop Lavrentije became the first high-ranking dignitary of the Serbian Orthodox Church who, in 2011, bequeathed his organs for cadaveric organ transplantation (the transplantation of the organs of a deceased individual into a living one, after brain death is declared), stating that “bequeathing one’s organs is an act of free will, love, and respect for human dignity [...] there is nothing more noble than gifting one’s organs, it truly is of considerable national importance and that is why we need to help as much as possible” (RTS 2018) and recommended that everyone bequeath their organs, this did not make a considerable contribution to the increase in donor activity, the establishment of trust, or an increase in collective awareness of the social significance of this issue. Furthermore, the families of potential donors mostly respond that they have not discussed organ donation consent with the deceased, which is the cause of the low consent rate and one of the reasons why so few transplantations take place.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA – ORGAN DONATION A (NON) PRIORITY ISSUE?

Organ Donation in International Law Binding on Serbia

The first international contractual document in this field was the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine, better known as the Oviedo Convention or the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (herein: the Convention), which took effect on December 1, 1999, and which the Republic of Serbia ratified on

³ Muharremi and Ramadani refer to the „Inhumane Treatment of Persons and Illicit Trafficking in Human Organs in Kosovo” report (Muharremi and Ramadani 2024).

February 10, 2011.⁴ The Convention was ratified by 30 states, and was signed without ratification by seven states: Armenia, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, Poland, Sweden, and Ukraine (Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Dignity of the Human Being with regard to the Application of Biology and Medicine: Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine [ETS No. 164] 1997).

The Convention obligates respect for and protection of the human essence in cases of conflict with scientific achievements, which could involve the misuse of knowledge in the field of biomedicine. Chapter VI regulates organ and tissue retrieval from living donors with the aim of transplantation, and it stipulates that organ or tissue removal from a living donor with the aim of transplantation be carried out exclusively for the purpose of “therapeutic benefit,” only when there is no suitable organ or tissue available for retrieval from a deceased individual, or there is no other method of treatment of comparable effectiveness, while consent, as stipulated in Article 5, must be given explicitly and clearly, in written form (ETS No. 164 1997, Art. 19).⁵ The transfer and transplantation of organs from living donors is regulated in accordance with the effort to prevent the human body and its parts from becoming a source of profit (ETS No. 164 1997, Art. 21).

⁴ The preamble states that “[...] the aim of the Council of Europe is the achievement of a greater unity between its members and that one of the methods by which that aim is to be pursued is the maintenance and further realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms; Conscious of the accelerating developments in biology and medicine; Convinced of the need to respect the human being both as an individual and as a member of the human species and recognising the importance of ensuring the dignity of the human being; Conscious that the misuse of biology and medicine may lead to acts endangering human dignity; Affirming that progress in biology and medicine should be used for the benefit of present and future generations; Stressing the need for international cooperation so that all humanity may enjoy the benefits of biology and medicine; Recognising the importance of promoting a public debate on the questions posed by the application of biology and medicine and the responses to be given thereto; Wishing to remind all members of society of their rights and responsibilities [...]” (Zakon o potvrđivanju Konvencije o zaštiti ljudskih prava i dostojanstva ljudskog bića u pogledu primene biologije i medicine: Konvencija o ljudskim pravima i biomedicini 2010).

⁵ Article 5 of the Convention stipulates that “An intervention in the health field may only be carried out after the person concerned has given free and informed consent to it. This person shall beforehand be given appropriate information as to the purpose and nature of the intervention as well as its consequences and risks. The person concerned may freely withdraw consent at any time” (ETS No. 164 1997).

The Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine concerning Transplantation of Organs and Tissues of Human Origin (ETS No. 186) took effect on May 1, 2006, and to this day has been ratified by 15 countries.⁶ Except for the Republic of Serbia which signed it on February 9, 2005, but has not ratified it to this day, this Protocol has been signed, without ratification, by France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Holland, and Ukraine. The Additional Protocol contains the general principles and special provisions related to human organ and human tissue transplantation for the purpose of treatment. The general principles included in the Additional Protocol include equal access to transplantation services for all patients, transparent rules for organ distribution, health and safety standards, prohibition of financial gain for donors, and the necessity for donors, recipients, healthcare professionals, and the public to be adequately informed, while the special provisions regulate organ retrieval from both living and deceased donors, the use of the retrieved organs and tissue and stipulate the prohibition of financial gain, confidentiality, sanctions, and compensation.

The Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights stipulated that “[...] any preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic medical intervention is only to be carried out with the prior, free and informed consent of the person concerned, based on adequate information [...]” (Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights [UNESCO] 2005, Art. 6).

Today, the concept of voluntary and informed consent is the leading principle in bioethics (the principle of autonomy), which is adopted by national laws, that regulate issues pertaining to bioethics and medicine. The concept presumes that an individual be given the right to choose based on information, understanding, and a clearly expressed desire to choose, bearing in mind all the other alternatives as well as the future prognoses for such a choice. Therefore, “the key elements of the concept are information, the freedom of consent (its voluntary nature, the absence of pressure or inappropriate influence) and the ability to make decisions” (the Council of Europe, Key human rights principles in biomedicine cited in: Ignovska 2022, 73). The author Ignovska states that “there are limitations to the application of the right to a private life as stipulated in Article 8 (2) of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article

⁶ The Protocol was ratified by Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland (ETS No. 186 2002).

26 of the Oviedo Convention; the presumption of personal autonomy is actually most frequently nullified, for example, when urgent medical care is required but the patient is unable to provide consent, or in cases when consent is presumed unless a statement to the contrary has been made explicitly (for example, in the case of postmortem organ donation in certain states, including the Republic of Northern Macedonia), where the concept of informed consent has been replaced by the concept of presumed consent (unless the individual was explicitly opposed, which is determined by means of a written statement notarized by a notary public during the individual's lifetime" (Закон (измени и допуњавања) за земање и пресадување на делови од човечкото тело заради лекување, 2011, 2013 cited in: Ignovska 2022, 75).

Organ Transplantation in Serbian National Law

The organ bequest program and the issuance of donor cards in the Republic of Serbia was first initiated in 2002 at the Military Medical Academy in Belgrade to improve the program of cadaveric organ transplantation. The program relied on the provisions of the Law on Organ Transplantation (Zakon o transplantaciji organa 2009) which had a relatively rigid position *vis-à-vis* consent for cadaveric transplant – which had to be given by an adult with full business capacity in a strictly prescribed form (Baturan i Samardžić 2013). After the Law on Human Organ Transplantation (Zakon o presađivanju ljudskih organa [ZPLJO] 2018 i 2021) and the Law on Human Cells and Tissues (Zakon o humanim ćelijama i tkivima [ZHĆT] 2018 i 2021) of the Republic of Serbia was ratified in July of 2018, the issuance of donor cards was terminated.

In accordance with the Law on Human Organ Transplantation from July 2018, each citizen of the Republic of Serbia is a potential organ donor; that is, there is a presumed consent policy which means that all citizens are considered potential organ donors in the case of brain death if they have not explicitly made a statement to the contrary in written or in oral form to the Biomedicine Directorate of the Ministry of Health. Therefore, the organs of the deceased could be donated provided that the individual had not, in oral or written form, explicitly made a statement opposing their organ donation. Nevertheless, the family still had the right to object to the organ donation, in which case the transplantation would not go through (assumed and revocable consent for donation was prescribed).

However, on May 20, 2021, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia determined that Article 23 of the Law on Human Organ Transplantation from 2018, which refers to cadaveric organ transplants, was not in accordance with the Constitution due to omissions, a lack of clarity, imprecise wording, and inconsistencies in the legal forms which prescribe the retrieval of organs from a deceased person (Odluka Ustavnog suda Republike Srbije [USRS], Iuz-223/2018). The legal arguments of the Constitutional Court did not go into a detailed examination of the relationship between the national legislation governing transplantation and the rights guaranteed by Article 3 and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which is also directly applicable in the Republic of Serbia. Instead, the Constitutional Court examined the provisions of Article 23 of the said Law in view of the standard of the quality of legislation, invoking its previous jurisprudence, and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights in this subject matter (USRS IUz-27/2009, IUz-107/2011, IUz-299/2011 and ECHR, 61243/08). The Constitutional Court found that the conditions for cadaveric organ transplantation from minors and from adults who had been fully or partially deprived of legal capacity were not regulated in a sufficiently clear and precise manner, thus rendering the norms of Article 23 incompatible with the principles of the rule of law and as such, unconstitutional. It is also interesting to note that in its decision the Constitutional Court explicitly stated that it did not find the presumed consent policy unconstitutional *per se*, i.e., that the lack of explicit consent does not impinge on the right of an individual to freely decide on organ and tissue donation.⁷

⁷ The Law stipulated that human organs could be retrieved from a deceased person for transplantation unless a legally competent adult donor had explicitly opposed it in oral or in written form during their lifetime, that is, if, at the moment of death, one of the parents, a spouse, a common-law partner, or adult child of the deceased individual were not explicitly opposed to it, and in exceptional circumstances, if the deceased did not have such relatives if, at the moment of death, a collateral relative up to the second degree of kinship did not explicitly object to it. It is possible to retrieve an organ from a deceased minor who had been under parental care during their lifetime, only with the written consent from both parents, that is, one parent if the other parent is deceased or is unknown, while from a deceased minor who during their lifetime did not have parental guardianship, organ retrieval is allowed only with the consent of the ethics board of a healthcare facility, formed in accordance with the law that regulates healthcare. From a deceased individual who was not a citizen of the Republic of Serbia, that is, did not have permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia, it is possible to retrieve organs only with the

The Constitutional Court also determined that all the provisions of Article 28 of the Law on Human Cells and Tissues, which regulate the conditions for tissue donation, were unconstitutional. This article stipulated that tissue from a deceased individual can be retrieved for use if the legally competent adult donor prior to death had not explicitly made a statement to the contrary in written or in oral form during their lifetime, or unless at the time of death, a parent of the deceased, a spouse, common-law partner, or adult child of the deceased individual were not explicitly opposed to it (ZHĆT 2018 i 2021).⁸ The Constitutional Court, in fact, utilized the same argumentation it had employed in declaring the provisions of Article 23 of the Law on Human Organ Transplantation unconstitutional.

The publication of the Constitutional Court decision was postponed for six months, until November 2021, in order for the governing bodies, the Ministry of Health, the Government, and the National Assembly to have enough time to make changes or additions to the aforementioned laws before the contested provisions ceased to be valid, which would prevent the occurrence of any legal gaps. However, this did not happen, and so since November 2021, there has been no legal framework regulating the conditions and procedures for human organ or tissue transplant from a deceased individual. The amendments and supplements to the Law on Transplantation were only harmonized with the Constitutional Court

written consent of the spouse, common-law partner, an adult brother or sister, or the adult child of the deceased individual (ZPLJO 2018 i 2021).

⁸ In certain instances, if the deceased individual did not have such relatives, the tissue from the deceased individual can be retrieved unless, a collateral relative up to the second degree of kinship explicitly objected at the time of death. Tissue retrieval from a deceased minor individual, who during their lifetime was under parental care, was possible only with the written consent of both parents, that is, one parent if the other parent is deceased or is unknown. In the case of a minor individual who during their lifetime had no parental guardianship, according to the Law, tissue retrieval was possible only with the consent of the ethics board of a healthcare facility, formed in accordance with the law that regulates healthcare. In a similar vein, organ retrieval from an adult deceased individual, who during their lifetime by decision of competent authority was partially or fully deprived of legal capacity, was permitted only with the consent of the ethics board of a healthcare facility, formed in accordance with the law that regulates healthcare. From a deceased individual who was not a citizen of the Republic of Serbia, or did not have permanent residence in the Republic of Serbia, tissue retrieval was possible only with the written consent of a spouse, a common-law partner, a parent, an adult brother or sister, or the deceased's adult child (ZHĆT 2018 i 2021).

decision in May 2023, when they were ratified by the Government of Serbia, and the text was sent to the National Assembly for adoption under expedited procedure; however, to this day it has not been included in the agenda (the proposal for the amendment made its way to the National Assembly, but was not included in the agenda because the Assembly was dissolved, and the procedure had to begin anew). It's uncertain when that will occur but it is clear that there can be no talk here of any kind of 'expedited procedure.'

Faced with a choice between the principle of presumed consent and the principle of explicit consent, Serbia adopted the principle of presumed consent, which states that an individual must explicitly state that they do not wish to be an organ donor, but in the absence of such a statement, the presumption is that they would like to be an organ donor. Dr. Marta Sjeničić, the president of the Association of Lawyers for Medical and Health Law of Serbia, states that the problem with the previous law was that once it is determined that no such statement exists, the relatives of the deceased individual are asked for their consent, which is not in accordance with the principle of autonomy of will, and that the relatives should be asked whether they know what the will of the deceased person actually was, and not what their opinion on it is (*Euronews Serbia* 2024). It was also precisely stated where and in what way interested citizens could express their will regarding organ donation, whether it be positive or negative, and so provisions were made for that statement to be given to a doctor of any specialization, to a notary public, or by means of the eUprava website.

It should be pointed out that in terms of the number of completed transplants, the Republic of Serbia is virtually last in Europe and among the last in the world (it is among the last five states) (Komčarević i Krstić 2024). The association "Donorstvo je herojstvo" points out that they are asking for "everyone to be the owner of their own organs, that is, to make their own decision on whether they wish to be a donor or not, instead of the decision being left to an individual's relatives [...] Therefore, one can now be in favor of organ donation, but their family members, when the time comes, can make a decision to the contrary" (Komčarević i Krstić 2024). The former Minister of Health, Zlatibor Lončar, has a somewhat different view of this problem, pointing out that "no law precludes us from being donors, and that for some time now we have been waiting for a response from the Serbian Orthodox Church on the issue, and that the discussion on the issue with the representatives of the Church is barely

even ongoing [...]” (Komčarević i Krstić 2024). On the other hand, the theologian Vukašin Milićević finds it “unusual that he [the minister, authors’ comment] does not know the official position of the Serbian Orthodox Church [...]” (Komčarević i Krstić 2024). There is an evident and undeniable existence of a lack of knowledge, lack of communication and coordination among certain key social factors, but also a lack of awareness regarding the importance and the need for priority action to legally regulate and improve the legal framework in this area, while at the same time a number of people are investing their final hopes in the possibility of receiving a donated organ for transplantation, which would improve their quality of life and extend their life, which is become increasingly more difficult and perilous on a daily basis.

Another serious problem is the fact that the Republic of Serbia is not a member of the Eurotransplant (ET) community (composed of Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and Slovenia). Joining Eurotransplant would significantly reduce the high mortality rate among individuals on waiting lists and the time spent waiting for a transplant. Some of the advantages include adding potential organ recipients to the unified waiting list of this organization, while providing priority to children and patients whose lives are threatened, which would also increase the chance of patients getting transplants since there would be more donors. It should be noted that the residents of these countries also face challenges in the field of organ donation and transplantation, and among the Eurotransplant community, over 1.2 thousand individuals in 2022 died while on the transplant waiting list (nearly 50% were waiting for a kidney and by around a quarter for a liver) (Stewart 2024b).⁹

However, until that happens, the Republic of Serbia must fulfill all the preconditions in the field of organ donation and transplantation, which primarily means increasing the number of donors through the active inclusion of the state in promoting donorhood, which directly correlates with strengthening the rule of law with the aim of increasing the trust citizens have in state institutions and government representatives. The latter has considerably been eroded, especially after November 1, 2024, and the collapse of the concrete canopy of the main railway station in Novi Sad, resulting in the death of individuals and leaving two individuals

⁹ Rate of deceased organ donors including both donation after brain death (DBD) and donation after cardiac death (DCD) in Europe in 2022 and 2023, by country (Stewart 2024b).

severely injured, one of whom subsequently also passed away. This event launched a wave of student protests that have been ongoing for several months all over the country, causing the suspension of teaching-related activities at universities and schools, agricultural worker strikes and strikes for workers employed in various economic sectors.

It is a vital precondition, in every country, that important issues such as organ transplants and care for the most vulnerable individuals in society become a priority, regarding which there will be consensus on the professional, responsible, and conscientious conduct of all the key social factors and holders of public authority. In other words, if the amendments to the law governing organ transplantation were to be promulgated under the present circumstances, instead of fostering the culture of organ donation, it would cause even more distrust and repudiation. The adverse impact that could stem from legislative activity under the present conditions can be further illustrated by examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the (dis)trust in the vaccination measures offered or imposed by various governments, and the effect of the given pandemic to organ donation and transplantation.

THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF ORGAN DONATION AND TRANSPLANTATION

Legal Challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic: a Bird's-Eye View

During the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals and society as a whole faced challenges in terms of maintaining their physical and mental health. In addition to the health aspects of the global pandemic and its impact on the global economy, the legal aspects are also important, especially in terms of respect and protection of unalienable human rights as one of the basic tenets of contemporary democratic society. The question is, to what extent would the degree of their restriction be justifiable, and where do we restrict the state authorities in their activities aimed at protecting public safety and public health (Ćorić and Knežević Bojović 2021)? During emergency events and circumstances, the distrust among people increases in states that do not enjoy the complete trust of their citizens, considering that they are not effective in protecting human rights in peacetime or when there is no general danger or situation that

requires an assessment of the necessity and scope of their restrictions (Čović 2020, 684). We could say that it is a “paradox that human rights are usually the first victims of a global crisis” (Uvarova 2020, 252). In the end, it can be concluded that the pandemic was a test of maturity for both the healthcare and the legislative systems of any state, rendering visible all their disadvantages and shortcomings, which under regular conditions might not have been evident to the citizens.

The question of (the lack of) trust among the citizens in the state’s healthcare system and its functioning is frequently addressed. COVID-19 vaccination sparked the most controversy among the public due to the brief research period and competition among the pharmaceutical companies regarding which one would be the first to put the COVID-19 vaccine on the market (irrespective of its efficiency), which gave the entire preventive role of the vaccine a negative connotation, along with the numerous contradictory pieces of information (the possible skipping of research phases, ‘concealing’ the actual results of the trial phase on human volunteers, etc.) (Čorić 2022, 27). Certain authors believe that “the individual character of the right to healthcare was pushed aside in favor of, or actually gave primacy to, the collective character of this law, by declaring a state of emergency” (Čorić 2022, 30). In other words, “vaccination has the character of a collective right, and in the aforementioned pandemic circumstances it had primacy over other individual laws; the right to choose still exists – to confront the ethical nature of one’s own choice, that is, an inadequate choice and the consequences which such a decision on the part of an individual has on their environment” (Čorić 2022, 32).

On the other hand, we would like to point out that during the coronavirus pandemic we witnessed numerous precedents such as the mass, systemic, institutional violation of human rights under the pretext of the protection of public health, and that the analysis of the obligatory COVID-19 vaccination from the viewpoint of the law indicates that such a practice threatens an entire group of fundamental rights, including the right to live, to physical integrity, safety, and health (Dokmanović 2022, 60).

Research that included 39 European countries indicated that 69% of countries had introduced measures to limit freedom of movement, 18% of countries had introduced a curfew, while 15% had introduced measures that additionally limited the freedom of movement of the elderly (Čović

and Nikolić 2021, 425).¹⁰ Restrictions and bans on citizens' freedom of movement in Serbia represented one of the most rigorous in Europe, based on data provided by the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (Čović and Nikolić 2021, 425). These measures did not motivate the citizens to get vaccinated in greater numbers, nor did the later attempts of the government to use financial stimulation in the form of symbolic one-time monetary payments in the amount of 25 euros, considering that only 45% of the population is vaccinated (Jeremić Stojković *et al.* 2023, 496). This could indicate the level of (dis)trust on the part of the citizens in the state and in healthcare institutions. The author Stjepanović reminds us that the Chinese authorities relied on considerably aggressive preventive measures and so concluded that the Republic of Serbia "to a considerable extent followed the example of China, since the measures imposed by the Government upon the citizens to prevent the spread of COVID-19 could quite freely and justifiably be labeled as some of the most drastic in Europe" (Stjepanović 2021, 104).

It is a fact that the healthcare systems of various countries during the COVID-19 pandemic were overwhelmed and that many patients with chronic conditions were unable to obtain healthcare to the same extent and in the same way as in the pre-pandemic conditions. Furthermore, it was necessary to introduce additional protective measures for immunocompromised patients, primarily hemato-oncological and transplant patients, as well as individuals suffering from chronic arthritis, systemic connective tissue disease; that is, all patients who due to their condition were more vulnerable compared to the general population, which is why vaccination was recommended for them without exception. According to the official recommendations, primacy was given to mRNA vaccines (Zajedno za novi život n. d. b, 16). However, in practice, it has shown that the immunological system of these patients reacts poorly to the COVID-19 vaccine, given that it does not create the required level of antibodies needed to fight off the infection, which is why these patients made up 40% of the hospitalized patients with breakthrough infections

¹⁰ By means of the Order on the restriction and prohibition of freedom of movement in the territory of the Republic of Serbia, a curfew was introduced in Serbia during the state of emergency, and the citizens of Serbia were prohibited from moving during business days from 5 PM (for several days also from 3 PM) to 5 AM, and during the weekend, from Friday, 5 PM, to Monday, 5 AM. Full prohibition of movement for persons older than 65 lasted for as many as 34 days, with the possibility of going to a grocery shop once a week, on a particular day, from 4 AM to 7 AM (Čović and Nikolić 2021, 425).

(Zajedno za novi život n. d. b, 4–5). However, the author Dokmanović points out that “the vaccines against this infectious disease were not only insufficiently tested, but also various innovative vaccines were introduced, vaccines based on genetic material which have so far never been used with the purpose of immunization, which is why they could only be administered with prior informed and voluntary consent of the individual” (Dokmanović 2022, 60).

When it comes to figures in terms of vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe, in EU member states, until January 17, 2023 the percentage of vaccinated citizens ranged from 35.8% in Bulgaria, 50.7% in Romania, 60.1% in Slovakia, 66.2% in Croatia, 66.9% in Poland, to more than 90% of the vaccinated population in certain countries (Ireland 96.3%, Portugal 94.2%, Malta 93.9%, France 92.3%, Denmark 92%, Norway 91.4%, Belgium 90.1%) (Stewart 2024a). Research which included the countries of the Western Balkans indicates that the percentage of the population that is completely vaccinated (including the booster shot) against COVID-19 was notably smaller: 40% in Northern Macedonia, 44% in Albania, 48% in Serbia, 45% in Montenegro, 26% in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is significantly below the 73% mark in the EU (Jeremić Stojković *et al.* 2023, 496). It is interesting to note that in 2020 and 2021, these Western Balkan countries also ranked in the bottom half of the countries included in the Rule of Law Index (World Justice Project 2024).

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Organ Donation and Transplantation

As indicated above, the COVID-19 pandemic has also affected organ donation and transplantation practices. Today, certain studies are available that point to the impact the pandemic had on trends in the field of organ transplantation. One of them states that Switzerland has seen a decrease in cadaverous transplants of 16.7% in March and April 2020 (during the pandemic) compared to January and February 2020, and that the decrease was mostly caused by kidney transplants (–27.6%) and to a lesser extent vital organ transplants (the heart, lungs, liver) (–5.9%) (Immer *et al.* 2020). In May 2020 organ transplantation in Switzerland again exceeded the average in the months prior to the pandemic (January and February), with 35 transplanted organs, but the

increase from April to May 2020 was solely the result of liver and kidney transplants (Immer *et al.* 2020).

In another study, the authors concluded that organ donation and transplantation activities decreased significantly in Hungary, from March 2020 until the end of the year, and cited that in Hungary the number of organ donors after brain death decreased by 38.33%, while the number of organ transplants from deceased donors decreased by 29.27%, especially in the case of heart and liver transplants (Mihály *et al.* 2021, 890). The number of organs that arrived from abroad rose by 21.13%, their overall share rose by 12.34%, while the number of transplanted kidneys from living donors remained unchanged (Mihály *et al.* 2021, 890). In 2020, there was a 25% decrease in new patients compared to those registered in 2019, while the mortality rate among the patients on the waiting list rose by 28% compared to the previous year, especially among those waiting for a kidney transplant, with the conclusion that in the country there had not been a SARS-COV-2 infection from a donor (Mihály *et al.* 2021, 890). Certain authors cite that “there has been a decrease in potential donors due to the lack of willingness on the part of staff to go into intensive care units out of fear of infection and heightened isolation measures [...] measures taken as a result of the pandemic preclude any possibility of performing activities related to organ transplantations, while the planned training and organization of awareness-raising activities were postponed and could not be realized due to the COVID-19 pandemic” (Akkurt *et al.* 2024, 24).

Spain had the highest rate of deceased donors in Europe in 2023, with 49.4 per million population, including donation after brain death (DBD) and after cardiac death (DCD), and the largest increase in the rate of organ donation between 2021 and 2022 (from 10.2 to 25.2 donors per million population) had Sweden (Stewart 2024b).¹¹ At the bottom of the list are Romania (4.1) and Bulgaria (3.3) (Stewart 2024b).

An interesting link has been made between organ donation and trust in the vaccination process. In his research, the author Inoue begins with the assumption that in countries in which organ donation is popular,

¹¹ Portugal had the second highest rate of deceased organ donation (36.8 per million population) and then Belgium (32.7), Slovenia (30.5), Italy (29.4), Croatia (29), Czechia (28.5), Finland (28.2), France (27.6), Sweden (26.2), Estonia (23.1), Switzerland (22.7), (United Kingdom 22.3), Norway (22.2), Austria (20.9), Lithuania (19.6), Denmark (19.2), Ireland (18.6), Netherlands (17.3), Latvia (13.9), Poland (13.8), Hungary (12.8), Slovakia (11.7), Germany (11.6), Luxembourg (13.3), Greece (8.4), Cyprus (6.9) (Stewart 2024b).

individuals exhibit greater trust in the vaccination process. He studied the correlation between the progress made with the COVID-19 vaccine and the status of organ donation prior to the pandemic in 38 countries, all members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Inoue 2022). Using publicly available statistical information on the progress of immunization and organ donation, he concluded that any progress in COVID-19 vaccination during 2021 correlated significantly with the trust that people have in medical staff and the public healthcare system, which is typical for organ donation (Inoue 2022).

Based on the research results of the author Inoue, which indicate that in countries in which organ donation is popular, individuals exhibit a greater level of trust in vaccination, it can be concluded that the data from the Republic of Serbia support the conclusions of the aforementioned study. Let us recall that Serbia recorded 45% of the population vaccination rate during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is almost 30 percentage points below the EU average. According to the available data, the otherwise small number of donors and performed transplantations prior to the pandemic has significantly decreased from 2020 on, with a clear yet insufficient trend of growth in the number of performed transplants during 2023 and 2024. The donor statistics and performed transplantations in Serbia over the past few years is the following: in 2017 – 40 donors and 92 transplants; 2018 – 23 donors and 64 transplants; 2019 – 15 donors and 37 transplants; 2020 – three donors and 10 transplants; 2021 – three donors and nine transplants; 2022 – two donors and two transplants; 2023 – 13 donors and 32 transplants; 2024 – nine donors and 44 transplants (Zajedno za novi život n. d. a; Hemofarm fondacija 2025).¹² The estimated population of the Republic of Serbia in 2023 was 6.623.183, based on the results of the 2022 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia 2024). The rate of deceased organ donation is 1.9 per million population in 2023, with an increase in 2024 (Zajedno za novi život n. d. a; Hemofarm fondacija 2025).

For purposes of comparison, in the neighboring Republic of Croatia in the pandemic year of 2021, 121 donors were registered, while a total of 268 organ donations were performed; compared to 2020, the total number of transplants increased by 26.5% (Ministarstvo zdravstva Republike

¹² A donor, for the purposes of the above statistics, is considered a person who has donated one or more organs, i.e., a person who has declared that they want to donate organs is not considered a donor (if the organ removal has not been performed) (Zajedno za novi život n. d. a).

Hrvatske [MZRH] 2021). In 2023, in the Republic of Croatia, there were 116 donors, and 300 transplants were performed (MZRH 2023), while a new increase was noted in 2024 – 312 organ transplants (Eurotransplant 2024). In Croatia, every deceased person who during their lifetime was not explicitly opposed to it (the law of assumed consent) is a potential organ donor (Zakon o presađivanju ljudskih organa u svrhu liječenja [ZPLJOSL] 2012, Art. 17), and any individuals who do not wish to donate their organs after death must fill out a Statement of non-donation with their family doctor, which is entered into the registry of the Ministry of Health (ZPLJOSL 2012, Art. 18). As many as 80% of families in Croatia give their consent to organ donation from a deceased family member, which is among the highest rates in the world (*Al Jazeera* 2016).

THE RELIGIOUS STANDPOINT ON ORGAN DONATION

We thought it important to include in the paper a brief overview of some of the religious standpoints on this issue, considering that people facing different biomedical dilemmas often have no actual knowledge of the stance on the issue from the point of view of church bioethics, which differs from secular bioethics. No religion prohibits the donation or reception of organs nor obligates an individual to donate or refuse organs. There is no clear evidence of support for organ donation from the Christian Church. Jesus sent out his disciples with the imperative to cure illness and disease: “Heal the sick [...] Freely you have received; freely give” (Jevandjelje po Mateju 10:8). When we refer to organ transplants, ethical considerations are double, that is, an assessment of the potential damage inflicted upon the donor and of the needs of the recipient is required.

By consciously choosing to donate his organs, man behaves as Christ would have, providing mankind with life, which is why the Catholic Church views organ donation as an act of mercy, while the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services 2018) as a group of principles, clearly explain why organ donation is permissible. Pope John Paul II reminds us that “each organ transplant originates from a decision of great ethical value wherein lies the nobility of the gesture which is a true act of love” and points out the need to plant into human hearts the true and deep love which can be reflected in the decision to become an organ donor (the Vatican 2000). Directive No. 63 states that

“Catholic health care institutions should encourage and provide the means whereby those who wish to do so may arrange for the donation of their organs and bodily tissue, for ethically legitimate purposes, so that they may be used for donation and research after death” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2018 cited in: Čović 2023, 139). Directive No. 64 further clarifies that “Such organs should not be removed until it has been medically determined that the patient has died. In order to prevent any conflict of interest, the physician who determines death should not be a member of the transplant team” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2018 cited in: Čović 2023, 139). It is of the utmost importance to obtain informed consent from the donor and/or legitimate representatives of the recipients, and for the vital organs, those which occur individually in the body, to be removed only after certain death (the complete and irreversible termination of all brain activity) (Donate Life California cited in: Čović 2023, 140).

The Greek Orthodox Church has adopted the position that organ donation is an act of self-sacrificing love, “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” (Jevandjelje po Jovanu 3:16; The Holy Synod of The Church of Greece, Bioethics committee 2007 cited in: Čović 2023, 137). The Greek Orthodox Church “protects and supports everything that goes beyond individualism and dependence on biological life and which binds people through a mutual connection and a sense of community, just like anything that proves the supremacy of spiritual life over biological survival; with respect and a special sensitivity it stands before the mystery of life and death just like before the psychosomatic unity that is man” (The Holy Synod of The Church of Greece, Bioethics Committee 2007). Since organ donation has to be performed with explicit consent, cell donation or tissue donation from an embryo is unacceptable, considering that an embryo is a living being and cannot provide consent (The Holy Synod of The Church of Greece, Bioethics committee 2007).

The Russian Orthodox Church considers being a donor an expression of love and compassion, but also warns that prolonging the life of one individual cannot shorten the life of another, as well as that the development of this field of medicine, by increasing the need for necessary organs, leads to certain moral dilemmas and presents a potential threat for society (Официальный портал Белорусской православной Церкви 2015 cited in: Čović 2023, 138). It warns that unfair promotion of donorhood or the commercialization of transplantation-related activities set the stage for

trading in human body parts, thus threatening the life and health of people' (Официальный портал Белорусской православной Церкви, 2015).

Judaism encourages organ donation and eye and tissue donation for the purpose of saving a life. The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative Movement issued a statement that organ donation post mortem represents not only an act of kindness, but also is a 'commanded obligation' which saves human lives, while refusing to take part in organ donation violates the commandment: "Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor," which obligates individuals to use any possible resource to save a life (Solomon 2001 cited in: Čović 2023, 141).

Certain Muslim ulama (scholars) and mufti (scholars interpreting Islamic law) from South Asia are opposed to organ donation, pointing out that the human body has an *amanet* or a covenant from God which is why it must not be violated after death, and human organ donation among people of the same faith is proposed only by some orthodox Jews and certain Islamic ulema/mufti (Bruzzone 2008 cited in: Čović 2023, 136).

In Islam, individuals with legal authority unanimously prohibit organ donation, especially in the case of the heart or the (entire) liver from a living donor, citing that it is tantamount to murder of the donor, and transplants are forbidden for any organs which would lead to a significant disruption in the life of the donor, even if they were not to die, for instance in the case of cornea removal from both eyes of the donor (Suheil 2023, 210–211). Modern Fiqh guidelines in this area distinguish between organs responsible for the transmission of genetic material to progeny, such as the testicles and ovaries, and those that do not, and so prohibit the transplantation of the former, considering that the transplantation of sex glands, such as the testicles and ovaries, includes tissue which continues to transfer and secrete the genetic material of the donor, even after being transplanted into a new host (Saudi Society for Studies in Medical Jurisprudence 2023, 211 cited in: Čović 2023, 140).

When we refer to the small number of donated organs and performed transplants in Serbia, the reasons can, in addition to the distrust caused by the conflict in Kosovo and Metohija, also be found in the high levels of corruption, the long-term lack of any complete and precise legal framework, but also in the fact that the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) does not have any official document which in a clear and unambiguous way outlines its stance on bioethics issues such as *in-vitro* fertilization, surrogacy, organ donation and euthanasia, unlike the Russian Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. Such a document would certainly be useful,

considering the respect that the SOC enjoys among the citizens (Čović 2023). The Serbian Orthodox Church issued a statement on October 22 that the Holy Assembly of Bishops in 2004 adopted a position whereby it acquiesces to organ transplantation, if the donor has voluntarily bequeathed their organs and if the donor's family has provided their consent postmortem, in response to the claims of the Ministry of Health that they have for some time been waiting for a response from the SOC regarding organ donation and that the discussion on the issue with the representatives of the Church 'is not ongoing' (*Radio Slobodna Evropa* 2024). The Holy Assembly of Bishops affirms organ transplantation from living individuals if it does not endanger the life of the donor, as well as if "the death of the donor was determined by a professional committee of doctors in accordance with medical ethics," it was stated in the announcement (*Radio Slobodna Evropa* 2024).

According to the results of research conducted in Serbia, young people trust the Church more than political institutions, and the same applies to the general population. When asked whom they trust the most, the respondents put scientists in first place (37%), then people from their environment (33%), the Church (20%), and politicians in the end (10%) (Demostat 2023). Therefore, the Church's contribution and active participation through clearer guidelines and conversations in solving this issue by promoting organ donation and transplantation would be, for sure, desirable and significant. Also, in order to achieve a better understanding of the legal, medical and ethical implications of scientific and technological developments, in particular for young people, the State, in cooperation with the Church, medical organisations and universities, should encourage bioethics education and training at all levels.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Organ donation and transplantation is a very complex issue from a legal and medical standpoint, but also from the standpoint of secular and ecclesiastical bioethics. Bioethics is inextricably bound to theology and philosophy and poses the question of overcoming moral dilemmas between the canonized knowledge of the human body and new technologies, that is, of the boundaries and ethical nature of their use to improve human life. The findings of applied biology and medicine are vital when it comes to their use to help people; however, showing respect for the dignity of a human being as God's creation must never be

brought into question. In that sense, the decision on who needs to have priority regarding organ transplantation must be based exclusively on medical factors and not on age, gender, religion, social position, or other similar criteria. In addition, organ transplantation should be performed in the context of love and respect for the dignity of human nature, which requires that donated organs never be offered for sale and that the act itself be motivated by mutual compassion, empathy, and selflessness among people, the wellbeing of an individual and society as a whole. Therefore, it could be said that based on all the above the existence of a certain level of individual and social maturity and spirituality is necessary, and above all an ordered legislative system, a clear theoretical framework, low levels of corruption, and firm trust on the part of the citizens in the state, its institutions, and its representatives. This complex process requires time, dedication to a shared cause, and cooperation between all the key social factors so that they, along with the citizens, can create a society in which the most vulnerable groups would be recognized and whose needs would come first as a priority.

Sadly, the Republic of Serbia has not advanced very far on this journey. It could be concluded that the citizens on waiting lists for organ transplants (and those who are yet to be on those lists) are victims of the war conflicts of the 1990s, the lack of a clear and complete legal framework, the expressed distrust of state and healthcare institutions, and of the high level of corruption in the country, which has become one of the main instigators of the greatest student and civil protests in modern state history. Time will tell how many years will be needed for more significant progress to occur in this field, as well as how many lives will be lost in the meantime.

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ПРАВНИ И ЕТИЧКИ АСПЕКТИ ДОНАЦИЈЕ ОРГАНА: ИЗМЕЂУ АЛТРУИЗМА И (НЕ)ПОВЕРЕЊА***

Резиме

Република Србија се налази на последњем месту у Европи и међу последњима у свету по броју реализованих трансплантација. У раду ће бити дат преглед релевантне правне регулативе и изазови са којима се суочавају сви којима је донација органа неопходна, након што је Уставни суд Републике Србије утврдио да су одредбе члана 23. Закона о трансплантацији људских органа из 2018. године које се односе на донацију органа умрлог лица и одредбе члана 28. Закона о људским ћелијама и ткивима, које прописују услове за даривање ткива, неуставне, уз осврт на религијска становишта о овом актуелном правном, медицинском и биоетичком питању. Такође, током пандемије Ковид-19 смањен је број донираних и трансплантираних органа, а у постковид периоду неретко се постављало питање поверења становништва у здравствене системе држава и Светску здравствену организацију, а у вези с тим и утицаја (не)поверења на одлуку појединаца да се појаве у улози потенцијалних донора, нарочито у државама које се суочавају са високим степеном корупције у свим областима, као и у ратним

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подручјима где се повећава могућност недозвољене трговине органима на црном тржишту. Ауторке закључују да ратни сукоби, не(постојање) јасног и потпуног законодавног оквира, као и степен поверења у државне и здравствене институције, директно утичу на број донора и извршених трансплантација у држави.

Кључне речи: донација органа, биоетика, Република Србија, право ЕУ, трговина органима

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IDEOLOGY PLACEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CINEMA'S EMANCIPATION FROM NARRATIVE VIA ATMOSPHERE**

Abstract

As advertising transitioned from intrusive propaganda to seductive experience, it freed its visual dimension from the constraints of representation and allowed it to develop in a process of free experimentation, much like the avant-garde tendencies in contemporary art. When this new aesthetic found its way into cinema, it also allowed TV series and later films to break free from narrative and exploit the full potential of cinema as technology. With its emancipation from narrative, cinema became less representational and increasingly science-fictional at the level of (visual) form. This process thus opens up new aesthetic and technological perspectives that appear alien in their distinction from the narratives we were used to in classic cinema. At the same time, this new, technologically mutated cinema also tends towards horror at the level of content. In this paper we will illustrate this transition from cinema based on narrative to cinema based on atmosphere, through an analysis of several examples: *Underwater*, *Euphoria*, *Too Old to Die*

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Young, Blade Runner 2049, Ghost in the Shell, Neon Demon, It Comes at Night, Thelma, Life and The Blackcoat's Daughter.

Keywords: ideology placement, atmosphere, science fiction, horror, cinema, technology, alienness

INTRODUCTION

Watching *Underwater*,¹ a visually striking masterpiece of a new wave of science fiction and horror hybrids, one gets the impression that it represents a culmination of a silent revolution in science fiction and horror cinema – silent in the sense that it contained no political agenda, no declarations and no manifestos, but was a purely visual and technological revolution in the original meaning of the word, as a return to cinema's original but now forgotten promise to abolish narrative-dominated media.

Underwater is Lovecraftian not only in the most obvious sense (through its depiction of a giant otherworldly eldritch monstrosity), but also in the sense that the plot and characters are merely vehicles for the experience of cosmic horror rather than centrepieces around which the film would revolve. However, it is also hyper-Lovecraftian in the sense that the experience of cosmic horror can only be described in literature, whereas cinema can actually realise it through the use of advanced computer-generated visual effects. Visual effects have a function that challenges rather than complements the traditional use of narrative in cinema, i.e., a use that has been inherited from literature and theatre and has prevented the full development of cinema's potential as a cultural technology.

What made this silent revolution possible was the unfolding of said possibilities of cinema in a low genre that had been overlooked and ignored by narrative and could, therefore, develop independently from it: advertising in its various contemporary forms, including music videos. Experiments with non-narrative visual forms subsequently invaded cinema proper in two ways: by replacing narrative messages with visually induced and technologically mediated atmospheres and by transforming science fiction and horror as – genres most open to technological experimentation. While recent science fiction contains

¹ *Underwater* (2020), dir. William Eubanks, 20th Century Fox.

the results of the silent revolution in cinema on the level of form, recent horror contains them on the level of content, as an alien experience. Both also tend towards a mutual hybridisation, since the use of alien perspectives always evokes horror, and playing with horror at the level of content always requires alien perspectives of science fiction.

THE END OF IDEOLOGY PLACEMENT

When cinema still counted as a stand-alone artistic entity, i.e., before the advent of mass internet distribution of media content through streaming platforms and before the dominance of film began to break down with the advent of more-than-TV series, a critique of ideology in film used to be relatively easy because ideology featured in cinema in just two simple ways: as pre-algorithmic advertising and as pre-capitalist propaganda.

Pre-algorithmic advertising was an intrusive promotion of certain products and consisted of old-fashioned ads of modest effectiveness (the main problem with old-fashioned advertising on television was to prevent viewers from changing the channel when commercials came on, so ads were usually placed before key scenes in a film). In the films themselves (as opposed to the insertion of advertising unrelated to the film when it is shown on television), old-fashioned advertising took the form of product placement. Such product placements were more or less subtle, but in most cases it was not difficult to recognise, expose, and criticise them as expressions of consumer ideology or the like because the advertising in films was just as simple, awkward, and intrusive as the advertising outside cinema.

Another way ideology worked in the film was the old-fashioned way, which was, if we used an analogy to product placement – ideology placement. Just as early capitalism first adopted certain pre-capitalist social relations of production before it could develop its own new, genuinely capitalist social relations and subsequently discarded the old ones in the process of real subsumption (Krašovec 2021), so it first adopted and used (until the late 20th century) pre-capitalist forms of ideology and only later began to replace them with new, capitalist ones. Pre-capitalist ideology in capitalist use takes the form of propaganda, i.e., a technique of mass broadcasting with historical origins in the *ancien régime*, whereby a particular group of people imposes certain forms of thinking on the rest of society. This old-fashioned form of propaganda is,

in developed capitalism, experienced as annoying, forced, and intrusive. When it enters cinema, it is not difficult to recognize and criticise it as ideology. Any film that contains traditional propaganda can be exposed as promoting this or that (racist, sexist, colonial or, on the other hand, liberal, progressive, etc.) ideology.

Both forms in which traditional propaganda invades cinema (as product placement and as ideology placement) are similar to each other: old-fashioned advertising is also a kind of propaganda. However, after a common beginning and early similarities between political and economic propaganda when early capitalism still used *ancien régime* techniques of political propaganda for its own economic purposes, their later development became divergent (both within and outside cinema).

From the mid-1960s onwards, economic advertising ceased to be propaganda. Modern advertising techniques abandoned the old, simplistic jingles and replaced them with more intelligent copies, which no longer aggressively promote a particular product but are rather witty plays on words that also incorporate avant-garde visual and sound techniques and value attraction over imposition. Advertising is thus no longer an imitation of propagandistic intrusiveness but an imitation of seduction (Baudrillard [1979] 2001). This is also evident in the visual style of contemporary commercials, which no longer emphasize the benefits of the products advertised, but the allure of graphic design, colours and typography in an attempt to lend charm and coolness to a particular product or brand.

Mid-20th century critical theory has already taken note of this breakthrough in advertising as a transition from a pre-spectacle within the society of needs to an actual spectacle within the society of desires (Situationist International [1962] 2006). As predicted by Tarde ([1902] 2007), advertising broke away from the limited circuits of needs and began to arouse potentially unlimited desires, in line with the capitalist imperative of a boundless expansion of economic production (Heinrich [2004] 2012, 102). In advertising and marketing literature, this shift is described as a shift from advertising products to advertising experiences of particular atmospheres (Biehl-Missal and Saren 2012).

However, although advertising underwent the aforementioned aesthetic, visual, and discursive changes, transforming from intrusive to seductive and evolving from crude propaganda techniques to aesthetic experiences, it was still focused on products. Thus, the most avant-garde forms of advertising had to emerge elsewhere – first as music videos (MTV era in the 1990s) and later as opening sequences of TV series

(HBO era in the 2000s). Music videos and opening sequences of TV series are still forms of advertising, except that the advertised product is the advertising itself, i.e., there is no difference between them – music videos advertise a visual and aural experience of a particular song, using film techniques, avant-garde graphic design, and animation; TV opening sequences are not advertisements for anything else and are themselves parts of the TV series they introduce. The difference between advertising and the advertised disappears.

As mentioned, capitalism initially adopted the political propaganda techniques of the *ancien régime* but later discarded them and replaced them with advertising as seduction. This transition from the techniques of imposition to the techniques of seduction also shifted the focus from text, discourse, language, and meaning to images, typography, graphic design, animation, and sound and from a discursive, text-based narrative (which also includes, or at least enables, a critical reading of ideology) to a sensual and affective experience – ideology is now no longer a message with a discursive meaning that needs to be decoded, but an experience of a certain atmosphere.

This raises certain problems for a traditional theory of ideology based on text, language, and discourse (Kittler [1986] 1999, 1–19) and corresponds to a broader and longer process of the decline of writing as a dominant media form (Leroi-Gourhan [1964] 1993, 187–216) and its displacement by visual media based on digital technologies (Flusser [1987] 2011). On the other hand, contemporary cinema has no problem accepting and incorporating the aesthetics of commercials and music videos in a process in which advanced visual techniques, initially seen only in the opening sequences, are beginning to define the aesthetics of TV series as a whole. In the 2000s, TV series evolved from the low culture of television to the high culture of cinema, only to again hybridize with elements of low culture (advertising, music videos) in the 2010s without ever losing their quality or appeal. As advertising and music videos become more sophisticated and refined, it is also increasingly rare to find crude and direct product placement in contemporary television. What we encounter instead is a hyper-aestheticised experience placement, where displays of fashion and interior design are mixed, gestures and facial expressions are mixed with computer-generated visual and sound effects, and language is the function of atmosphere rather than narrative.

ATMOSPHERE PLACEMENT IN *EUPHORIA* AND *TOO OLD TO DIE YOUNG*

In such a situation it is hard to identify this or that ideology in TV series and criticise them in the traditional way – we can only say that this or that TV series works for us (or not) or that we like it (or not). They resist analyses that look for false consciousness, ideological manipulation, or (mis)representation. Two interesting examples of TV series that are both aesthetically and visually avant-garde as well as productive of a special atmosphere are *Euphoria*² and *Too Old to Die Young*.³ Both are, in a way, ideological, but what is ideological about them cannot be reduced to a discursive political message. They contain several scenes that look like extended music videos (the car chase in the fifth episode of *Too Old to Die Young* could also be used as a stand-alone music video for the soundtrack, Barry Manilow's 1974 song Mandy), and their use of colour and lighting is similar to contemporary commercials. Both are examples of the next generation of TV series developing their own high-tech aesthetics resistant to any kind of ideological critique developed through analyses of traditional television and film.

Too Old to Die Young is the more right-wing of the two – not so much because it conveys right-wing messages or ideas, but because of its atmosphere of coldness and cosmic indifference to life, interspersed with outbursts of cruelty and senseless violence, which is precisely an affective atmosphere of fascism (Dick [1962] 1992, 32–33). When we watch *Too Old to Die Young*, we can sense a total non-attachment to anything, a Buddhism without compassion, a dark mindfulness that counters the indifference of the universe towards us with its own indifference towards the universe. Nicholas Winding Refn has been developing his own unique brand of horror as a kind of dark, esoteric Buddhism (as opposed to the exoteric, nice guy mainstream Buddhism of figures like Richard Gere), at least since *Valhalla Rising*.⁴ The non-attachment, expressed in the facial expressions of the main characters and in their silence and combined with visual and acoustic effects causes the viewer to experience an unsettling empathy that doesn't refer to a specific affect but to the complete absence of affect, i.e., depression. Although Refn's

² *Euphoria* (2019), created by Sam Levinson, HBO.

³ *Too Old to Die Young* (2019), created by Nicolas Winding Refn, Amazon Prime.

⁴ *Valhalla Rising* (2009), directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, Nimbus.

characters, at least since *Drive*,⁵ are often misdiagnosed as autistic, they actually enact depression as the endgame of non-attachment. Depression as zero affect is the *sunyata* of Refn's dark esoteric Buddhism and is perfected in *Copenhagen Cowboy*'s⁶ Miu. Refn's films and TV series do not propagate this or that ideology at the level of their message but allow us to see the (social) world as it feels from the perspective of depression when all emotional investment in and attachment to the world ceases and its senselessness and violence is cast in a stark light. Waves of violence feel both inevitable and unmotivated and as beyond morality and causal explanations (Krašovec 2023b).

While depressive atmosphere(s) have always had a complicated history with right-wing thought and culture (Fox 2009), *Euphoria*, on the other hand, seems more left-wing – not because it seeks to impose a particular discursively formulated left-wing ideology on its viewers, but again because of the atmosphere it creates through its specific aesthetics. What used to be ideology placement (by analogy with product placement) is now a placement of visually (and aurally) stimulated affective experiences, and what makes *Euphoria* special is that it is one of the rare examples of left-wing affective experiences that does not feel forced or ideological in the old-fashioned way. While many recent TV series (such as *Sex Education*)⁷ – while well-written, well-acted, well-filmed, and well-produced – feel off because of their frequent use of the old-fashioned ideology placement (Christian characters are always portrayed as mean hypocrites, the ensemble of main characters always look like their identities were picked straight out of a diversity handbook and statements on reprehensible right-wing issues like incels are always the exact replications of opinions propagated by leading liberal media voices), *Euphoria* perfectly captures the flow of current cultural mutations.

Euphoria is a great example of a general tendency in the development of its media since cinema as technology can only develop freely in marginal areas (detached from the constraints of narrative and the tradition of theatre and literature), e.g., in advertising and music videos, which are considered irrelevant from the perspective of "serious cinema." However, once they are developed far enough, these non-narrative forms begin to invade and overwhelm cinema as a whole. The entry point for their invasion is the opening sequence of a TV series, but it does not stop there

⁵ *Drive* (2011), directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, FimDistrict.

⁶ *Copenhagen Cowboy* (2023), created by Nicolas Winding Refn, Netflix.

⁷ *Sex Education* (2019), created by Laurie Nunn, Netflix.

– *Euphoria* is an example of a hybrid form in which narrative, characters and their mutual relationships, as well as story arc(s), are still present, but are modified and augmented through the use of visual and sound techniques first developed in advertising media. This additional layer of technological effects is precisely what makes it possible to translate what would otherwise be a crude, direct ideological message into an affective atmosphere. In other words, the ability to create an atmosphere is a function of the technological development of computer-generated graphics, effects, lighting, and sound.

Euphoria functions as a smooth and seamless ideology-as-atmosphere placement, where the visual and aural sophistication is not a function of the ideological message but rather is that message itself. We can measure the evolution of the medium by comparing *Euphoria* to the iconic 1990s teen TV series *Beverly Hills 90210*,⁸ in which young adults also play teenagers caught up in the culture wars of the time, but *Beverly Hills 90210* is much cruder by comparison. For example, while one of its characters, Donna, when caught smoking in a car park behind the school, is scolded by her classmates (old-fashioned direct ideology placement in a discursive form), *Euphoria* functions not by judgment enacted through discursive instruction but by establishing a relationship of affective empathy with emotionally and existentially complex situations of interracial sexual relations, addiction, mental health problems, body dysmorphia, depressive hedonia (Fisher 2009, 21–22) and toxic social relations. In other words, *Euphoria* does not delineate right from wrong or normal from deviant but makes us feel complex and ambivalent situations such as transitioning, addiction or social exclusion. Much like Gaspar Noé's *Climax*,⁹ which does not represent a bad trip but lets us experience it with all the disorientation, nausea, and cognitive fractures that come with it, *Euphoria* is not a representation of the lives of Generation Z and the current culture wars, but their emulation and at the same time a part of them (new media production is an inseparable part of current lifeworlds and everyday cultures and not a separate level of their representation).

In this sense, *Euphoria* is beyond morality (since any moral judgment necessarily presupposes a separation of judgment from what is being judged): drugs are not an evil that corrodes our societies, but an inevitable part of a society of constant stimulation (Crawford 2023),

⁸ *Beverly Hills 90210* (1990), created by Darren Star, Fox.

⁹ *Climax* (2018), directed by Gaspar Noé, Wild Bunch.

so that the question is not drugs yes or no, but drugs how and when; queering is not a political programme or message, but an experiment with unpredictable results; making money with OnlyFans is not a disgrace, but a social game among many other; being right-wing is not an ultimate evil, but another affective constellation (obsessive-compulsive disorder, repressed homosexuality). The experience of the affective atmosphere of Generation Z, which *Euphoria* makes us feel, is a situation where there is no good and evil, no right and wrong ideas, and no right and wrong sides of history. Today's culture is a war zone with many micro-atmospheres whose weapons are not moral or political values but attraction. Traditional ideologies, morals, and political programmes are being displaced by a multitude of visuals, gestures, facial expressions, speech styles, and soundtracks without any transcendental evaluation criteria. Culture war is a matter of taste, desire, and affect.

The atmosphere of the right side in this culture war is cold, obsessive, depressive, non-attached, (self)destructive, and nihilistic, while the atmosphere of the left side is hedonistic, burnt out, anxious, and hyperactive. From the perspective of traditional politics and morality, such affective micro-atmospheres necessarily appear pathological. However, if we put moral prejudice aside, the current affective micro-atmospheres are not a deficiency in terms of the eternal values of reason and judgment but an effect of the process in which forms of power based on discipline (and old media technologies such as writing) are losing control and top-down command systems are giving way to chaotic and unpredictable horizontal power relations (Deleuze [1990] 1992).

SCIENCE FICTION CULTURE

As early as 1971, Ballard (1971) noted that everything was becoming science fiction and that all cultural forms were tending towards something that used to be a marginal and pulp genre. However, science fiction's growth in cultural significance never consisted of its convergence with the forms and criteria of bourgeois high culture – it was (and still is) rather the other way round: bourgeois culture itself was forced to become more and more technological and alien and less and less theatrical and poetic. Bourgeois culture, based on the written word, could not escape the effects of the cultural mutations associated with the new media technologies, but that does not mean it took them well. (Post)bourgeois culture is currently a war zone, an Alamo of the humanist spirit, full of

emergencies, security measures, nervous twitches, and general irritability (Krašovec 2023a).

The technological acceleration of culture is a nightmare for (post) bourgeois culture, as it does not respect its procedures and criteria but invades and transforms its main cultural forms, such as literature and cinema, that used to be the epitomes of a humanistic spirit. Today, both literature and cinema are sites of alien invasion from the future. While humanist writers still write about social life and existential questions, Chinese science fiction superstar Liu Cixin (2013) diagnoses the current state of literature as follows: “[...] literature has always given me the impression of indulging an intense anthropocentric narcissism.” In his programmatic essay, he highlights star constellations, galaxies, the laws of physics, and the universe itself, rather than human individuals, as the main characters of the literary text. In comparison, the great motifs of traditional literature appear as petty brooding of marginal and hopelessly self-absorbed creatures.

The innovations of science fiction, which is mainstreaming itself in line with a ubiquitous technologisation of everyday life, are transforming culture into a grey zone where high and low cultures swap places. High is replaced by hype and is no longer defined by exclusive bourgeois cultural institutions and rituals but by massive viral affective contagions (Sampson 2012) mediated by new media technologies. In light of this, all of today’s culture is sci-fi, even if its subjects and materials do not fit the criteria of the genre – DJ sets, TV series, music videos and cinema are all, even if their content is not, science fiction at the level of their material production and sensory reception. Only Jonathan Franzen can still write without the internet. Introspective, lyrical, existential, and other forms of culture centred on human stories and dramas alone, are no longer elite culture but examples of obstinacy and anachronism. At the same time, even what remains of traditional literature and narrative-bound cinema is no longer faithful to the canonical procedures of bourgeois culture. According to Moretti (2013, 169–187), Ibsen was still able to hold his gaze in the face of the abyss of techno-capital and its cold indifference to bourgeois life and culture, while today’s (post)bourgeois literature and cinema mostly ignores the world of automated and autonomous capital (Camatte 2014), preferring existential reflections and social chronicling instead. Science fiction (in its broadest sense), on the other hand, captures and transforms the great motifs of obsolete bourgeois culture. The big

questions of what it means to be human and what makes us so are now asked by *Blade Runner 2049*¹⁰ and *Ghost in the Shell*.¹¹

Science fiction in cinema today is both hybrid and ambivalent. Occasional slow close-ups of the protagonists' faces meditatively pondering the metaphysical questions of human identity and existence offer traditional cinephiles (who otherwise abhor the science fiction aesthetics of high-tech visual culture forms such as commercials and music videos) a chance to tune in but also elicit cringe from science fiction fans; while, on the other hand, the stream of computer-generated and mediated images and animation that captivates fans makes cinephiles (who have forgotten that cine in their title means kinetic) seasick (as the equivalent of seasickness, but on spaceships).

Bourgeois culture, however, does not go gently into the night. There is still a certain cultural inertia, especially around art cinemas and film festivals, that is, producing films that expose burning social issues of the present or cut deep into intimate human relationships. Reflection, once a philosopher's stone of traditional bourgeois culture, is now a form of bad conscience and a method of penance for the ecstasy we feel at the sight of hypnotic computer-generated effects, which are becoming less and less special and more and more ordinary and integral parts of cinema itself, regardless of its genre. The new, fast, mutant science fiction films do not make us think but draw us into their zone (which is exactly the opposite of the bourgeois comfort zone, involving slow, peaceful, and deep contemplation) – although watching science fiction effects involves frenetic sensory and brain activity, it does not give us time to think.

Since narrative tends to hold cinema hostage and subject it to the archaic constraints of theatre and literature, science-fiction cinema is at its best when it frees itself from the inhibitions of narrative. Adherence to narrative would force cinema into a depiction of human relations and the social world while abandoning narrative releases its true technological and cultural potential, which goes beyond what literature and theatre can offer, as foreseen by the Soviet avant-garde filmmaker Dziga Vertov (1985). Contrary to Vertov's bold predictions, however, film technology had to wait almost a century before it finally came into its own, and contrary to his expectations, the emancipation of film technology came not through revolutionary rupture but through the lowest and most commercial forms of capitalist culture.

¹⁰ *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), directed by Denis Villeneuve, Warner Bros.

¹¹ *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), directed by Rupert Sanders, Paramount.

For example, *Neon Demon*¹² is a hybrid mixture of music videos and advertising-inspired visuals rather than a traditional film with a linear narrative. It draws on low, commercial cultural forms that were never under the spell of narrative and were, for that reason, able to fully exploit the possibilities of film technology and to combine them with computer graphics and animation. Even in the scenes that follow a traditional cinema-as-drama template, for example, a scene showing an audition for new models, *Neon Demon* seems as alien and frightening as in the more explicit horror scenes. Even though the film has no meaningful message at the level of content, *Neon Demon* shows what cinema is capable of when it emancipates itself from the narrative. To paraphrase Deleuze's ([1962] 1983, 57) Nietzsche: narrative separates cinema from what it can do.

The narrative perspective characteristic of anachronistic cinema-as-drama is always anthropocentric, i.e., an experiential perspective of the individual human subject, and thus a perspective that is limited and inhibiting in comparison to the ones made possible by film technology. While cinema as drama uses this first-person perspective and its familiar angles and distances, cinema mutated by science fiction culture does not represent the social world or imitate its perspective(s) but opens up perspectives that are invisible and inaccessible to the organic eye (Vertov 1985). Thus, new perspectives made possible by the use of all the possibilities of film technology do not lead to reflection (on the contrary, reflection is what we do with familiar perspectives since films that make full use of their technological possibilities exceed human mental reaction time and do not leave time and concentration necessary for reflection as a form of mental peristalsis), but rather to something closer to vertigo.

SCIENCE FICTION HORROR HYBRIDS

At the first film projections, visitors fled not because they were afraid of the image of the speeding train but because they were afraid of the radical alienness of the new perspective made possible by the cinema technology itself (while a speeding train was a familiar sight, seeing it from a new perspective as if lying on the tracks was not). Such alien perspectives were soon (at least temporarily) domesticated by cinema as drama, where the perspectives were always familiar ones, i.e., either a first-person view or a side view of social events, but the potential of

¹² *Neon Demon* (2016), directed by Nicolas Winding Refn, Amazon MGM.

horror remained at the core of cinema as a technological and cultural form. It is precisely this potential for the horror that makes cinema so attractive and irresistible, and films that move us or make us think have their potential cancelled out by narrative (we can be moved by poetry or made to think by articles in *The Guardian* but there is nothing especially cinematic about either experience). A static or slow-moving camera simulating a perspective familiar to everyday life (the same human faces and body parts from familiar angles) is the feature of cinema as drama, while science fiction cinema favours action, movement, and speed over dialogue and contemplation, and tends to replace linear storylines with time-travel loops, and psychological development of human characters with explorations of the inhuman, machinic or alien subjectivities beyond human psychology.

Contemporary science fiction developments might mean that cinema as a technological and cultural form is finally coming of age, as the main character Matsoko Kusanagi puts it in the final scene of the original animated version of *Ghost in the Shell*.¹³ Just as children stop behaving childishly when they grow up, Kusanagi also gives up her human ego and personal identity and begins to explore the possibilities of machinic subjectivity. From this perspective, childhood would be something limited, like cinema bound by patterns it inherited from literature and theatre, and cinema's coming of age would mean that it abandons the childlike narrative and begins to mutate into a purely visual-cinematic technological and cultural form. It would also mean that human characters and their psychology would play an increasingly diminished role and that visual effects, movement, and montage would play an ever greater one. This would be science fiction at the level of form or cultural technology even in cinema that does not feature aliens or spaceships.

Perhaps an era when science fiction was defined by specific content was the infantile, immature era of the genre, which is now coming to an end. Traditional science fiction films were often just costume dramas or space operas, essentially dealing with the same existential questions that drama films do and adding space scenography to the still earthly, too-earthly themes. In contrast, adult science fiction cinema is science fiction not in what it tells but in what it does – from this perspective, the new 2017 version of *Ghost in the Shell*, despite a disappointing narrative about human identity that falls far short of the original version's insights

¹³ *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), directed by Mamoru Oshii, Shochiku.

at the level of content, is, at the level of form, closer to the futuristic montage and animation of the opening sequences of cult HBO series (such as *True Blood*¹⁴ or *True Detective*¹⁵ or Rihanna's music videos than it is to its costume drama genre peers of the past.

There is no linear, continuous process of development from space opera to today's science fiction. The latter rather stems from cultural niches and interstices, overlooked by narrative and free from the critical gaze and bourgeois judgments of taste: teasers, trailers, opening sequences, music videos, and commercials. Only when it succeeds in detaching itself from narrative and drama can cinema actually develop as cinema, and it is this formal development and not any specific content that makes cinema science fiction at the level of technological form. On a visual level, that is, on a level where the film touches us directly and without the mediation of narrative, the dystopian atmosphere of *Blade Runner 2049* is not so much a techno-visual representation of a mental reflection on future society (although it contains narrative, the narrative of *Blade Runner 2049* is more a retroactive rationalisation of its techno-visual images than their driving force), but rather a technological effect of the film itself in the present. It is experienced as a dystopian horror not so much because it allegorically says something about our present society or its possible unpleasant futures, but because it deviates so drastically from the everyday perception of society as drama and life as a scenario. This discrepancy, in which we see not the expected and the familiar but radically alien perspectives, angles, and speeds, reawakens the primary experience of cinema as an ecstatic vertigo that combines euphoria and anxiety. After a century of the predominance of cinema-as-drama, it is the hyperkinetic special effects of contemporary science fiction that revive cinema as horror on the level of (technological) form.

As soon as it emancipates itself from narrative and drama, today's technologically infused and mediated science fiction cinema begins to lean towards horror. A recent example is *Life*,¹⁶ a hybrid of science fiction and horror that does not deal with human issues and is not a drama on a spaceship, but an encounter with a radical, terrifying, and violent alienness. Cinema is an ideal medium for horror because of the primal alienness of the cinema experience itself, and horror has been inextricably linked to the experience of film as technology since its

¹⁴ *True Blood* (2008), created by Alan Ball, HBO.

¹⁵ *True Detective* (2013), created by Nic Pizzolatto, HBO.

¹⁶ *Life* (2017), directed by Daniel Espinosa, Sony.

inception. It is, therefore, not unusual that science fiction cinema, when emancipated from narrative, also tends towards horror on the level of content. Cinema technology – unlike horror literature, which can only describe an experience of horror due to inherent technological limitations of the medium of writing (Kittler [1986] 1999) – can actually enact an experience of horror in its fullness.

This process of hybridisation between science fiction and horror can also be observed on the other side – in the horror genre. Whereas traditional horror films were, similarly to traditional science fiction, costume dramas with vampires and zombies and allegories of human society with its mundane, all-too-human evils, more recent and advanced horror cinema is increasingly becoming both horror as technology at the level of form and horror as an experience of radical alienness at the level of content.

An example of the first case is *Thelma*,¹⁷ which very much follows the conventions of coming-of-age drama in terms of its content and whose story has nothing particularly horrific about it – childhood psychological abuse, guilt, controlling parents, emotional blackmail, and so on are nothing unusual or alien to human society and daily life. On the other hand, *Thelma* counters its main narrative with a number of high-tech horror scenes that lean more towards the aesthetics of music videos and commercials than traditional cinema, such as disorienting sudden shifts in perspective during a psychogenic seizure in a swimming pool scene, or unsettling stroboscopic lighting effects during a neurological examination scene. If one were to watch *Thelma* as a drama, one would get an unexceptional story about the claustrophobic experience of growing up in rural Norway and the subsequent difficulties in establishing and maintaining intimate relationships due to the religious repression of female sexuality. However, the main character Thelma's inexplicable supernatural mental condition serves as an entry point for genuine horror scenes. Since they are not a function of narrative, these horror scenes do not so much illustrate the story as hijack it as alien invaders that take advantage of any gap in the narrative to sabotage it. What started as a move away from propaganda to seduction in the context of advertising found its final form as an intense experience of horror-as-technology at the level of form in the context of cinema.

¹⁷ *Thelma* (2017), directed by Joachim Trier, SF Norge.

An example of the latter – horror as an experience of radical alienness at the level of content – is *It Comes at Night*,¹⁸ whereby the final escalation of violence and murder is a *non sequitur* in relation to the preceding narrative development of the film since nothing hints at or leads to it. On the contrary, the two families who meet in a dystopian situation of an outbreak of a mysterious, incurable, and deadly disease try their best to preserve their humanity and act rationally, but they still get caught in a paranoid loop and are drawn into a murderous insanity that is experienced as horror precisely because there is no way to explain it or determine its motive.

Another example of horror as an experience of radical alienness on the level of content is *The Blackcoat's Daughter*,¹⁹ where no attempts are made to explain or even rationalise the gruesome ritual murders, carried out by its teenage protagonists. Instead, the film accentuates the experience of horror evoked by the murders through purely visual, non-narrative techniques. The only clue to the probable cause of the murders is a persistent shadow of a dark, demonic figure, which, however, does not appear as an attempt to explain them but marks the intrusion of something inexplicable and alien. *The Blackcoat's Daughter* is precisely not an allegory of the issues involved in coming of age and the awakening of female sexuality, nor is it a critique of social repression within the education system. The film creates horror effects precisely because it disrupts its own narrative setting and continuity – there is a profound *non-sequitur* that separates teenage witches cutting off their victims' heads from the usual consequences of growing up in repressive school environments.

CONCLUSION

Emancipated from the narrative, cinema opens up a hitherto inhibited technological potential of inhuman perspectives at the level of form. At the same time and at the level of content, human stories and dramas are replaced by horror-inducing encounters with radical, inhuman, and inexplicable alienness. When science fiction cinema merges with horror, there is nothing left to reflect on or to understand, only hypnotic speed and cosmic fear.

¹⁸ *It Comes at Night* (2017), directed by Trey Edward Schults, A24.

¹⁹ *The Blackcoat's Daughter* (2017), directed by Oz Perkins, DIRECTV.

At the same time, this conclusion, of course, only applies to a certain niche of science fiction, horror, and their hybrids in contemporary cinema, while cinema as a whole is in no way beyond narrative, and drama is still the most common and dominant cultural form in cinema. The point of this essay was not to show that all of the cinema will or must get rid of narrative, but rather that some of it can and did (to an extent) and, in the process, realised more of the potential of cinema as a technology than more ordinary films; and that sticking to narrative, inherited from written cultural forms such as literature, acts as an inhibition on mentioned technological potentials of cinema.

Another important takeaway is that commercial cultural forms, rather than being predictable, schematic, and boring, as was a common accusation against it in the 20th-century critical theory (Adorno and Horkheimer [1948] 2002, 94–136), are today at the forefront of avant-garde experimentation and innovation precisely because they are not burdened by narrative. And since science fiction and horror are cinema genres least susceptible to narrative, this is where the most interesting fusions take place at the level of both (technological) form as well as content.

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ПЛАСИРАЊЕ ИДЕОЛОГИЈЕ У КОНТЕКСТУ ЕМАНЦИПАЦИЈЕ ФИЛМА ОД НАРАТИВА ПУТЕМ АТМОСФЕРЕ**

Резиме

Рад објашњава развој скорије научне фантастике и хорора у филму у контексту остварења авангардног потенцијала кинематографије као технолошке форме која се може еманциповати од наратива, значајног за књижевност и позориште, и тиме развити сасвим ново и другачије културно искуство од оног заснованог на тексту. Док је већина савремене кинематографије још увек везана на наратив, предност научне фантастике и хорора је да су више отворени и доступни за споменути тип формалног експериментисања који се крајем 20. века развио у комерцијалним облицима културе, пре свега у оглашавању. Основна теза рада је да научна фантастика и хорор нису (више) маргинални жанрови, него простор најбитнијих авангардних експеримента у данашњој кинематографији; и да комерцијална визуелна култура, из које вуку своју инспирацију, није ниска него прото-авангардна управо јер није – за разлику од буржоаских културних форми – везана уз текст и наратив. У овом раду се доказује како је оглашавање прешло из наметљиве пропаганде у заводљиво искуство, ослободило своју визуелну димензију ограничења репрезентације и омогућило јој да се развија у процесу слободног експериментисања налик на авангардне тенденције у савременој уметности. Када је ова нова естетика,

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прво развијена у културно маргиналним жанровима као што су рекламе и музички спотови, нашла свој пут у кинематографију, такође је почела да трансформише ТВ серије и касније филмове, омогућавајући им да се ослободе наратива и искористе њен пуни технолошки потенцијал. Својом еманципацијом од наратива везаног за књижевност и позориште, кинематографија је постала мање репрезентативна и оријентисана на приче о људима и њиховом животу те искуствима, а све више научнофантастична на нивоу (визуелне) форме. Овај процес тако отвара нове естетске и технолошке перспективе које изгледају страно по свом разликовању од наратива на које смо навикли у класичној кинематографији. Истовремено, ова нова, технолошки мутирана кинематографија такође тежи хорору на нивоу садржаја – хорору у смислу стране атмосфере која нарушава и поткопава наратив. Рад се састоји од увода, четири поглавља и закључка. У уводу се описује „тиха револуција” у визуелној култури касног 20. века која почиње са формалним и технолошким експериментима у оглашавању које се онда преносе у музичке спотове и у раном 21. веку преплављују кинематографију, првенствено научну фантастику и хорор. У првом поглављу „Крај пласирања идеологије” анализирали смо историјске промене оглашавања у 20. веку и закључили да капиталистичко оглашавање прво преузима облике (политичке) пропаганде, карактеристичне за *ancien régime* и употребљава их док не развије своје, капитализму примереније облике оглашавања који се не темеље толико на убеђивању него више на завођењу и не промовишу толико неку идеју или производ него више атмосферу и афективно искуство. У другом поглављу „Пласирање идеологије у *Euphoria* и *Too Old to Die Young*” ту тезу применили смо на споменуте ТВ серије које јесу политичне, али не на начин наметнуте идеологије у дискурзивном облику него управо на начин креирања левичарске (*Euphoria*) и десничарске (*Too Old to Die Young*) атмосфере, креиране визуелним средствима. У трећем поглављу „Научно фантастична култура”, анализирали смо научну фантастику у филму и растуће тежине техно-визуелних форми, у којима научна фантастика представља авангарду у савременој култури уопштено и расправљали смо о проблемима који представљају за класичну, уз текст, рефлексiju и наратив везану, буржоаску културу. У четвртном поглављу „Хибриди између научне фантастике и хорора” анализирали смо неколико примера и показали да су споменути жанрови битни јер су најдоступнији

за нову визуелну естетику, тј. грађење атмосфере и превазилажење наратива технолошким средствима, док је њихова међусобна разлика у томе да научна фантастика ту страну атмосферу више гради на нивоу форме, док је хорор гради на нивоу садржаја. У закључку смо сажели основне тезе и закључке рада и додали да представљена анализа не важи за савремену кинематографију генерално (јер је она још увек доминантно везана уз наратив) него само за одређене нише унутар ње које нису превладавајуће квантитативно него су битне више због својих авангардних квалитета.

Кључне речи: пласирање идеологије, атмосфера, научна фантастика, хорор, кинематографија, технологија, страност

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REVIEWS

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Book Review

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koncepti i merenja [Free and Fair Elections: Standards, Concepts, and Measurements]. Belgrade: FPN: Službeni glasnik, pp. 222.

FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS



Jovanović, Milan. 2023. *Slobodni i poštteni izbori: Standardi,*

In light of numerous electoral disputes in Serbia and the renewed focus of the domestic public on debates surrounding electoral reform and the electoral system as a whole, Professor Milan Jovanović's monograph "Free and Fair Elections" emerges as a timely and valuable contribution to both the theoretical and practical examination of this important and complex issue. From the very introduction, the author problematizes the terms "free" and "fair" elections, thereby setting a polemical tone for the entire book. In this way, he engages in a debate over terms frequently used in both public and expert discourse yet often treated as normative axioms without precise definitions or a clear understanding of what they actually entail.

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According to Jovanović, the electoral process has, to a large extent, become a battleground for questions of political distrust. It appears that even developed democracies in the 21st century have significantly deviated from the ideal image of elections as a functional mechanism for expressing citizens' free political will and for effectively translating their votes into seats in representative bodies – that, in turn, are expected to act in the best interest of the public. While this loss of trust may seem all too familiar to audiences in Serbia, it is by no means a uniquely domestic phenomenon. The proliferation of problems concerning global trust in electoral institutions (and the political system more broadly) is driven by a host of factors, many of which are not strictly political in nature. Perhaps most notable among them is the overwhelming availability of both verified and unverified information, along with citizens' ability (through social media and new technologies) not only to participate in public opinion but to shape it themselves, at any given moment, without any form of verification or accountability from responsible media or institutions.

When projected to the field of electoral processes, this situation of stark transparency places every possible mistake by electoral administrations under intense

scrutiny. At the same time, the public is becoming increasingly aware of the numerous opportunities for error, oversight, manipulation, or electoral fraud inherent in such a complex process. Complexity itself is an additional factor, where public misunderstanding of many of the electoral institutions only deepens distrust. And of course, in many countries, political actors often attempt to justify their own electoral outcomes by attributing them to manipulation by their opponents. In the broader context of democratic fatigue, declining voter turnout, the rise of populist parties, and waning trust in political processes, media, elites, and democratic institutions as a whole, it is only logical that trust in elections is also eroding. For this reason, the author argues – perhaps paradoxically – that it is of utmost importance to clearly define the concept of free and fair elections and, crucially, to adhere to that definition in the actual implementation of electoral procedures. The sheer scale of this process, as the most widespread political activity in any society, and the inherent complexity of elections, which involve a wide array of actions, inevitably contain numerous potential points of failure that can undermine the very idea of a free and fair contest. After all, Sartori famously described elections as the most manipulative instrument

of politics. Moreover, it is worth emphasizing once again that determining the criteria for the quality of elections is not only a matter of practical implementation but also of theoretical debate over the very meaning of the concepts involved.

It is precisely for this reason that the central chapters of Jovanović's book offer a significant synthesis of knowledge on this topic, presented across several complementary domains. One of them is a review of international electoral standards, their development, and practical application. The author emphasizes that globally there is no single binding document or universally accepted understanding of what a free electoral process should look like. Nevertheless, the general concept outlined in the 1950s soon became widespread through the efforts of international organizations, and later through organizations specifically focused on electoral processes. This concept, like many others in the social sciences, is naturally subject to reinterpretation and evolves in response to changing historical and societal contexts. Various international charters and conventions, valuable primarily for promoting a broader understanding of what electoral competition should ideally entail, may carry limited legal force, but they have played a key role in the diffusion of these ideas into national legal

frameworks, contributing to the standardization and unification of electoral laws. This has further led to similar legal definitions of electoral institutions across the globe, despite numerous differences in how those institutions are implemented, which are often shaped by cultural or political conditions.

The second important area of synthesis is an analytical review of influential theoretical concepts in political science literature: concepts that may, in fact, be even more diverse than the definitions of standards found in international documents. At this point, the author distinguishes between different phases of the electoral process where criteria for "free" and "fair" elections can be located: the pre-election period (including candidacy, campaigning, and preparatory activities), election day (focused on the voting process), and the post-election period (which encompasses the translation of votes into mandates, as well as the resolution of electoral disputes). To illustrate the variety of approaches, Jovanović compares the work of Elklit and Reynolds, who situate the assessment of electoral quality within the operational field of election management; with the ten variables of free elections proposed by Bishop and Hoeffler, which cover much broader societal framework, including media and legal standards, also engaging with the concept of

electoral competition, grounded in Sartori's assertion that the quality of an electoral process can be judged based on its competitiveness – that is, the presence of opposition, the possibility of a change of government through elections, and the acceptance of both the legitimacy of the process and the election results by all participating actors. At the end of this section, Jovanović offers a brief but intriguing reflection on the impact of different electoral systems on the overall quality of elections, though he acknowledges that this is a topic deserving of a comprehensive study in its own right.

Toward the end of the monograph, the author turns to what is arguably the most compelling segment of the topic: electoral management – that is, the practical governance of a complex political and administrative process that, in principle, involves the entire political community. This process encompasses hundreds of tasks that must often be executed within very short timeframes, requiring coordination among dozens or even hundreds of bodies, institutions, and individuals, all of which can crucially influence public perceptions of whether an election is free and fair. The author adopts the approach to electoral management developed by Mozaffar and Schedler, who frame this area broadly in terms of three phases. The first is rule-making, which includes not only the specific

procedures for conducting the vote but also earlier decisions regarding the electoral formula, the design of the ballot, the number of electoral districts, and the size of the legislature. The second is rule-implementation, or the organization of elections, where the author discusses the contrast between depoliticized, neutral electoral administrations and the dilemmas faced by many transitional democracies that rely on independent electoral bodies due to well-known deficiencies in public administration. This is particularly relevant for Serbia, which – due to its historical trajectory and the induced distrust among political actors both toward state institutions and toward one another – has, for more than a quarter of a century, relied on an ad hoc parliamentary body to oversee elections. This body is neither a government agency nor an independent institution and thus lacks both the capacity and the authority to improve the electoral process in a systematic way. Third, result verification and dispute resolution are crucial indicators of the overall fairness and democratic character of the process.

Jovanović argues that the key distinction between democratic and authoritarian regimes lies precisely in the quality of electoral management. In democracies, electoral rules are relatively stable and rarely subject to change, while election outcomes remain uncertain. In more

authoritarian forms of governance, the opposite tends to be true: electoral rules are fluid and often shaped by the manipulative interests of those in power, while the outcomes are largely predictable, as the competition takes place on an uneven playing field that heavily favors ruling parties.

In the concluding section of the study, the author adopts a somewhat pessimistic tone in illustrating why electoral reform is often difficult to achieve, even when the need for it is widely acknowledged. He cites findings that suggest political parties are unlikely to change electoral rules as long as the existing electoral arena remains favorable to them – specifically, as long as it allows them to maximize the number of seats won. Complementing this argument is Colomer's study, which finds that the likelihood of electoral reform decreases when there are fewer decision-makers involved (i.e., when the effective number of parties in parliament is low), as these actors tend to preserve their exclusivity and maintain barriers for new competitors. Additionally, the longer a certain system has been in place, the harder it becomes to reform, as all stakeholders grow accustomed to it. This is a particularly troubling insight for Serbia, especially in light of the near-unanimous consensus among experts about the need for

electoral reform. Despite its many flaws, Serbia's current electoral system has remained in place since 2000 and has been used in ten parliamentary election cycles. Nevertheless, Jovanović cautions that most theories of electoral reform view the process primarily through the lens of elites and political actors, whereas the current social context may induce widespread public distrust and bottom-up pressure from citizens – factors that could ultimately serve as a decisive impulse for systemic change.

Milan Jovanović's book, despite its accessible style and ease of reading, is firmly grounded in theory and clearly intended for a professional and academic audience. At the same time, it is closely connected to the practical realities of political life and, as such, represents a valuable resource for future designers of electoral institutions: decision-makers and political practitioners. However, as previously noted, the broader social context in Serbia, in which debates around the most widespread and important political process are unfolding, makes this monograph highly recommended for a general readership as well – namely, for all citizens who actively engage in political processes and seek to better understand them.

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DOI: 10.5937/spm91-58770

Book review

Српска политичка мисао
(Serbian Political Thought)

No 3/2025.

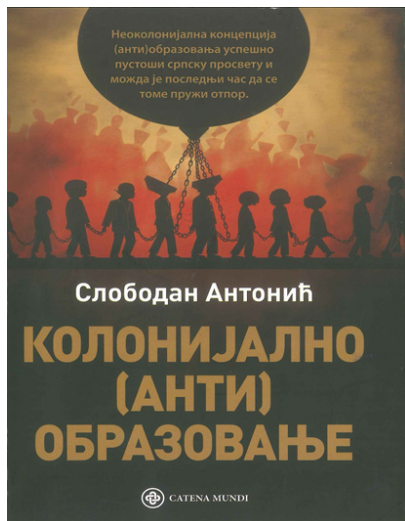
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ON EDUCATION FOR SERVICE WORKS OF THE GLOBAL CAPITALIST SYSTEM*



Antonić, Slobodan. 2024. *Colonial (Anti) Education: Serbian Education under the Yoke of Atlanticism*. Belgrade: Catena Mundi, 127 pp.

This book by Slobodan AntoniĆ, a distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, is very interesting, inspiring, and intriguing. In it, Professor AntoniĆ, as in many of his previous books, analyzes current social phenomena in Serbian society and debates with their protagonists, pointing to fundamental national and civilizational values. In this context, he very seriously and critically analyzes the education reform at all levels in the Republic of Serbia that was carried out after October 5, 2000, which he describes as a “training system” for the planetary capital needs of global and profit multiplication (AntoniĆ 2024, 5). At the same time, professor AntoniĆ takes a stand against the creators of these reforms, their executors, and propagandists. His views are based on the analysis of numerous phenomena, processes, and examples from everyday practice in the education system, but, on the other hand, also on serious arguments that are grounded in the literature of a humanistic

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educational orientation. That is why his ideas are original and innovative, and it seems quite logical that professor Slobodan Antonić's book *Colonial (Anti)Education, Serbian Education under the Yoke of Atlanticism* received the *National Award for Creativity* for 2024 from the national branch of the World Intellectual Property Organization (Zavod za intelektualnu svojinu Republike Srbije 2024).

This book by Professor Antonić, in addition to the introduction and conclusions, is composed of six chapters, which are titled: 1) Education Reform in Serbia and Transnational Structures; 2) Academic Capitalists and Anti-Education; 3) The Comprador Elite Takes Over Serbian Education; 4) What Covid-19 Has Shown About "Nationalism" in Serbian Schools; 5) Civic Education as Autocolonial Morality; and 6) Gender Ideology in Primary and Higher Education.

In the introductory part of the book, Professor Antonić points out that the education reform after October 5, 2000, is possible to present as "a transition from a system that produces a responsible national elite, as well as a modernizing qualified middle class, to a system of training and socialization of the *auxiliary population* – which plans to perform only routine, semi-skilled and service jobs for the center of the

world capitalist system." (Antonić 2024, 5). For the bearers of this educational reform, he designates the "colonial political class" that has selfless help from the "comprador intelligentsia." This transformation of education is expressed through the commercialization of education, the decline in the quality of education at all levels, the introduction of dual education, the reform of higher education through the Bologna Process, and the increasing suppression of material related to cultural and national identity from teaching, especially in primary education. These views of Professor Antonić run through the entire text of this book and are confirmed after an analysis of educational reforms at all levels of the education system.

In the first chapter, Professor Antonić devotes the greatest attention to considering the relationship between educational reforms in Serbia and transnational structures, pointing out that these reforms, as in other transition countries, are being implemented as a function of globalization processes and that they cannot be understood without these processes. In this context, he points out that the process of educational reforms in Serbia "reduces itself to the transition from a *qualitatively elitist* to a *class-elitist* model of education." (Antonić 2024, 13).

This refers to the lowering of the general level of knowledge acquired in public schools and the taking over of the education of children from the upper classes by transnational structures. Children from the upper classes are sent to study mainly in private schools and universities belonging to the centers of world capitalism, while children from the lower classes remain in devastated domestic public schools and universities. Reforms have been carried out in primary and secondary education that are “in line” with the strategic goals of the European Union and the challenges imposed by globalization. This reform did not begin with an autonomous analysis of the situation and needs but instead based on the demands of transnational structures. Through this reform, as Professor Antonić points out, they came to express, in particular, the pressure of the World Bank to reduce the number of classes in primary and secondary schools and include national content in educational programs. Higher education reforms that encourage globalization are based on the Bologna Process, which has further undermined strong and independent national education systems.

In the further course of his considerations, through the second chapter, Professor Antonić elaborates on the liberalization of

education, which in Serbia has been reduced to the commercialization of education. In addition, he points out that the Humboldtian concept of the university has been replaced by a concept according to which students do not receive grades from professors based on knowledge but based on the enrollment fee they have paid to the owner of the university. To illustrate these claims, Professor Antonić points to a multitude of phenomena and examples in Serbia. In the third chapter, Professor Antonić continues his analysis regarding the commercialization of education, as well as the mandate of the comprador elite in that process. At the same time, he points out very argumentatively how the trend of degradation of academic evaluations and certificates is increasingly spreading to state universities which have succumbed to the impact of market competition, particularly evident through pressures to increase exam pass rates. In addition, he points to corruption in the education system and its actors, which he illustrates with examples of controversial doctorates that have succeeded in public and have been the subject of numerous controversies. Then, in these considerations, Professor Antonić devotes great attention to dual education in Serbia, which he sees as a need to produce cheap

labor for foreign companies. Also, primary education was devastated through reform processes, which was most reflected in eliminating national curriculum content necessary in the educational process. In this and the overall reform of Serbian education after the October 5 changes, professor Antonić sees a significant role for the dominant comprador elite in Serbian society.

In the fourth part, Professor Antonić discusses the accusations made by the primary representative of the *Other Serbia* that education in Serbia is allegedly burdened by “Serbian nationalism.” Such accusations were raised during the *COVID-19* pandemic when lectures were held online and broadcast on television, with parents and the wider public having the opportunity to see the content of most of those lectures. Professor Antonić, through his analysis, proves that such accusations are not true and points out that in some cases the public protested due to inaccurate or inadequate interpretation of facts relating to key questions of the history and identity of the Serbian people, which he supports with strong arguments and concrete examples.

One of the very important topics in Serbian education is civic education textbooks for primary schools, to which Professor Antonić devotes attention in the fifth chapter

of this book.. He points out that these textbooks express a *hidden curriculum* in which two critical goals are recognized. The first is an attempt to alienate or denationalize children; and the second, “to create a gap between students and their parents.” (Antonić 2024, 6). Both of these forces are leading to the dehumanization of education. In the last, sixth, chapter Professor Antonić points out to the penetration of gender ideology into Serbian education. He does this through the analysis of “two specific cases.” The first relates to the curriculum in the biology textbook for primary school, and the second to a document called the *National Strategy for Gender Equality 2021-2030* (SRRP 2021). In this strategy, projects related to the implementation of gender equality in university education deserve special attention. In the conclusions of this book, Professor Antonić warns that there’s a pronounced tendency to reduce the quality of education in Serbia at all levels, from elementary school to university. Then, this tendency is directly related to the effort to socially produce generations with limited education, unprepared for critical thinking, who will be easily manipulated not only in the political sphere, but primarily in the domain of economics, from relations in production to consumption patterns (103).

The book *Colonial (Anti) Education: Serbian Schooling under the Yoke of Atlanticism* by Professor Slobodan Antonić does not leave the reader indifferent, regardless of whether they agree with his views or not, but simply forces him to think more deeply. That is why this book is so valuable, and like few others, it leaves a strong impression on the reader's understanding and comprehension of current issues in Serbian education after reading. Such books and scientific papers are essential for our academic, professional, and social public to become informed and encouraged to view and resolve many education-related issues more creatively and critically. Based on the aforementioned observations, it can be concluded that this book by Professor Antonić can be inspiring for many readers involved in education, whether they are people who study education or those who create educational policy and determine curriculum content, as well as for those who work in the education system.

REFERENCES

- Strategija za rodnu ravnopravnost za period od 2021. do 2030. godine [SRRP]. 2021. *Službeni glasnik RS*, br. 103/2021.
- Zavod za intelektualnu svojinu Republike Srbije. 2025. „Obeležavanje 104. godišnjice Zavoda za intelektualnu svojinu.” Poslednji pristup 6. maja 2025. <https://www.zis.gov.rs/vesti/2024-obelezavanje-104-godisnjice-zavoda-za-intelektualnu-svojinu/>

* This book review was submitted on May 10, 2025, and accepted by the Editorial Board for publishing on June 20, 2025.

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

The academic journal *Serbian Political Thought* publishes articles that result from the latest theoretical and empirical research in the field of political science. Authors should refer mainly to the results of scientific research published in academic journals, primarily in political science journals.

Manuscripts should be submitted in Serbian (Cyrillic script) with a mandatory English translation, or in English.

The journal is published six times a year. The deadlines for submitting the manuscripts are February 1st, April 1st, June 1st, August 1st, October 1st, and December 1st.

Two consecutive issues cannot contain articles written by the same author, whether single-authored or co-authored.

Papers are submitted to the Editorial Board by uploading them to the CEON platform using the following link: <https://aseestant.ceon.rs/index.php/spm/login>.

Authors are obliged to submit a signed and scanned declaration of authorship when submitting their works. The declaration form can be downloaded from the journal's website: https://www.ips.ac.rs/en/magazines/srpska-politicka-misao/authors_directions/

All submitted manuscripts are checked for plagiarism or auto-plagiarism. Various forms of chat boxes and other artificial intelligence software cannot be (co)authors of the papers under consideration. These tools can only be used for stylistic language editing, not for writing sections of the paper, and authors who use them are obliged to specify the purpose of using such tools at the point where they are used.

Authors are required to provide their ORCID numbers along with their (preferably) institutional email addresses, which they include in the manuscript text in a footnote alongside their names and surnames.

Research articles can have up to 40,000 characters with spaces, including footnotes. When counting the characters leave out the reference list. Exceptionally, a monographic study can be larger in scope in accordance with the provisions of *the Rulebook on procedure, method of evaluation, and quantitative presentation of scientific research results*.

Reviews can have up to 15,000 characters with spaces.

Book reviews can have up to 10,000 characters with spaces.

CITING AND REFERENCING

The journal *Serbian Political Thought* uses a partially modified Chicago style of citation (17th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*), which implies specifying bibliographic parentheses (brackets) according to the author-date system in the text, as well as a list of references with full bibliographic data after the text of the paper.

Data in bibliographic parentheses and the list of references should be written in Latin script.

Below are the rules and examples for citing the bibliographic information in the reference list and in the text. For each type of source, a citation rule is given first, followed by an example of citation in the reference list and bibliographic parenthesis.

The bibliographic parenthesis is usually set off at the end of the sentence, before the punctuation mark. It contains the author's surname, the year of publication, and page numbers pointing to a specifically contextual page or range of pages, as in the following example: (Mearsheimer 2001, 15–17).

Books

Books with one author

Surname, Name. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

(Mearsheimer 2001)

Books with two or three authors

Surname, Name, and Name Surname. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

(Brady and Collier 2010, 211)

Pollitt, Christopher, Johnston Birchall, and Keith Putman. 1998. *Decentralising Public Service Management*. London: Macmillan Press.

(Pollitt, Birchall and Putman 1998)

Books with four or more authors

Surname, Name, Name and Surname, Name and Surname, and Name and Surname. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Pollitt, Christopher, Colin Talbot, Janice Caulfield, and Amanda Smullen [Pollitt *et al.*]. 2005. *Agencies: How Governments do Things Through Semi-Autonomous Organizations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

(Pollitt *et al.* 2005)

Editor(s) or translator(s) in place of the author(s)

Surname, Name, Name and Surname, ed. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Kaltwasser, Cristobal Rovira, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, and Pierre Ostigoy [Kaltwasser *et al.*], eds. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

(Kaltwasser *et al.* 2017)

Chapter in an edited book

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the chapter." In *Title*, ed. Name Surname, pages range. Place of publication: Publisher.

Lošonc, Alpar. 2019. "Discursive dependence of politics with the confrontation between republicanism and neoliberalism." In *Discourse and Politics*, eds. Dejana M. Vukasović and Petar Matić, 23?46. Belgrade: Institute for Political Studies.

(Lošonc 2019)

Journal Articles

Regular issue

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the article." *Journal* Volume, if available (issue): page range. DOI.

Ellwood, David W. 2018. "Will Brexit Make or Break Great Britain?" *Serbian Political Thought* 18 (2): 5?14. DOI: 10.22182/spt.18212018.1.

(Ellwood 2018)

Newspapers and magazines

Signed articles

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the article." *Newspaper/Magazine* Date: page range.

Clark, Phil. 2018. "Rwanda's Recovery: When Remembrance is Official Policy." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2018: 35–41.

(Clark 2018)

Unsigned articles

Title of the newspaper/magazine. Year of publication. "Title of the article." Date: page range.

New York Times. 2002. "In Texas, Ad Heats Up Race for Governor." July 30, 2002.

(*New York Times* 2002)

Corporate Author

Name of the corporate author [acronym if needed]. Year of publication. *Title of the publication.* Place of publication: Publisher.

International Organization for Standardization ?ISO?. 2019. *Moving from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015.* Geneva: International Organization for Standardization.

(International Organization for Standardization ?ISO? 2019) – *The first in-text citation*

(ISO 2019) – *Second and all subsequent citations*

Legal and Public Documents

Sections, articles, or paragraphs can be cited in the parentheses. They should be appropriately abbreviated.

Constitutions and laws

The title of the legislative act [acronym if needed], "Official Gazette of the state" and the number of the official gazette, or the webpage and the date of last access.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 98/06.

(The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Art. 33)

The Law on Foreign Affairs [LFA], “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 116/2007, 126/2007, and 41/2009.

(LFA 2009, Art. 17)

Succession Act [SA], “Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia”, No. 48/03, 163/03, 35/05, 127/13, and 33/15 and 14/19.

(SA 2019, Art. 3)

An Act to make provision for and in connection with offences relating to offensive weapons [Offensive Weapons Act], 16th May 2019, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/17/pdfs/ukpga_20190017_en.pdf, last accessed 20 December 2019.

(Offensive Weapons Act 2019)

Legislative acts of the European Union

The title of the legislative act, the number of the official gazette, the publication date, and the number of the page in the same format as on the *EUR-lex* website: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>.

Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission’s exercise of implementing powers, OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13–18.

(Regulation 182/2011, Art. 3)

Web sources

Surname, Name, or name of the corporate author [acronym]. Year of publication or n.d. – if the year of publication cannot be determined. “The name of the web page.” *The name of the website*. Date of creation, modification, or the last access to the web page, if the date cannot be determined from the source. URL.

Bilefsky, Dan, and Ian Austen. 2019. “Trudeau Re-election Reveals Intensified Divisions in Canada.” *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/22/world/canada/trudeau-re-elected.html>.

(Bilefsky and Austen 2019)

Institute for Political Studies [IPS]. n.d. “The 5th International Economic Forum on Reform, Transition and Growth.” *Institute for Political Studies*. Last accessed 7 December 2019. <http://www.ips.ac.rs/en/news/the-5th-international-economic-forum-on-reform-transition-and-growth/>.

(Institute for Political Studies [IPS] n.d.) – *First in-text citation*

(IPS n.d.) – *Second and every subsequent citation*

Associated Press [AP]. 2019. “AP to present VoteCast results at AAPOR pooling conference.” May 14, 2019. <https://www.ap.org/press-releases/2019/ap-to-present-votecast-results-at-aapor-polling-conference>.

(AP 2019)

Special cases of referencing

Citing editions other than the first

Surname, Name. Year of publication. *Title*, edition number. Place of publication: Publisher.

Bull, Hedley. 2012. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 4th edition. New York: Columbia University Press.

(Bull 2012)

Multiple sources of the same author

1) *Multiple sources by the same author* should be arranged chronologically by year of publication in ascending order.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2010. “The Gathering Storm: China’s Challenge to US Power in Asia.” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3 (4): 381–396. DOI: 10.1093/cjip/poq016.

2) *Multiple sources by the same author from the same year* should be alphabetized by title, with lowercase letters attached to the year. Those letters should be used in parenthetical citations as well.

Walt, Stephen M. 2018a. *The Hell of Good Intentions: America’s Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

(Walt 2018a)

Walt, Stephen M. 2018b. “Rising Powers and the Risk of War: A Realist View of Sino-American Relations.” In *Will China’s Rise be Peaceful: Security, Stability and Legitimacy*, ed. Asle Toje. 13–32. New York: Oxford University Press.

(Walt 2018b)

3) *Single-authored sources precede multiauthored sources beginning with the same surname* or written by the same person.

Pollitt, Christopher. 2001. "Clarifying convergence. Striking similarities and durable differences in public management reform." *Public Management Review* 3 (4): 471–492. DOI: 10.1080/14616670110071847.

Pollitt, Christopher, Johnston Birchall, and Keith Putman. 1998. *Decentralising Public Service Management*. London: Macmillan Press.

4) *Multiauthored sources with the same name and surname* as the first author should continue to be alphabetized by the second author's surname.

Pollitt Christopher, Johnston Birchall, and Keith Putman. 1998. *Decentralising Public Service Management*. London: Macmillan Press.

Pollitt Christopher, Colin Talbot, Janice Caulfield, and Amanda Smullen. 2005. *Agencies: How Governments do Things Through Semi-Autonomous Organizations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Special cases of parenthetical citation

Exceptions to the rule of placing the parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence

1) If the *author is mentioned in the text*, even if used in a possessive form, the year must follow in parenthesis, and page numbers should be put in the brackets at the end of the sentence.

For the assessment, see Kaltwasser *et al.* (2017) ... (112).

According to Ellwood (2018) ... (7).

2) When *quoting directly*, if the name of the author precedes the quotation, the year and page numbers must follow in parenthesis.

Mearsheimer (2001, 28) claims that: "...".

3) When *using the same source multiple times in one paragraph*, the parenthetical citation should be placed either after the last reference (or at the end of the paragraph, preceding the final period) if the same page (or page range) is cited more than once, or at the first reference, whereas the subsequent citations should only include page numbers.

Do not use *ibid* or *op. cit.* with repeated citations.

Using brief phrases such as “see”, “compare” etc.

Those phrases should be enclosed within the parenthesis.

(see: Ellwood 2018)

Using secondary source

When using a secondary source, the original source should be cited in parenthesis, followed by “quoted/cited in” and the secondary source. The reference list should only include the secondary source.

“Its authority was greatly expanded by the constitutional revision of 1988, and the Court of Arbitration can now be regarded as a ‘genuine constitutional court’” (De Winter and Dumont 2009, 109 cited in: Lijphart 2012, 39–40).

Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, 2nd edition. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Multiple sources within the same parentheses

1) When *multiple sources* are cited, they should be separated by semicolons.

(Mearsheimer 2001, 34; Ellwood 2018, 7)

2) When *multiple sources by the same author*, but published in different years are cited, the name of the author is cited only the first time. The different years are separated by commas or by semicolons where page numbers are cited.

(Mearsheimer 2001, 2010) or (Mearsheimer 2001, 15–17; 2010, 390)

3) When *different authors share the same surname*, include the first initial in the parenthesis.

(M. Chiti 2004, 40), (E. Chiti 2004, 223)

Chiti, Edoardo. 2004. “Administrative Proceedings Involving European Agencies.” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 68 (1): 219–236.

Chiti, Mario. 2004. “Forms of European Administrative Action.” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 68 (1): 37–57.

TEXT FORMATTING

General guidelines for writing the manuscript

The manuscript should be written in Word, in the following manner:

- Paper size: A4;
- Margins: Normal 2.54 cm;
- Use Times New Roman font (plain letters) to write the text, unless specified otherwise;
- Line spacing: 1.5;
- Footnote line spacing: 1;
- Title font size: 14 pt;
- Subtitles font size: 12 pt;
- Text font size: 12 pt;
- Footnote font size: 10 pt;
- Tables, charts and figures font size: 10 pt;
- Use Paragraph/Special/First line at 1.27 cm;
- Text alignment: Justify;
- Font color: Automatic;
- Page numbering: Arabian numerals in lower right corner;
- Do not break the words manually by inserting hyphens to continue the word in the next line;
- Save the manuscript in the .doc format.

Research article manuscript preparation

The manuscript should be prepared in the following manner:

*Name and surname of the first author**

* Footnote: E-mail address: The institutional e-mail address is strongly recommended. ORCID:

Affiliation

*Name and surname of the second author***

** Footnote: E-mail address: The institutional e-mail address is strongly recommended. ORCID:

Affiliation

TITLE OF THE PAPER***

*** Footnote: if necessary, specify one of the following (or similar) data: 1) the name and number of the project; 2) the proceeding where the manuscript was presented under the same or similar title; 3) statements of gratitude.

Abstract

Abstract, within 100–250 words range, contains the subject, aim, theoretical and methodological approach, results and conclusions of the paper.

Keywords: Below the abstract, five to ten **key words** should be written. Key words should be written in roman font and separated by commas.

The manuscript can have maximally three levels of subtitles. **Subtitles** should not be numbered. They should be used in the following manner:

FIRST LEVEL SUBTITLE

Second level subtitle

Third level subtitle

Tables, charts, and figures should be inserted in the following manner:

- Above the table/chart/figure, center the name of the Table, Chart or Figure, an Arabic numeral, and the title in Times New Roman font;
- Below the table/chart/figure, the source should be cited in the following manner: 1) if the table/chart/figure is taken from another source, write down *Source:* and include the parenthetical citation information of the source; or 2) if the table/chart/figure is not taken from another source, write down *Source: Author.*

Use in-text references according to *Citing and referencing.*

Use the footnotes solely to provide remarks or broader explanations.

REFERENCES

References should be listed after the text of the paper, before the Resume in the following manner:

- the first line of each reference should be left indented, and the remaining lines should be placed as hanging by 1.27 cm using the option Paragraph/Special/Hanging;
- all the references should be listed together, without separating legal acts of archives;
- the references should not be numbered;
- list only the references used in the text.

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