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Prof. Dr. Dragica Vujadinović  
Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade  
SERBIA IN THE MAELSTROM OF POLITICAL CHANGES

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Head of the Center for Publishing and Informing

*Reviewers*

Prof. Dr. Hauke Brunkhorst  
Prof. Dr. Vladimir Goati

*Proof-reading*

Timothy Johnston

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Dragica Vujadinović

# SERBIA IN THE MAELSTROM OF POLITICAL CHANGES

Belgrade, 2009

*Prof. Dr. Hauke Brunkhorst*

This is an excellent book which I quite strongly appreciate. It is a must for everyone who wants to understand what is going on in Serbia today, as “maelstrom” is the right metaphor to use. Whatever one does, they go deeper into the abyss. There is, as Dragica Vujadinovic shows, no alternative to Europe. Yet, once you head towards Europe, you lose the elections at home. There is no alternative to human rights and democracy but for the time being democracy does not seem willing to take rights seriously. Still, once we take rights seriously without democratic legitimation and concretization, then rights will quickly become a mere means of arbitrary hegemonic power.

This book is so striking because it does not stand still with general analysis but goes into the legal and political details of a world region which is more exemplary for globalization than western countries like to acknowledge. Brilliantly, Professor Vujadinovic shows how small the road of democracy is and that to the left and the right of the road all the dangers of authoritarianism are to be found. But there is no alternative. We must go ahead to an unknown future which eventually will be democratic and legal. With this great book there is some light visible at the end of the tunnel.

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\* \*

*Prof. Dr. Vladimir Goati*

The book *Serbia in the Maelstrom of Political Changes* represents an important contribution to the understanding of social and political changes in contemporary Serbia.

This book offers a well articulated and comprehensive explanation of both the difficult and contradictory processes of the internal democratization of Serbia and its international and European integration. This extraordinary analysis of social and political transformations after the fall of the Milošević regime represents, according to our opinion, literature that is unavoidable to those who want to achieve a deeper insight into actual events in Serbia.

The additional value of this book is that it offers useful methodological instruments for future research, as Serbia represents a very unique societal and political entity to which certain standard instruments of analysis have not been fully applicable.

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## INTRODUCTION

This textbook represents the result of my theoretical research concerned with the controversial and postponed transition of Serbia from its “real-socialist” and, later on, its ethno-nationalist regime into a liberal-democratic multi-party system. Here my texts which I have written since the democratic overturn of the Milošević regime in the year 2000 up to the present are collected, taking into consideration the deep and multiple obstacles for implementing essential liberal-democratic institutional reforms together with obstacles that Serbia has been facing in its accession process into the European Union.

These texts were produced as my individual contributions to a few collective projects.

Together with colleagues Prof. Dr. Vladimir Goati from Serbia, Prof. Dr. Lino Veljak from Croatia, and Prof. Dr. Veselin Pavićević from Montenegro, I initiated from 2000 until 2008, the project – through the cooperation of the Center for Democratic Transition (CEDET) from Belgrade with two nongovernmental organizations from Zagreb and Podgorica – related to the comparative analysis of the transitional processes in the countries established after the breakup of the Former Yugoslavia. Two texts in this book were originally written as introductory contributions for a first and third book, which had been published as the result of the above mentioned project; namely, three books were published as a series, with the common main title: *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy*, and with the subtitles: *Institutional Framework* (book I), *Civil Society and Political Culture* (book II), and *Serbia at the Political Crossroads* (book III). The introductory text for the first book was “Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Transitional processes in Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia”, and for the third book in the above mentioned series was “What is the National and State Interest of Contemporary Serbia?”

Taking part in the prestigious European Civil Society Network (Ci-So-Net), which was supported by the European Commission in the Fifth Framework, gave me the chance to write a paper on the obstacles which Serbia has been facing on its road and attempts towards both democratic transition and the European accession process. I presented that paper at the Ci-So-Net Conference held in London in 2004, under the title “Democratic Deficits in the Western Balkans and Perspectives on European Integration”. This text was later on published in the international magazine *Journal for International Innovation and Institutional Development*.

I attained further stimulus for my theoretical research in the field of both the institutional democratization of Serbia and its integration into the European Union through taking part in a project, called: *The Legal Capacity of Serbia for European Integration*, led by Prof. Dr. Stevan Lilić at the Faculty of Law, University of Belgrade, and supported by the Ministry of Science and Technology. This project has been carried out since 2005, and there are three books published in the series, with three following my texts: firstly, "Serbia and the European Union – The European Union Strategy towards the Western Balkans and Its Implementation in Serbia", secondly, "Obstacles in the Integration Process of Serbia to the European Union", and, thirdly, "Serbia at the Crossroads of Strategic Orientation – the Victory of the Pro-European and Pro-Reform Option?".

In addition, I was invited by the prestigious sociologist and political theoretician Prof. Dr. Claus Offe to prepare a presentation for a conference, called: *Post-communist Social and Political Conflicts: Citizenship and Consolidation in New Democracies of South East Europe*, held in Bucharest in 2007. The title of my paper was: "The Ethnification of Politics and Society in Contemporary Serbia". This text is also included in the textbook.

The title of the book – *Serbia in the Maelstrom of Political Changes* – expresses the controversial, often traumatic experience of Serbian state and society on their road outlined towards overcoming both its Titoist and Milošević legacy, and establishing the rule of law and constitutional democracy together with its integration into European Union. These texts aim to present the obstacles of democratic transformation and European integration, and to better understand the reasons and causes why both transitional and accession processes in Serbia have been postponed, perverted, and are far yet from finished.

A critical analysis with its multiple negative implications, however, does not lead to negating the positive potential of Serbia in both the above mentioned dimensions of its proposed democratization.

On the contrary, I believe that Serbia possesses real social, political and cultural capacities for overcoming multiple objective obstacles on the road towards its full democratization, and I try to approve this statement especially in the latest written texts, called: "Serbia at the Crossroads of Strategic Orientation – The Victory of the Pro-European and Pro-Reform Option?".

The texts in this book are ordered from those which were last written to those written much earlier. The reasons for this method of ordering are the following: firstly, starting from the newest theoretical results and moving towards older ones gives an overview of the theoretical maturing of the author; secondly, it is more attractive for the reader of the book – from the point of actuality and comprehensiveness of insight – to start from the latest phases of the issue's analysis; thirdly, more developed social and political results throw better light and allow for better insight into the previous phases of development; fourthly, and in continuation with the third point, it is methodologi-



cally more productive to start from what has been attained and to go far back towards what had been both the normative and empirical starting point. This methodological approach allows one to outline the advantages and disadvantages of the achieved results and to understand why the achieved results were not better than the given ones, or in other words – why the proposed aims and projects – full liberal-democratic transformation together with integration into the European Union – have not yet been realized.

Dragica Vujadinović  
Belgrade, February 2009.



## SERBIA AT THE CROSSROADS OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATION\*

### – The Victory of the Pro-European and Pro-Reform Option? –

*The results of the last presidential and early parliamentary elections in 2008 show that Serbia has finally started to overcome the barrier over transitional processes (over democratic reforms and EU integration process) which has continued to happen even after the democratic changes of the Milošević regime in 2000 and especially since 2003 when Zoran Đinđić – the first democratic prime minister – was assassinated. This has been connected to the growing power of Serbian Radical Party (SRS), and other extreme rightist, ethno-nationalist political actors, and it has been profoundly caused by the slow and poor improvement of social, economic and cultural conditions and the bad quality of life in Serbia.*

*In the past few years Serbia has been divided into half, at the crossroad of two essentially opposed civilization options – liberal-democratic reforms and European integration on the one hand, and a pseudo-traditionalist, anti-democratic path of development and international isolation (growing into a “black hole” of Europe and the world), on the other.*

*The supersession of a politically retrograde processes and civilization dead-end was indicated by the slight but certain growth of a democratic political body's preponderance over a traditionalistic/ethno-nationalistic one.*

*The results of the aforementioned 2008 elections show that people in Serbia are starting to mostly opt for the country's economic progress and its European integration, and that they are finally starting to give priority to the quality of their life over populist ethno-nationalist demagogy.*

**Key words:** Serbia, civilization crossroads, identity-and-value-orientations-based cleavages, transitional processes, liberal-democratic reforms, integration into the EU, parliamentary elections, presidential elections.

This text is based on the hypothesis that recent social-political changes within the electorate – expressed through the results of presidential elections, held in January of 2008 and, especially, through the early parliamentary elections, held in May 2008 – give indications that, although with great tardiness, Serbia will, finally, opt by majority for the pro-European choice of a modern liberal-democratic state and society's development.

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\* This text was originally published in: Lilić, S. ed. *Pravni kapacitet Srbije za evropske integracije*, 3 (*The Legal Capacity of Serbia for European Integration*, 3), Beograd: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2008.

The background hypothesis is that Serbia was, until recently, on a dangerous threshold and pathless area caused by the equalized strength of complete mutually opposed developmental tendencies: towards a modern European state on one hand, and towards an anti-modern, isolated, pseudo-traditionalistic state creation, on the other; or more precisely: the path of European integration and liberal-democratic reforms, towards which the parties of a civic option are gravitating, becomes finally stronger and dominant, i.e. ever less incapacitated by anti-European and anti-reformist forces.<sup>1</sup> Of course, this

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- 1 In order to avoid any possible confusion of concepts, the following remarks are given: Firstly, pro-reform and pro-European parties in Serbia represent modernizational forces, which are devoted to the establishment of liberal democracy, free market, integration into the international community and, above all, into the European Union. Anti-reform and anti-European parties support re-traditionalization, re-patriarchalization and clericalization of both the state and society, and insist upon "patriotism" which is more or less identified with ethno-nationalism. The radical forces are vindictive, militant, and conflictual towards the internal as well the international political life of Serbia – they relentlessly persist on the militant concept of a "Greater Serbia".

Pro-reform and pro-European parties are: first and foremost the Democratic Party (DS), as well as smaller parties like G17 Plus and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV), the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP), the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), and minority parties, such as the Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina (SVM), the Sandžak Democratic Union (SDU). The Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) recently joined this block in a very controversial way.

The Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), from the time of the fight against the Milošević regime in the 1990s and up to March of 2008, formally and factually belonged to the group of democratically orientated parties, that is, to the "civic option". However, according to the type of political statements and activities, this party more and more approached traditionalist social-political forces – especially from the moment of declaration of Kosovo's independence. This also applies to New Serbia (NS), DSS's coalition partner in the last parliamentary elections.

On the other hand, SPS, by definition, belonged to the ethno-nationalist matrix from the time of Milošević's rule, which it has not completely abandoned to this day. However, since 2004, from the time of entering an arrangement for support of the DSS and G17 Plus minority government, with Prime Minister Koštunica at its head, SPS has made certain program shifts related to the acceptance of time-limited privatization and integration into the EU. It can be stated that SPS had loyally participated in the functioning of Vojislav Koštunica's government from 2004 to 2007. Also, since August 2008, SPS has been participating in pro-European and pro-reform government formed after the early parliamentary elections of May 2008. (See the interview with Vladimir Goati, in *WEEKEND Danas*, 9-10. August 2008; <http://www.danas.co.yu/20080809/vikend2.html#0>; also see: Goati, V. *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postoktobarskom razdoblju (Party Struggles in Serbia in Post-October Era)*, Beograd: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2006).

Secondly, traditionalist (anti-European and anti-reform) social-political forces, according to their political values profile – ethno-nationalism, the rejection of values of democracy, tolerance, pluralism, equality of the Other – belong to the extreme right, but because of their unusual massiveness (tendentially around the half of the electorate), they cannot be called the "extreme" right, because by definition the extreme options in the political field does not go over 10% to 15% of the electorate. However, according to its program, the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), as well as ethno-nationalist extremist groups, clero-fascist and Nazi organizations, militant groups of football fans, etc., primarily belong to the extreme right. In 2008, the populist coalition of DSS and NS joined the traditionalist/ethno-nationalist block.

does not mean that dangers and obstacles on the road of reforms and European integration, which come from the enormous strength and influence of traditionalist political actors, were eliminated, but this means that the trend of strengthening and the predominance of the civil/modernizational over the traditionalist/ethno-nationalist political option is now clearly visible.

In this text, the background hypothesis will be firstly explained; then the comparative presentation of presidential and parliamentary election results in the past few years as the indicators of gradual positive shifts in Serbian citizens' strategic orientations will be given. The intention is to argue in favor of the main hypothesis that Serbia has finally come to a turning point, to the beginning of the end of Serbia's "captivity" and the final testing of its European and reformist democratic path.

## Serbia on Epochal Thresholds

The background hypothesis is that Serbia again – after the successfully completing of a decade-long fight against Slobodan Milošević's authoritarian ethno-nationalist regime, which was crowned by the victory of democratic forces in the elections held in 2000 and after initial reform successes, fell back into crisis and the reform's processes and integration efforts were stopped. The retrograde process was caused by the assassination of democratic Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003, as well as by controversial and obstructive politics (from 2004 to 2008) of two Serbian governments in which the main actor was Vojislav Koštunica<sup>2</sup> (this does not mean that Vojislav Koštunica's

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Thirdly, classification into modernizational or traditionalist/ethno-nationalist parties is not a fixed given, because dynamic concepts are at stake, in the sense that it is possible that parties can move from one political block into another, depending on their program or activity. In Serbia today, it is the case with DSS and SPS.

- 2 The first government, with Vojislav Koštunica as the Prime Minister, was formed in March 2004, after early parliamentary elections in December of 2003.

In addition, the constitutive session of the new Serbian parliament was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2004, and later, in late February, DSS, G17 Plus, SPO and NS have reached the coalition agreement on forming the government, with Vojislav Koštunica at its head. Also, it was agreed upon that the Socialists would support this Government in the Parliament, but that they would not get any cabinet posts.

After the dissolution of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, in May 2006, the Government of Serbia incorporated two new ministries – the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A day after the new Serbian Constitution was adopted in the Parliament, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2006, Ministers from the G17 Plus resigned because negotiations with the EU were not continued. However, their resignations were not confirmed in the Parliament until the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, after the referendum on Constitution – which was supported by Serbia's citizens.

The second Koštunica government lasted from 2007 to 2008, and it was formed after the parliamentary elections that were held in January 2007.

After the adoption of Constitutional Law for the Implementation of the Constitution in Parliament, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2006, the President of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadić, scheduled parliamentary elections for the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2007. The results

obstructive activity as the president of the federal state<sup>3</sup> was not present while first democratic Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić was still alive).

Democratic reforms began in 2000, a whole decade after transitional processes in Central and Eastern European countries. However, they were halted to a great extent after the assassination of the first democratic Prime Minister Đinđić; namely, the joint government of Democratic Party (DS) and Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), with the aforementioned significant influence of DSS's president Vojislav Koštunica as Prime Minister in two mandates, lead to a significant interruption of certain spheres of reform processes and, to a certain extent, to a renewing of the ethno-nationalistic matrix, that

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of these elections were that the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) won 81 parliamentary seats, the Democratic Party (DS) won 64, the Democratic Party of Serbia/New Serbia (DSS/NS) Coalition won 47, G17 Plus won 19, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) won 16, the coalition gathered around Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 15 seats, the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (SVM) won 3, the List for Sandžak won 2, the Albanian Coalition from Preševo Valley won 1, the Roma Union of Serbia won 1 and the Roma Party won 1 parliamentary seat.

The constitutive session of Parliament was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February. In this session, the delegates' mandates were verified, and after this the session was postponed indefinitely. The session did not continue until the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, when the President of the Assembly was elected. On the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, Tomislav Nikolić (the Radicals' deputy leader) was elected for the President of the National Assembly of Serbia – by the votes of the Radicals, the Socialists and DSS. A few days later, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, the leaders of DS, DSS and G17 Plus (Boris Tadić, Vojislav Koštunica and Mladen Dinkić) ended the three and a half months long negotiations on the composition of the Cabinet. The constitutive session of the Parliament was continued on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, with a discussion on the dismissal of Tomislav Nikolić, which was initiated by the newly-formed parliamentary majority representatives. On the next day, Nikolić resigned from his position as speaker.

The vice president of the Assembly, Milutin Mrkonjić, succeeded to position of the President of the Assembly. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, the mandate for forming the new Government of Serbia – Vojislav Koštunica – delivered his keynote address in Serbian parliament, and after a discussion that lasted for several hours, members of the new Cabinet (from DS and G17 Plus, as well as from DSS and NS) assumed office.

After the Declaration of Independence of Kosovo and Metohija, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2008, the Cabinet fell into a deep crisis. Despite the fact that the EU did not denounce Kosovo independence, one part of executive power (DS and G17 Plus) still supported the continuation of Serbia's negotiation on EU accession. The other part of the Cabinet (DSS and NS) required the EU to clearly declare that it recognized the territorial integrity of Serbia. Since disagreements continued, it was obvious that early elections were the only solution. Furthermore, SRS proposed the adoption of the Resolution on the protection of territorial integrity of Serbia in relations with the EU, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. DSS and NS supported the Resolution, while DS and G17 Plus did not. On the next day, the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, in a Cabinet session, Tadić's and Dinkić's ministers outvoted the DSS-NS ministers on this issue. Prime Minister Koštunica stated that "he does not have any more trust into his coalition partners regarding protection of territorial integrity". In this sense, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, Koštunica announced to the public that he will suggest that the President disband the Parliament and schedule early parliamentary election for May. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, the Cabinet unanimously supported the proposal. (See: [sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Српске\\_Владе\\_после\\_5.октобра\\_2000](http://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Српске_Владе_после_5.октобра_2000). – 58k).

- 3 After the change of government in the FRY on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2000, which was achieved through democratic elections, and Milošević's recognition that he had lost the elections, Vojislav Koštunica was elected as the first President of the federal state.

is, to a revitalization of Milošević-like principles for conduct of domestic and foreign policy. In fact, although the democratic government of DS and DSS was basically carrying out important reform processes in the economy, legislation and partly in the judiciary, the parts of the government that were under Koštunica's influence were simultaneously obstructing the reformation of certain levers of power and value systems, without which the democratization of the state and society in full range was not possible. In this sense, the implementation of Law on Lustration<sup>4</sup> and the reformation of Milošević's military and civil structures were prevented, and the international obligation of full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal was only partially fulfilled. The strategic-political split between DS and DSS in the Government was more and more discernible; the conflict within democratic powers became more severe and the division between pro-reform, pro-European forces which gathered around DS, and those forces that gathered around DSS (who more and more expressively and openly showed their anti-European disposition and gave priority to ethno-nationalism over the reformist matrix of thinking and acting) became unavoidable.

This political conflict, which also represented an ideological-value split was expressed intensely at the moment of Kosovo's self-proclamation of independence, which happened with significant support coming from the USA and key members of the EU. In spite of the official policy's joint refusal to accept the idea and practice of an independent Kosovo, the ideological-political split was clearly crystallized around the question of whether the continuation of the EU integration process is, in spite of everything, necessary for Serbia, or whether it should be conditioned totally by the request that the USA and Member States of the EU, as well as all the countries that recognized Kosovo as independent, renounce said act.

After the clarification of the two different answers to the question of the relationship between Europe and Serbia – Europe at all costs, or Europe only if integration connotes that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia – the parliamentary majority, in which DS and DSS (by a smaller portion) were predominant, was not possible any longer. DSS's political vocabulary became very similar to the one which is traditionally recognizable in the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and the convergence of stances of DSS and SRS was symbolically articulated in their alignment into the "patriotic bloc", without any hesitation to demonize the other side as being "treasonous" and "non-patriotic".

In the decades of the sharp fight against the Milošević regime, DSS always stood by DS and other democratically oriented parties and actors, contrary to the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), SRS and parties and actors similar to them. Therefore, in the years before and after democratic changes in 2000,

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4 In Serbia, the Law on Lustration (the Accountability for Human Rights Violations Act) was adopted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2003, but, due to the lack of political will, it has not been applied. This law would be applicable to every breach of human rights committed after the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1976, the day when the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights came into force, but under conditions foreseen by this law. (See: <http://www.ldp.org.yu/cms/item/politics/sr/lustracija.html>)

the aforementioned visibly present ideological-political split certainly did not imply that DSS and coalitions around DSS and Vojislav Koštunica, would openly submit to this other option.<sup>5</sup> However, after the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić, and especially in the past few years in which Kosovo's secession has become more certain – DSS and Vojislav Koštunica personally have leaned more toward ethno-nationalism and anti-European ideas and actions. In the negotiations preceding Kosovo's self-proclamation of independence, the Milošević-like discourse and sentiments close to SRS's ideas were discernible to a great extent exactly among representatives of DSS. After Kosovo's Declaration of Independence, the distancing of DSS from European policy, and subsequently from reformist policy, was totally explicit. In addition, just like in the time of Milošević's various negotiations regarding wars and sources of crisis, the official negotiation approach – lead by DSS representatives – was again colored by ignoring the other side's arguments and persistent perseverance on their own exclusive stances, without any willingness to compromise and make concessions. Of course it again resulted in the loss of any chances of gaining any kind of benefits for Serbian citizens in Kosovo, Serbia and its state interests. The political strategy of alleged "negotiations" – either Kosovo as a whole (as Serbian territory, regardless of wishes and the numeracy of the Albanian majority), or nothing – has resulted in the independence of Kosovo, without any previously provided conditions for the protection of Serbian citizens in enclaves and in the territory of Kosovo in general.

To conclude, the background hypothesis is that in the past few years Serbia has found itself at a strategic-historic crossroads of modern and anti-modern tendencies<sup>6</sup>, in the sense of sharp conflict and the equalized strength of political actors that would direct the state in a progressive course of democratic reforms and European integration on one hand, and, on the other, the ones that would pull it back, into a retrograde processes of isolation, ethno-nationalism, the halting of reforms in politics, culture and the economy. Thanks to certain political and historical circumstances, Serbia was trapped by its real-socialist and ethno-nationalist heritage for the longest time in comparison to almost every country that had been formed in the territory of the Former Yugoslavia<sup>7</sup>, and especially in relation to Central and Eastern Eu-

5 However, since the civil protests in 96/97, even possibly before them, there were many motives and crucial reasons for doubting their full democratic orientation. (See, for example: Vujadinović, D. Obstacles and Perspectives of Development of Civil Society in FRY, in: Subotić, M. and Spasić, I. eds. *(R)evolution and Order – On Dynamic of Changes in Serbia*, Belgrade: Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, 2002.

6 See: Vujadinović, D. Srbija između antimodernosti i modernosti – "Su čim ćemo pred Karađorđa?" ili "S čime ćemo pred buduće generacije?" (Serbia Between Anti-Modernity and Modernity – "What shall we face Karađorđe with?" of "What shall we offer to future generations?"), *Helsinkička povelja*, February/March 2004, no. 73-74; Vujadinović, D. What is the Rational National and State Interest of Contemporary Serbia?, in: Vujadinović, D. and Goati, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Serbia at the Political Crossroads*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2009.

7 See: Vujadinović, D. Introduction – Between Authoritarianism and Democracy, in: Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavićević, V. eds., *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia – Institutional Framework*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2003.



ropean countries. The transitional process of liberal-democratic reforms and European integration in Serbia was very late or delayed – due to wars, sanctions, the destruction of society and institutional systems, then blocked – due to the state's unfulfilled obligations toward the Hague Tribunal, and, to a considerable extent, unsuccessful – due to the processes of re-traditionalization, clericalization, re-patriarchalization of Serbian society and the unusually high growth of the extreme right in the political field.

As was stated at the beginning, the basic hypothesis in this text is that, in Serbia, the growth trend of ethno-nationalist, anti-modernizational and traditionalist forces, which has been very pronounced in the past few years, is coming to an end. In other words, Serbia is tendentially more expressively turning – slowly but surely, and unstopably – toward a pro-reform, democratic and pro-European strategic course. The analysis of the last presidential and parliamentary elections (both held in 2008) is of the utmost importance for the argumentation in favor of this hypothesis. However, the results of other presidential and parliamentary elections that were held in the past few years are also partly taken into account, because they help us to make comparison between the electoral strength of mutually opposed political options and to understand gradual shifts in influence of the parties and political-strategic tendencies expressed within them.

### Political-Historical Tendencies Seen through Electoral Results

In the early parliamentary elections that were held in December of 2003<sup>8</sup>, more than 50% of voters chose the civic option<sup>9</sup>, and 35% voted for the extreme right party SRS and partly for SPS, in contrast to federal elections (FRY) held in October of 2000 and the republic elections (Serbia) held in December of 2000, when 64.4% of the vote went to the democratic option.<sup>10</sup>

8 These parliamentary elections were held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December 2003, after the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić, and after three unsuccessful rounds of presidential elections. The turnout amounted to 58.84% of registered voters. The Serbian Radical Party (SRS) won 28% of the vote or 89 mandates, the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) won 18% of the vote or 53 mandates, the Democratic Party (DS) won 13% of the vote or 37 mandates, the G17 Plus won 12% of the vote or 34 mandates, the coalition of Serbian Renewal Movement and New Serbia (SPO-NS) won 8% of the vote or 21 mandates, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) won 8% of the vote and 22 mandates, and the remaining 14% went to other minor parties. After these elections, the first Koštunica's government was formed, and it lasted from 2004 to 2007. (See: [sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Српске\\_Владе\\_после\\_5.октобра\\_2000](http://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Српске_Владе_после_5.октобра_2000). – 58k; [www.cesid.org](http://www.cesid.org))

9 In this period, and formally and factually until March 2008, DSS unambiguously belonged to a group of democratically orientated parties, that is, to the “civic option”.

10 The federal elections in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) were held on September 24, 2000, and the mass protests for defence of the election results were finalized by the democratic overturn of federal president Milošević on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2000. Very important changes were made in FR Yugoslavia after these elections. Political crisis after them led not only to the change of governments at the federal level but also towards the break up of an actual Serbian nomenclature, resignation of the Republic governments and an-

Thus, after three years of democratic changes and halting of reform processes after the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić, 700,000 voters returned<sup>11</sup> to the extreme right (from 322,333 voters in December of 2000 to 1,008,074 voters in December of 2003).

The growth of the radical vote continues more pronouncedly from 2004 to 2008<sup>12</sup>, which can, for example, be seen through the results of parliamentary elections held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2007. However, in these elections, the growth trend of DS's strength is also obvious, which means that there is the crystallization of two predominant and yet mutually opposing value-political orientations at stake. The electorate started growing, in the sense of opting predominantly for the two biggest parties – SRS and DS – (smaller parties converged around one of them), in other words, it led to halting the division of the Serbian political body into 50/50.<sup>13</sup>

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nouncing of early parliamentary elections in Serbia (a constituent state of FRY) for December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2000.

After the session was postponed several times and obstructed by SRS representatives, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2000, the National Assembly of Serbia elected the transitional technical Government of Serbia, which provided the functioning of the state until the early parliamentary elections. The government was formed by the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) and SPO and SPS, and Miomir Minić (from SPS) was elected as president. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, the President of National Assembly of Serbia, Dragan Tomić, scheduled early parliamentary elections.

In the first free democratic parliamentary election in post-Milošević Serbia, that were held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2000, the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) scored a convincing victory by winning 176 out of 250 parliamentary seats. Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) won 37 seats, Serbian Radical Party (SRS) 23, Party of Serbian Unity (SSJ) 14. Without parliamentary seats were left Serbian Renewal Paert (SPO), Yugoslav Left (JUL), etc. The National Assembly was inaugurated on 22 January 2001 and the new Government was formed three days later, i.e., on 25 January. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2001, the National Assembly of Serbia elected the new and the first democratic republic Government, with Dr Zoran Đinđić as the Prime Minister.

Democratic changes were enabled and hastened in Serbia by the extraordinary victory scored by DOS in these elections. As already mentioned, DOS attained a two rhirds majority of votes, i.e. 176 mandates. (See, for example: *Jugosleovenski pregled*, 2000, notebook. 3, pp. 3-34; see also: <http://www.cesid.org>).

- 11 The word "returned" has used because SRS had more than a million voters in the 1992 parliamentary elections. It was a time of rising ethno-nationalism, wars, militancy, which was fruitful for SRS growth.
- 12 For more on the pronounced growing trend of extremism in Serbia in the past few years, in the sense of an increase of SRS's popularity, the sprouting up of extreme right organizations and associations, as well as of the clericalization and re-traditionalization of society, see: Vujadinović, D. *Prepreke na putu integracije Srbije u Evropsku uniju* (Obstacles in the Integration Processes of Serbia to the European Union), in: Lilić S. ed. *Pravni kapacitet Srbije za evropske integracije, 2* (*The Legal Capacity of Serbia for European Integration*, 2), Beograd: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2007, 90–106. See, also: Bakić, J. *Radical ideological-political Extremism of the Contemporary Serbia*, Wikipedia, 2006: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremism>.
- 13 At that time, the turnout was 4,020,744 out of 6,652,105 registered voters. SRS won 28.7% of the vote or 81 mandates, DS won 22.9% of the vote or 65 mandates, DSS won 16.7% of the vote or 47 mandates, G17 Plus won 6.8% of the vote or 19 mandates and LDP won 5.3% of the vote or 15 mandates.

In the past few years, political analysts claimed that SRS has a stable voting base, which is disciplined to vote and has a maximum limit of around 1,400,000 votes. However, analysts and researchers also pointed out that the growing numbers of the “transition losers”, impoverished and ill-educated people, together with a negative solution of the Kosovo issue have represented a basis for growth of the Radical Party’s popularity.

In a series of elections after 2003, it has been proved that SRS’s voting base can still grow; that not only poor, uneducated, old and non-urban citizens mostly voted for SRS candidate – Tomislav Nikolić, but also a significant number of urban, educated and young people. There is no doubt that the rising numbers of the “losers of transition” and the bad social-economic situation contributed to the growth of the radical (extreme right) option during the last couple of crucial years of the late and incomplete democratic transition. In addition, the national identity question – articulated as the Kosovo issue – essentially contributed to the growth of this extreme right political option.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, it appears that from 2008 the growth of the radical vote began to stop and that, next to the fact of the enlargement of the two blocs of mutually opposed orientation around DS and SRS, the tendential prevalence of the electorate’s choice for DS and other more or less converging parties that have a democratic profile is coming in sight.

### *The 2008 Presidential Elections*

In the successful<sup>15</sup> presidential elections that were held in May of 2004, the democratic candidate Boris Tadić defeated SRS’s candidate Tomislav Nikolić. In the first round Nikolić had an advantage over Tadić. Nikolić received 939,695 votes, or 30.1% of the vote, while Tadić received 852,230 votes, or 27.3% of the vote. In the second round of presidential elections 1,431,833 votes, or 45% of the vote, went to Tomislav Nikolić, while 1,706,888 votes, or 53.8% of the vote, went to Boris Tadić.

Whereas, in the first round of presidential elections, that were held on 21<sup>st</sup> of January 2008, the SRS’s candidate Tomislav Nikolić attained 39.99% of the

14 See: Goati V. State Interest Through the Prism of the Commitments of Ruling Parties, in: Vujadinović, D. and Goati, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Serbia at the Political Crossroads*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2009.

15 Before these 2004 presidential elections, three attempts of presidential elections had been unsuccessful, partly due to electoral law, according to which one candidate had to receive votes from more than a half of registered voters. In the first unsuccessful presidential elections, held in 2002, Vojislav Šešelj received 845,000 votes, while Vojislav Koštunica and Miroljub Labus, in the second round won 1,123,000 and 995,000 votes. In the second, also unsuccessful, presidential elections, held in late 2002, Vojislav Šešelj received 1,063,296 votes, while Vojislav Koštunica received 1,670,000 votes. In the third unsuccessful presidential elections, held in 2003, the vice-president of the SRS Tomislav Nikolić won 1,166,896 votes, while the Democrats’ candidate Dragoljub Mićunović received only 894,000 votes. (For more details on electoral legislation and unsuccessful presidential elections see: Goati, V. *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postoktobarskom razdoblju (Party Struggles in Serbia in Post-October Era)*, Beograd: FES, 2006.

vote, or more exactly 1,646,172 votes, DS's candidate and current President of Serbia, Boris Tadić attained 35.4% of the vote, that is, 1,457,030 votes. In the second round (held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 2008) 2,197,155 votes, or 47.97% of the vote, went to Tomislav Nikolić, while 2,304,467 votes, or 50.31% of the vote, went to Boris Tadić. In the second round Boris Tadić won 847,437 additional votes, while Tomislav Nikolić received 550,983 votes more than in the first round.

The voter turnout in the first round of the 2008 presidential elections was 4,117,870, which is 61.38% (of 6,708,697 registered voters), while the turnout in the second round was 4,580,428, or 68.14% of 6,723,762 registered voters.<sup>16</sup>

The aforementioned high turnout in the first round was totally unexpected for all party and political analysts; but the even higher turnout in the second round was not a surprise for them. The high turnout in these elections, similar to that of the crucial period of the elections in the late 2000, represented evidence that citizens also have valued these elections being crucial. There was a large number of politically mobilized people who did not want EU integration, to give Kosovo away, who wanted an alliance of orthodox counties, who were not bothered by the isolation and who did not believe in democratic reforms; however, there was an even larger number of those who thought that – if the Radical option would win – there would be a substantial halt in pro-reform, pro-European and a modern strategy of development, and that the faith of Serbia will turn in the wrong direction.

Besides the fact that analysts, as has already been stated, did not at all predict before the presidential elections in January of 2008 this big increase in turnout, they also made a mistake while estimating that a possible higher turnout would primarily suit the democratic presidential candidate Tadić. They made the mistake because the number of votes for the radical presidential candidate Nikolić grew proportionally.

In this sense, the victory of the Radical option in the presidential elections final results was quite possible, and pre-election polls and political analysis also pointed to that possibility, although the victory of the democratic option was more probable. In any case, it was known that small numbers would decide in favor of one option or the other. It was presupposed that the turnout was going to be higher in the second round, but after the experiences from the first round (high turnout, dispersion of votes among varied presidential candidates), it was certain that concentration of votes on two candidates would affect the results of both sides.<sup>17</sup>

16 Around 150,000 new voters in these elections were mainly young people and refugees who obtained citizenship in the meantime (in 2004 there were 6,532,940 voters).

17 In the first round, a significant number of votes was "dispersed", in a sense that over a million votes went to the candidates of smaller parties: Milutin Mrkonjić from SPS won 260,000 votes, Velimir Ilić from NS won 350,000 votes, Čedomir Jovanović from LDP won 240,000 votes, and around 100,000 votes went to Sandor Pasztor – the Hungarian minority presidential candidate. It was known that in the second round the Radicals'

Based on empirical indicators, it was clear that the turnout was proportionally much higher in the first and second round of presidential elections in 2008 than the one in 2004<sup>18</sup>, but while in the first round of the 2004 elections Nilolić's advantage over Tadić was proportionally minor (around 30% against 27.3%), in the second round Tadić had a significant proportionally larger advantage over Nikolić (54% against 45%). In this sense, it is possible to talk about the compelling victory of Boris Tadić as presidential candidate in 2004. However, in the 2008 elections, Nikolić's advantage over Tadić in the first round was proportionally bigger (around 40% against 35.39%) than Tadić's advantage over Nikolić in the second round (50.31% against 47.97%). Practically, Tadić won by the skin of his teeth and objectively the election results were very uncertain.<sup>19</sup>

The division of the body of political parties (approaching a two-party model) and of the electorate (50%/50%) was visible after the 2008 presidential elections, but not in the sense of a division between two liberal or democratic options, which is the case in stable democracies, but between two models of development, two strategically opposed orientations, the modern and the anti-modern. This conflicting kind of division was shown in practice, that is, the division that essentially sets the strategic political and value dilemma – should we go in the direction of further democratization or anti-modernization. Essentially different developmental conceptions are on the agenda and a stalemate position makes the situation crucial, dramatic and generally bad from the standpoint of democratic reforms and European integration.

The change in the trend of the vote proportion between extreme right and democratic presidential candidates (in such a way where SRS's candidate's advantage from the first round is replaced with the democratic candidate's advantage in the second round) happened both in the 2004 presidential elections and in the presidential elections held in 2008. However, the democratic candidate's advantage was proportionally much larger in the 2004 elections than in the 2008 elections.

It may sound paradoxical, but Boris Tadić's victory – although close and proportionally numerically less convincing from the one in 2004 – could be considered as an indicator of the democratic option's strengthening trend and

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candidate could receive a part of the SPS, NS and DSS vote, and that the Democrats' candidate would receive a bigger part of the LDP, DSS and NS vote, and maybe some of the SPS vote.

18 In the first round of the elections held in January 2008, almost a million more voters cast their vote than in the first round of presidential elections held in June of 2004, and in the second round of 2008 presidential elections, almost 1.5 million more voters cast their vote than in the second round of 2004 presidential elections. In the second round of 2004 presidential elections, the turnout was slightly higher than in the first round (around 50,000 voters), and the turnout of the 2008 presidential elections increased by almost half a million voters from the first to the second round.

19 Because of the unattained support from DSS and LDP many had predicted Tadić's defeat.

also the weakening trend of the radical option (despite the fact that positive results are far from the ones in 2000). The fact that Tadić managed to win in the second round, although he did not receive public and official support from any bigger or more significant party from the sphere of the democratic option, and that the election was held in a time of very dire international signals on impeding Kosovo's status resolution, and also in the aforementioned context of the increasing citizens' discontent with the living conditions, represented a very clear sign that the majority electorate has turned slowly but surely toward the European, democratic and pro-reform option.

More precisely, the step out of the radical option advantage in the first round to a small but sufficient advantage for the democratic option in the second round of presidential elections, and in the situation where neither DSS nor LDP publicly and officially gave their support to Boris Tadić, represents a turning point in the Serbian political body and predominant strategic orientations in its framework.

### *The 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections*

The fact that Tadić still won (although very close) represented a significant turning point for further events and a relevant sign or indication of the trend – which is confirmed in the early parliamentary elections, which were held in May of 2008.

Public opinion polls had predicted, until the last moments before the early parliamentary elections, a slight advantage for the radicals, and the general expectation was that the results of a coalition around DS and SRS would be in a tie, while every party put more of their trust in luck than in reliable predictions that its slight advantage would prevail in the final results.<sup>20</sup> However, the democratic option visibly became stronger, and experts did not recognize nor expect this turning point or indication of a change in the mood and the strategic orientations of citizens in Serbia.

In fact, precisely because of the traumatic and uncertain situation in presidential elections held in the January and February of 2008, the democratic option's evident victory in all segments of power (in the early parliamentary elections that were held simultaneously with regional elections in Vojvodina, the city of Belgrade and at the local level in May of 2008), was not predicted by any relevant analyst or empirical research. During the past few years, researchers have obviously been under the influence of a very strengthened extreme right, and under the impression that the Kosovo issue will have absolute priority and they fell into the wrong prediction that ethno-nationalist forces gathered around SRS, but also around DSS, would certainly obtain

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20 Public opinion polls in the past few years show that SRS's high popularity was kept constant at around 35-40%, that is, SRS was the single strongest parliamentary party. The united democratic option still, typically, had the majority, even though several opinion polls during 2007 and 2008 indicated that SRS together with SPS could have form a parliamentary majority.



an electoral benefit and victory from the Kosovo issue and proclaimed independence of this Serbian province.

There is no clear answer to the question why the empirical surveys had “failed” in prognosing the public mood, and why they gave a slight advantage mostly to SRS over DS and the coalition For a European Serbia (ZES). Subsequent explanations repeated the fact that from 2000 all empirical surveys of Serbian citizen’s attitudes show a high percentage of positive indicators of pro-EU orientation, in spite of the rise of traditionalist forces and despite the aforementioned poor social-economic picture. In this sense, with “subsequent wisdom”, it was concluded that in the last moment the fear from further aggravation of Serbia’s bad social-economic condition, that if the radical option would have won, it would have distanced Serbia from the EU, prevailed within the population. Also, the positive effects of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU that was signed immediately before the elections, as well as the economic cooperation agreement between the auto industry “Zastava” and the Italian company “Fiat”, were mentioned.

### *The 2008 Parliamentary Elections*

In the most recent elections, held on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2008, the pro-European parties DS, G17 Plus, the Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO), Nenad Čanak’s League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV) and Rasim Ljajić’s Social-Democratic Party of Sandžak (SDP) ran together under the name For a European Serbia (ZES). In addition, as has already been stated, local elections on all levels and regional elections for the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina were held simultaneously with the parliamentary elections.

In the republic parliamentary elections the ZES coalition achieved around 1,5 million votes out of around 4,2 million votes, meaning 38.75% of the vote or 102 mandates (DS won 66 seats, G17 Plus won 25 seats, SPO and SDP received 4 seats each, LSV won 3 seats). These were the elections results: ZES won 102 parliamentary seats, SRS 78, the Democratic Party of Serbia-New Serbia Coalition (DSS-NS) won 30, the coalition of Socialist Party of Serbia, Party of United Pensioners of Serbia and United Serbia (SPS-PUPS-JS) won 20, The Liberal-Democratic Party of Čedomir Jovanović (LDP) won 13, and the minority parties won 7 seats.<sup>21</sup>

Parties, by themselves, independently from coalitions – viewed comparatively regarding the parliamentary elections of January 2007 and these early parliamentary elections of May 2008 – had the following scores: SRS fell from 81 to 78 mandates, DS rose from 60 to 66, DSS fell from 33 to 21, G17 rose from 19 to 25, SPS fell from 14 to 12, NS fell from 10 to 9, LDP rose from 11

21 The Hungarian Coalition won 4 mandates, the Bosniak List for a European Sandžak won 2 and the Albanian Coalition from Preševo Valley won 1 mandate. The minorities, thus, received 7 mandates in total. The Roma parties ran disjointedly and independently and they lost all seats (in the previous convocation of Parliament, two Roma parties had one representative each). (See: *Blic*, 2. June 2008; [www.cesid.org](http://www.cesid.org))

to 13 (while in the 2006 elections it ran independently, in 2008 it ran together in coalition with several smaller parties), LSV fell from 4 to 3, JS rose from 2 to 3, PUPS did not exist in 2007 and in 2008 it won 5 mandates, SPO received no representative in the 2007 election, and in 2008 it had 4, and SDP rose from 3 to 4 mandates.

The Democratic Party, by itself, increased the number of mandates from 60 to 66, but the coalition – lead by DS – significantly outdistanced SRS, that is, it gathered 24 mandates more than the Radicals did, which is a fact that none of the analysts and none of the pre-election empirical research and predictions of election results would have guessed.

The pro-European option's victory tells us several things: firstly, the pro-European mood in Serbia, after the "half-half" phase during the past few years, still strengthened tendentially and became predominant. The fact of a clear half-half division of the electorate after 2003 was a consequence of the fact that the anti-European and the anti-democratic option managed to come back and strengthen after the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić, which was also the essential goal and political background of this assassination. During 2007, barely anybody – even among democratically orientated people – still doubted that a historic defeat of democratic option could happen. Many even had feared that in the near future the Radicals would take power. However, as was already mentioned, with the results of the January 2008 presidential elections, the trend was slightly indicated, and, with the last parliamentary elections, the trend of the predominance of pro-European mood among the population was expressed much more clearly.

The unexpected disproportion in the votes received between DS and SRS, and in the favor of DS (and parties close to DS), must be interpreted as a triumph of the pro-European option in the 2008 parliamentary elections, and it was demonstrated not only in the national elections, but also in local municipal<sup>22</sup> and regional elections (for The Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina).

22 In the Belgrade local elections, out of 17 municipalities, the coalition For a European Belgrade (ZEB), which was comprised of DS and G17 Plus, won the majority of the votes in 12 municipalities, SRS won in 4 municipalities, while the "Group of Citizens" attained their biggest support only in the municipality Sopot. The Coalition of DS and G17 Plus won most of the votes in city's central municipalities Savski Venac, Stari Grad, Voždovac, Palilula, as well as in the municipalities Novi Beograd, Lazarevac, Barajevo, Rakovica, Čukarica, Zvezdara and Obrenovac, and it won the absolute majority in the municipality of Vračar. The Radicals received the biggest support in Surčin, Zemun, Mladenovac and Grocka, but they were not able to form the government independently in any of these municipalities.

The compared results of the 2004 local elections for the City of Belgrade and the results of the 2008 elections give the following picture: the list around DS – the list For a European Belgrade (ZEB) – had an increase from 32.2% to 39.2% of the vote (SPO joined ZEB in 2008, and in 2004 it did not reach the electoral threshold, while G17 Plus individually had 4.9% of the vote, and the electoral threshold was 3% of the vote); the Radicals had an increase from 26.6% to 35.01% of the vote; in 2004 DSS had 12.5% of the vote by itself, and now, in the coalition with NS, it received only 11.12% of the vote; SPS fell from 5.5% to 5.22% of the vote; in 2004 LDP did not exist, and now it has passed the threshold; the



The election results<sup>23</sup> in Vojvodina, for the provincial assembly, have shown the biggest proportional progress of orientation for democratic reforms and European integration, and the biggest fall in popularity of the SRS and the ethno-nationalist policy, which is represented by SRS (together with the populist coalition DSS-NS). The list For a European Vojvodina (ZEV), which was comprised of DS and G17 Plus received 64 parliamentary seats, SRS 24, the Hungarian Coalition 9, Together for Vojvodina 6, DSS-NS 6, SPS-PUPS 5, LDP 1, and the rest won 5 seats.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that the populist coalition of DSS-NS – led by Koštunica – had weakened, that is, that from the previous 47 to now only winning 30 mandates, represents the only exactly predicted election result. Since the populist Coalition in its pre-election campaign openly used a political discourse which was much closer to the one of the Radicals, part of its electorate obviously voted for ZES; and although it had placed its focus on the Kosovo issue and expected to win election points precisely upon the traumatic event of Kosovo's recently declared independence, it had been shown that the electorate in Serbia did not think that Kosovo's status was the only question of priority, but equally gave importance to the issues of the quality of life and economic prosperity.

The Socialist Party of Serbia alone fell from 14 to 12 mandates, but the coalition of SPS with the Party of United Pensioners of Serbia (PUPS) and the United Serbia (JS), won 20 mandates. In electoral mathematics, those 20 mandates gained a key role for forming a parliamentary majority and in this sense, the SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition became crucial for the direction in which Serbia would further go.

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Movement Strength of Serbia (PSS), led by Bogoljub Karić, had 4.6% of the vote in 2004, and now it had 0.3% of the vote.

In Niš, the Democrats kept the same number of mandates as in 2004 (18 mandates). However, the Radicals improved their score by 6 more mandates; G17 Plus kept the same number of mandates (7), and in 2008, DSS and NS together had one mandate less than what DSS had in 2004; the Socialists received two more mandates, and LDP had passed the electoral threshold.

- 23 The combined electoral system (the proportional system and the qualified majority system) is being applied in Vojvodina, while republic elections are being held under a strictly proportional system. (See: Goati, V. Electoral System in Serbia, in: Vujadinovic, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavičević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Institutional Framework*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2003.
- 24 People in Vojvodina turned their backs on the Radicals in their traditionally radical bastions (for example, Bačka Palanka, Srem, Beočin, Novi Sad, and Sremski Karlovci). In the second round, the ZEV heavily defeated the Radicals, and the losers also were: DSS, the Hungarian Coalition, SPS and Nenad Čanak's League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, because they all received fewer seats than in the previous session of the province Assembly. After the first round, SRS had 39 candidates, and 14 of them had started from a better position and had expected a victory in the second round, but none of those 14 candidates were successful in the second round. To everyone's surprise, the candidates of the Hungarian Coalition were defeated in "their" places. They lost the elections in Ada, Senta, Mali Idoš, Čoka, and Temerin, and were "surprized" the most with the defeat in Subotica (See: *Blic*, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008).

With these elections, SPO came back on the political scene, if not with the same extent and significance as SPS, than still sufficiently significant, in the sense that with its 4 parliamentary seats and clear pro-European and pro-reform orientation it could contribute to the advancement of the democratic political option.<sup>25</sup>

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) experienced a relative failure, stagnation more exactly, because it did not expand its electorate at all, and if it had won only 3 parliamentary seats more a democratic government might have been formed, without any need for making hard and controversial compromises with SPS. The best proof of the immaturity of LDP's campaign is its failure in Vojvodina, which had shown the biggest democratic orientation of its citizens in these elections.

Čedomir Jovanović formed his own party, among other things, out of discontentment with the over-tolerance that DS, with Tadić at its head, had been showing for DSS's policy, and in this context, he was a fierce critic of DS and DSS's cohabitation during the two governments in which Koštunica was Prime Minister.<sup>26</sup> He rightfully pointed out that Koštunica had the biggest responsibility for many manifestations of halting democratic reforms, but also that Tadić was responsible to an extent that he was allowing this. However, Čedomir Jovanović and LDP were also rightfully criticized for not showing more patriotic sentiments and political wisdom while conducting policy in the last presidential elections (when in the second round they did not publicly and unambiguously support Tadić as Nikolić's opposing candidate), as well as for acting exclusively, elitistly, turning only to "selected" or enlightened citizens in the last parliamentary elections' campaign; in addition, LDP criticized DS more than SRS.<sup>27</sup> The main point of critique against LDP could

25 Besides entering the Parliament with 4 mandates, in the local elections, SPO passed the electoral threshold in 8 municipalities, in which it ran independently: Lapovo, Paraćin, Trstenik, Čičevac, Žabari, Majdanpek, Bogatić, and Arandelovac. In Smederevo it passed the threshold with the help of a local party, and in other municipalities it ran successfully in the coalition with DS and G17 Plus. (See: *Vreme*, May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

26 In an interview which Čedomir Jovanović gave to the newspaper *Blic* shortly after the elections, on the question – If Đinđić was alive, what would he say if he saw Serbia today? – he responded: "While we were working together, solving the problems which prevent change in Serbia was of utmost importance. And all the cordons, tear gas, and conflicts with the police, protests, Koštunica, the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, Milošević's arrest, and the red berets – all were the 'frogs' which we were swallowing so that society can move forward. SPS, as a frog that needs to be swallowed, neither was then and neither is now, a bigger problem than those who have led Serbia for years so that today it depends on Socialists, who in their time ruined it. The cohabitation and coalition of DS and DSS brought us back to the beginning. Tadić, next to Koštunica, is the most responsible for that, although he tries to change existing relations by seeking new partners in SPS, while Koštunica tries to conserve Serbia with support from the Radicals. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, people voted for Europe and future, for the ideals whose personification is Zoran Đinđić. More important than what he would say about Serbia today is what we will do so that society starts moving out of quicksand in which it had been blindly groping in since the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2003." (See: *Blic*, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

27 Teofil Pančić, a journalist and political analyst, gives a critical review of the LDP's behavior in the recent presidential and parliamentary elections. He states that LDP made

be stated in the following way: if LDP had won more votes than in the previous parliamentary elections, instead of remaining in its 220,000 votes, in other words, if it had won only 3 more mandates, “swallowing the frog”<sup>28</sup> in the image of SPS would have been completely unnecessary!

To conclude with the following important remark: In the past few years, the Serbian Radical Party systematically noted political defeats, although it was the strongest political party individually. The paradox was that precisely in 2008 SRS was the closest to the possibility of not just winning the biggest number of votes (in the parliamentary and presidential elections), but also of forming the government, and thanks to the newest movements within the electorate, they still remained in the opposition. However, it cannot be simply stated that *vox populi* – of the mostly democratically orientated electorate – have passed the judgment, because despite the fact that DS (with the ZES Coalition) significantly overpowered SRS in the last parliamentary elections, it still might have been possible for the coalition arrangement to have brought SRS to power<sup>29</sup> (if the SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition approached SRS). Ac-

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a catastrophic strategic miss in the second round of the presidential elections, when he had not supported Boris Tadić as the democratic candidate. He also analyzed LDP's poor electoral results, as caused by its elitist and arrogant political approach. “After the parliamentary elections and the elections for the City of Belgrade – in which LDP noticeably failed, even though none of party leaders will publicly admit to it... – this has already become extremely worrisome. It was like LDP unavoidably slipped back into the self-sufficient narcissistic autism of the Righteous Man Debate Club, while real political life went on, somewhere far beyond their, in this arithmetic considerably useless, ‘peak elevation 13’. ... But, Čedomir Jovanović would not be what he is (that is, an extraordinary political talent!) if he did not quickly realize that futile sect-like behavior is the last thing he needs in his life, because he would only be able to lock the store with it, before chasing away the Brain Trust that lead him into bankruptcy. The aggressive *constructive* post-election LDP's attitude towards DS, even when (extorted, but also very much tastelessly “equipped”) cooperation of Tadić-ists and the Mythical Arch-enemy in the form of SPS, whether on the state or city level, is at stake.... The announced ‘strategic association of Democrats and Liberals’, before all in European integrations affairs, is partly used for ‘intimidating’ Dačić-ists, which cannot seem to cross the ‘Belgrade Rubicon’, but this move is hardly exhausted by that... Probably both sides have understood that what we call the ‘pro-European Serbia’ is too fragile to allow itself the luxury of strategic hostility in the name of overtopping in Orthodoxy (or in anything else, after all).... Time will show whether I was too optimistic, but it seems that LDP – probably edified by a huge totally merited electoral slap – is slowly starting to overcome its *adolescent syndrome*; with this large post-election capital and with less risk than before, DS is also in the position to start overcoming its *ill-compromizing and sleep-like (kunktatorski) syndrome*, which in the time of the infamous “cohabitation” would, from time to time, deform it beyond recognition (after all, if it were not like that, LDP might have never existed, and certainly would not have placed itself in the Parliament). And this means that this might be ‘the beginning of a beautiful friendship’... Nobody asks Boris Tadić and Čeda Jovanović to love each other: it would be sufficient if they did something for the *common interest*.” (Vreme, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

- 28 The expression “progutati žabu” means literally in Serbian “swallowing the frog”. This expression is used when one has to make undesirable, but necessary political compromises.
- 29 Vladimir Goati points out that the contemporary politicology more clearly notices the tendency that in western democracies coalitions of political parties are becoming a cru-

cording to electoral mathematics and the SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition's quite possible opting for coalition with SRS, the traditionalist option might have come to power. In other words, the victory of democratically orientated parties is partly conditional, and conditioned by decision of chiefs of Coalition around SPS. However, no matter how much in this case *vox populi* was susceptible to changes under the influence of the factor of variable coalition arrangements, the profiling tendency of the strengthening of the modernizational option, in relation to the traditionalist option, still crucially influenced the final coalition arrangements and the victory of forces around DS. It might be concluded that the final result still expressed the *vox populi*/the will of the majority of people in the correct way.

### Post-electoral Fermentation

The Radicals generally did worse in the last parliamentary elections than they expected to, and worse than every objective expectation and empirical surveys' indicator proposed. They especially did badly in the regional elections of Vojvodina.

The Serbian Radical Party and populist Coalition DSS-NS – faced with results worse than expected – tried to make a mathematical majority and cover up the failure quickly after the parliamentary elections. They had not even succeeded in that, although they showed considerable efficiency in making preliminary agreements with SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition for forming a government in Belgrade, as well as in public promising that they will form a parliamentary majority for the republic government; and while doing so, they made intense public promotion of these efforts and placed very strong media pressure on Serbian political and social public.

In every formal and informal post-election conversation and negotiation, the question of how SPS will decide into the final results – to join SRS and the populist Coalition, or to reorient and join DS and parties who wanted to form a democratic government – was of vital significance. The Socialist Party of Serbia, after many dilemmas and much internal and external pressure, still decided to form a parliamentary majority on the republic level together with DS and other parties from the democratic option, and later, the same unambiguous logic was gradually applied to every level of the power pyramid. In addition, declaratively speaking, this party's (as well as their coalition partners') estimate that the democratic government will be one that supports the principles that SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition cares about – the principles of social justice and EU integration (i.e., the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU) – was crucial for SPS's decision to

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cial intervening variable in the post-election period, so that, in political practice, coalition arrangements really can deform the results of the democratically expressed majoritarian will (*vox populi*). In this sense, politicology needs to take into account the crossing of the theory of democracy with the theory of party coalitions. See: Goati, V. *Političke partije i partijski sistemi (Political Parties and Party Systems)*, Podgorica: Fakultet političkih nauka, pp. 71-92.

“change sides”. Factually, it might be possible that the SPS leaders’ estimate was that it was not only in the long-term interest of their Party, but also in their personal interest that SPS came over to the “winning side”. Thanks to the aforementioned SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition’s decision, the ethno-nationalist “patriotic forces” – among which, next to SRS, DSS was now classified as such – remained without any chances to form, first of all, a government on the republican level, and then later on all formal and informal agreements on forming a government in the City of Belgrade, as well as in the biggest number of municipalities throughout Serbia, were suspended.

In the meantime, leaders of DS and SPS made an agreement on the creation of a “pro-European vertical between these two parties, from municipalities, the regional level, and finally to the republic level”.<sup>30</sup> The agreement on applying this pyramidal structure of DS and SPS cooperation on every level of local power, resulted in the termination of some already implemented agreements between SPS and the Radicals (and the People’s Parties Coalition – DSS-NS) for local governments throughout Serbia.<sup>31</sup>

The biggest problems with forming the government appeared in the City of Belgrade. The reason was that a preliminary coalition agreement between SRS, DSS and SPS was made very quickly after parliamentary and local elections, thanking to the fact that the proposed representatives of SPS in the Belgrade government belonged to the “hard core” Milošević-like version of SPS. In the meantime, after SPS’s assent to break informal negotiations or cancel the announced alliance with the Coalition of the SRS and DSS-NS on the republican level, the formal agreement between SRS, DSS-NS, and SPS-PUPS-JS on the level of City of Belgrade, was also canceled.

In the context of post-election “locking horns” and difficult negotiations over the forming of a republican government and the entire “pyramid of power”, the results of empirical research, conducted in the aforementioned post-election period, are interesting because they give more or less reliable indicators of which political actors would be losers, and who would be winners of the eventual repeated national elections, as well as local elections in Belgrade.

30 In keeping with this, at the level of the highest authorities in Vojvodina, it was agreed that SPS would take part in the government in Vojvodina, although it received a negligible number of votes in the regional elections. Therefore, in Vojvodina, the Socialists – together with the Democrats – would directly or indirectly form the government in almost every municipality, even though SPS did not pass the electoral threshold. The idea was to form an entirety and harmony within the pyramid of power, by making the aforementioned concessions to SPS in Vojvodina, as well as by restructuring parliamentary majorities in local organs, so that a pro-European and pro-reform government could function on all levels without any disturbance. (See: *Blic*, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008).

31 In this sense, after the breaking of the alliance between SPS with DSS-NS and SRS, a reconstructed government was established in Titel, Beočin, Kikinda, Temerin, and Sremska Mitrovica, and the same was expected in Bačka Palanka, Vrbas, Apatin, Odžaci, Kikinda, Žabalj and Kovin. A very interesting fact is that the local representatives of DSS, in the majority of the aforementioned municipalities, accepted to enter the coalition with DS, even though leaders of the Party made the decision (regarding the process of forming the government in the City of Belgrade, and regardless of the fact that DS and DSS collaborated very successfully in Belgrade in the previous convocation) to place a ban on entering the coalition with DS on every level. (See: *Blic* July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008; *Blic*, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

The agency for public opinion polling “Strategic Marketing” published a public opinion poll, conducted from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, and from the sample of 1,086 people. According to the results, if parliamentary elections were repeated, the democratic option parties with DS at its head (DS, LDP and minority parties) would have had a majority and would be able to form a pro-European government, without any “unprincipled coalitions” with SPS. Namely, ZES would have won 111 parliamentary seats, LDP 13, the minority parties 7, DSS-NS 28 and SRS 75 seats. Two thirds of citizens would still vote for accession to the EU, and the opinion about international institutions has changed for the better. Among the problems that worry citizens the most, the first out of three most important was unemployment (cited by 50% of citizens), and then a low standard of living (cited by 38% of citizens). The Kosovo problem fell from first place, which it occupied in February of 2008, to third place, and it was cited by 24% of citizens. By the importance of problems that Serbia needs to solve, crime and corruption are usually in fourth and fifth place.<sup>32</sup>

The same agency published, on July 15<sup>th</sup>, the results of a public opinion poll in Belgrade, regarding the possible repeating of elections for the Assembly of the City of Belgrade. The results of empirical survey showed that, in case local elections were repeated, the coalition “For a European Belgrade” (ZEB) and the LDP would be able to form the government, while the SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition would not pass the census (and now it has 6 representatives). ZEB with 44% of the vote and 50 representatives, SRS with 37% of the vote and 42 mandates, DSS-NS with 8% of the vote and 10 mandates and LDP with 7% of the vote and 8 mandates, would enter Parliament.<sup>33</sup>

The point is that these post-election empirical surveys also show the proportional constant growth of pro-European and pro-reform policy orientation

32 See: *Blic*, May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

33 See: *Blic*, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

It can be said that, among other things, the SPS-PUPS-JS Coalition accepted to break the initially made coalition agreement with SRS and DSS, precisely because it was in danger of subsequently losing its participation in the republic Government, and losing every chance to form a government with anybody on the City level if elections were repeated, because it would have not passed the electoral threshold.

The “Strategic Marketing” research, conducted from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2008, from a sample of 1,020 examinees, showed a decrease in the rating of every party and an increase in undecided voters, and that the President of Serbia, Boris Tadić, and his party, DS, still enjoyed the highest amount of popularity. If the elections were held in the last week of August 2008, and with the same lists of candidates as in the elections held in May, ZES would have won even more convincingly than others. (It would have won 41% of the vote.) The Coalition around SPS possibly would not have passed the electoral threshold, because according to this research it fell to 4% of the vote. Radicals would have won 32% of the vote, and LDP would have stably positioned itself on 7% of the vote. DSS, together with NS, would have won 13% of the vote.

The most popular politician is Boris Tadić, and Boris Tadić and Čedomir Jovanović are still more popular than their own parties, while Tomislav Nikolić and Aleksandar Vučić are almost equally popular. If a referendum were held in the same week, on the issue of whether Serbia should join the European Union, up to 61% of citizens would have voted positively. (See: *Blic*, September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008)



of the majority of Serbian citizens, in other words, that populism and ethno-nationalist demagogy (which unfortunately took root very deeply inside the population from the time of Milošević's rule) are less and less important to citizens, and that the quality of life, the growth of living standards, employment and economic stability are more and more important to them.

Of course, it is not easy for the Serbian Radical Party and other "patriotic bloc" parties to admit their defeat in these elections, to accept the "solid" fact that they have never – in spite of growing power – managed to win power, and to face the fact that their popularity is waning, and that – on the same ideological-political premises – their perspectives on winning power in future are worse and worse.

Precisely in the delicate moment when "patriotic forces" were facing the fact that every chance and possibility of forming the government on the entire pyramid structure, including the City of Belgrade, was slipping out of their hands, Radovan Karadžić was arrested – one of the main war crime suspects and a Hague fugitive. This event was used for the organization of patriotic forces' meeting, on Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2008 – under SRS leadership – with the expectation that several hundred thousand people would gather and contribute to a strengthening of SRS and their coalition partners.

The preparation of the meeting was accompanied by hate speech directed toward the leaders of the democratic parties, by stirring up anti-European and militant sentiments, and with the slogan that the meeting was organized by "patriotic" forces against "traitorous" forces, and with the expectation that large dissatisfied masses would initiate the take down of the newly constituted government. However, a negligible number of people showed up – compared to expectations. It was estimated that 15,000 people were present, and the meeting ended with fierce street fights between the police and hooligans and the demolition of city property. It turned out that "patriotism", offered by ethno-nationalist forces – like in several previous cases<sup>34</sup> – was crossed by, and overlapped with, hooliganism.

Citizen street gatherings, which were based on populist demagogy and indoctrination, and which were followed by violence, hate speech, and death threats against political opponents, by definition fall into (which is called in political theory) an "uncivilized civil society".<sup>35</sup> In these events politics becomes converted into violence and by that politics itself becomes annulled, because fighting by political means is replaced with fighting by (non-politic) violent means. Civil society, by definition implies a nonviolent, voluntary

34 In the case of the gathering for the defense of Kosovo, in March 2008, the identification of hooliganism/criminal behavior underlined with "patriotism" was manifested in the most drastic manner – through setting embassies on fire, destroying public property and the massive looting of luxury merchandise stores and sportswear stores.

35 See: Keane, J. *Civil Society – Old Images, New Visions*, Polity Press 1998; see, also: Vujadinović, D. The Concept of Civil Society in the Contemporary Context, in: Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavićević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2005.

public gathering of autonomous individuals who fight for the improvement, establishment, and/or control of constitutionally guaranteed rights and a true affirmation of the principles of liberal democracy. In contrast to civil society which essentially represents the embodiment of politics in a broader sense, “uncivilized civil activity” goes outside the scope of political (both in a narrow and broad sense meaning of “political”).

The leading representatives of SRS promise an intensification of street protests and mass gatherings of malcontents (who are not satisfied with the results of the last parliamentary and local elections) in the following autumn, with the intent to take down the newly constituted government. Previous indicators about the character and the outcome of such gatherings do not bode well. The only good thing regarding these promises and intent is that they will most probably be without massive support and will fail. Also, it would be good if the authorities prevented and sanctioned violent mass gatherings, and if serious initiatives would be started for outlawing organizations and forms of activity that are promoting hate speech and militant behavior, and by doing so, are threatening the foundations of democratic order.<sup>36</sup>

Violence and “patriotism” equal to populist demagoguery and hooliganism can have very negative consequences in the blocking of Parliament and legislative activity and in shifting the parliamentary fight to violent forms of non-parliamentary fight. Populism in Milošević’s time was connected to war profiteering and criminalization of the state and society, and, in the worst case, with war crimes that were massively committed in the name of Serbian people. The present populism is its direct extension and it amounts to stirring up and the preservation of the ethno-nationalist matrix.

The out-of-parliament civil opposition’s fight in the time of Milošević’s rule was predominantly non-violent. Civil and Student protests from the 90s to 2000, and especially in ‘96/’97, were the expression of political activity in a broader sense of the word; they represented a manifestation of civil society’s

36 SRS’s representatives have a rich history of threatening and insulting anyone with a different political mindset. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2003, deputy leader Tomislav Nikolić sent a message to Đinđić, saying that Tito also had a problem with his leg before his death. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2001, from a speaker’s platform in the Parliament, Nikolić also stated that he was “proud of being a fascist.” In the session held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2005, MP Zoran Krsić insulted the President Boris Tadić, as well as nongovernment organizations and media: “How would it be if a man unconsciously participated with common scoundrels, Tadić, Karić, DS, PSS, nongovernment organizations, Women in Black, White, Green, however, because there is plenty of that. When Bogoljub Karić grabs you with his Albanian BK television, B92 with its ustasha television, people are rightfully driven crazy.” In 2007, SRS’s representative Goran Cvetanović stated that the G17 Plus vice-president, Ivana Dulić Marković, was an ustasha, and that her brother and father are also ustasha. The same expression has been used for president Tadić on an everyday basis. Also, the Radicals have been calling war crime suspects “Serbian heroes” for a long time, and the word “traitors” has been introduced to everyday political speech, to mark representatives of the democratic option. One of the latest drastic hate speech scandals is the statement of SRS’s representative Verica Radeta, in which future generations of Boris Tadić’s family are cursed in the most primitive, neo-traditionalist manner. (See: *Danas*, Tuesday July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2008)



development and activity, in the fight for the establishment of a democratic order.<sup>37</sup> In contrast to this, these present radical option's protests – although they would like to imitate the aforementioned civil protests by certain symbolic means – in principle represent the focus of hate speech, violence and delinquency with the potential for it slipping into more serious forms of violence and terrorism. As such, they do not serve the establishment and consolidation, but the destabilization and destruction of the liberal-democratic order's inceptions.

## Concluding Remarks

The hypothesis which was the starting point of the analysis and upon which the argumentation was built are the following: firstly, Serbia has been still at the crossroads of strategic orientations between democratic reforms and equal incorporation into the international community and European Union, on one hand, and the retrograde tendency of pseudo-traditionalist, ethno-nationalist model of an isolated state and society, on the other; secondly, the results of last parliamentary elections (in continuity with the last presidential elections), have shown the (slight but clear) tendency of the electorate's movement towards the democratic option; thirdly, although the aforementioned tendency is obvious, it is still not strong enough so that a parliamentary majority can be formed out of democratically orientated political parties; fourthly, while DS has reached its current maximum, that is, their unexpectedly good election results, LDP scored a result worse than expected, and in this sense, it prevented the forming of a "clear" democratic majority in the Parliament; fifthly, precisely that small but crucial shortage of democratic votes has lead the Serbian political scene in the paradoxical situation so that – despite the electorate's democratic orientation – the forming of a democratic government in Serbia depended on SPS, a party with which Milošević used to "rule the roost", the fate of Serbia, and the entire region from the late 80s and then for following 15 years; sixthly, it is expected from SPS to truly accept a pro-reform and pro-European policy, which unavoidably means that SPS must distance itself by its program and activity from its Milošević legacy and stigma from the past; and finally, DS and LDP have shown, in the post-election period, constructive signs of "strategic association" (cooperation and

37 See: Pavlović, V. ed. *Potismuto civilno društvo (Suppressed Civil Society)*, Beograd: EKO-centar, 1995; Skenderović Ćuk, N. and Podunavac, M. eds. *Civil Society in the Countries in Transition*, Subotica: Open University Subotica, 1999; Vujadinović, D. Obstacles and Perspectives of Development of Civil Society in FRY, in: (R)evolution and Order – On Dynamics of Changes in Serbia, op. cit. pp. 333-347; Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavićević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, op. cit.; Mihailović, S. ed. *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji, II (Five Years of Transition in Serbia, II)*, Beograd: Socijaldemokratski klub and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2006; Pavlović, V., *Civilno društvo i demokratija (Civil Society and Democracy)*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2006; Pavlović, V., *Društveni pokreti i promene (Social Movements and Changes)*, Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2006.

joint responsibility for the strengthening of strategic capacities and goals concerning the modernization of Serbia).

In brief, the fact that citizens are moving their priorities toward social-economic issues and consequently giving priority, by majority, to the pro-European and pro-reform political option, represents a turning point regarding the up-till-recently blocking division of the electorate and Serbia's dangerous facing with the equal strength of two mutually opposed historical tendencies.

Whether a new government will function in a successful and stable manner will depend to what extent it will deal with giving priority to the issues which citizens themselves are setting as a priority, and those are social-economic issues, and to them connected European integration. Then, it will depend on how successful the cooperation between DS and SPS will be in one way, and between DS and LDP in another way, but successful in both cases in the sense of focusing on the two mentioned priorities. Also, the stable functioning of this democratic government will depend on parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities of the present opposition's structure, comprised of ethno-nationalist "patriotic" forces, but before all, to what extent will the new government manage to annul the anti-system activity of its current opposition, by its social-economic and political results, and to influence the further weakening of SRS's<sup>38</sup> influence, and the influence of anti-European and anti-reform forces in general.

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38 A few months after this article had been published, an internal split of SRS occurred, and the greater part of SRS left it and formed the Serbian Progressive Party (SNP), under the leadership of Tomislav Nikolić.

## WHAT IS THE RATIONAL NATIONAL AND STATE INTEREST OF CONTEMPORARY SERBIA?\*

*The crossroads between the process of modernization and anti-modern tendencies, at which Serbia currently stands, is analyzed in the introductory paper of this book. The analysis focuses on establishing the difference between rational and irrational concepts of national and state interests. Special attention is given to the destructive consequences of the Milošević regime, then to current growing extreme-right processes and anti-modern tendencies, as well as to the fatal perpetuation of the militant concept of "Greater Serbia". The viewpoint here is that the rational state interest of contemporary Serbia must be directly related to the normative task involved in establishing a constitutional democracy, creating a civil/republican order in its full and authentic meaning. In that sense, rational national interest can be fulfilled only by moving forward, on the basis of a constitutional democracy – while dismissing self-isolation and xenophobia – towards openness to cooperation, interaction, communicability, tolerance and enrichment through economic, cultural and social mutual influences, authentic acknowledgement of the positive achievements of others, with the recognition of the highest civilizational standards as one's own.*

**Keywords:** modernization, anti-modern tendencies, ethno-nationalism, transition, democracy, rationality, national interest, state interest.

### Diagnosis of the Current State of Affairs

Serbia is at a crossroads between the process of modernization<sup>1</sup> and strong anti-modern tendencies. The issue lies in the deep conflict between the

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\* This text was originally published in: Vujadinović, D. and Goati V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Serbia at the Political Crossroads*, Belgrade: CEDET&FES, 2009. References to different texts and their authors further on in the footnotes of this text are also related to the book *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Serbia at the Political Crossroads*, *op. cit.*

1 There is abundant literature dealing with the concept of modern society, modernization and anti-modernism in its original, as well as in its modified contemporary interpretations, including one in a postmodernist key.

The modern era, a product of West-European civilization, is about two hundred years old (four hundred years in a broader sense), dating approximately from the French Revolution, the American War of Independence and the Industrial Revolution. From the point of view of content, it dates from the moment the three basic components of the modern era (capitalism, industrialization and democracy) united, thus establishing and

official strategy of modernization and its bearers, on one side, and strongly pronounced anti-modernizing tendencies and their social and political representatives, on the other.<sup>2</sup> As a result, modernizing processes in Serbia has not only been delayed (compared to other post-communist transition states) and partial (the processes of creating an institutional political-legal framework and meeting all the preconditions for a market economy have been partially accomplished), but they are also seriously jeopardized by anti-modern

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shaping its specific contradictory structure, where both universal political equality and economic inequality are at work at the same time. In the broadest terms, modern society is determined by a *universalizing project*, acting by *logics of industrialization, capitalism and democracy* that co-exist and are mutually connected yet relatively independent. (See: Heler, A. *Teorija istorije*, Beograd: Rad, 1984, pp. 378-380 [Heller, A. *A Theory of History*, London, Boston: Routledge&Kegan Paul, 1982]).

Modern society is characterized by the process of rationalization of all spheres of life (followed by resistance to rationalization), the separation of domestic and professional jobs, i.e. private and public sphere, the universal division of labor, the separation of state and society, the separation of church and state, the domination of a scientific perception of the world, the division and mutual control of government bodies within representative democracy, the separation of reason and mind, instrumental and substantial rationality, discerning of the three powers of judgment (Weber, Smith, Kant). According to Bauman, one of the key characteristics of modernity is the revolution in the mentality of people – relying on one's own reason and mind, on exploring new possibilities, openness to new and unorthodox solutions, faith in progress and the power of reason. As early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many analysts saw the essence of modern dynamism in the emancipation of human actions from unchangeable customs, traditions and responsibilities towards the collectivity, the community. Although the classical perception of the modern era has been challenged with good reason, within the framework of the so called postmodern era (for example, faith in progress and unambiguous historical process, the domination of reason and rationalization over emotions and spontaneity, the domination of the Western way of living over pluralism of values and lifestyles), the basic determination of modernity as the highest level of development, in the sense of the achieved level of universality and evolution into the first global civilization in history, is not being questioned. "Thus, modernity is usually described as the highest form of historical development. Although inherently dynamic, modern civilization still maintains its own identity. It is capable of continuous creativity, unlike other civilizations, which calcify and lose their ability to adjust to 'new' challenges. With the emergence of modern civilization, the world split up into a modern part and the remainder, which is faced with the challenge of modernization." (See: Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity, Krieger, J. ed. *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 550-555)

Modernization – as a challenge to the "rest of the world" to transform itself following the example of the most developed Western countries – results in very diverse institutional constellations, depending on specific characteristics of traditional systems and social-political-economical-cultural characteristics. However, the modified interpretation of modernization (in the postmodernist key) does not bring into question the fact that, to a greater or lesser degree, the crucial elements of the transformation of traditional societies follow at least some of the crucial aspects of what originally represented modernity. (See, for example, Agnes Heller and Zygmunt Bauman, *op. cit.*)

- 2 Contemporary anti-modernism does not profile itself any more as conservatism and traditionalism, as was the case originally, but rather in the postmodernist key of creating new types of fundamentalism and authoritarianism. (See, for example: Heli-Lukas, M., *Fundamentalizmi danas – Feministički i demokratski odgovori* (*Fundamentalisms Today – Feminist and Democratic Responses*), Beograd: Žene u crnom, Sarajevo: Žena i društvo, 2007.

tendencies towards re-traditionalization, clericalization, re-patriarchalization, self-isolation and xenophobia.

In the case of Serbia, the process of “modernization” refers – in the ideal-type sense – to the transformation of the heritage of the real-socialist authoritarian system, and its subsequent upgrade, the ethno-nationalistic, pseudo-democratic system from the Milošević era, into a genuinely democratic system. The issue involves the normative tasks of establishing a constitutional democracy, rule of law, market economy<sup>3</sup>, social justice, the separation of state and society and the establishment of a developed civil society, the separation of state and church and the establishment of an open and secular society, the creation of autonomous civic identity and democratic political culture, encouraging the process of individualization and overcoming the predominance of collective (ethnic) identity and the patriarchal structure of family, and social relations on the whole. The normative task of liberal-democratic reforms “from the inside” is inseparable from international integrative processes.<sup>4</sup>

By “strong anti-modern tendencies” in contemporary Serbia, we refer to a combination of all-penetrating ethno-nationalism and growing processes of clericalization, re-traditionalization and re-patriarchalization<sup>5</sup>, which will be discussed further on.

The process of modernization in contemporary Serbia is related to democratic reforms and Euro-Atlantic integrations. It is officially accepted as the development strategy of the state and society from the moment the democratic government came into power, after October 2000. However, the institutional framework of democracy is not consolidated, while the social and political actors of democratization and modernization lack the critical mass necessary for decisive moves (because the political body is divided, almost down the middle, accepting or denying of modernization), and they also lack a crystallized and consensually accepted vision of reforms (the democratically inclined part of the political body is also marked by profound differences).<sup>6</sup> The strategic division both within the elite and the electoral body is related to the so called ideology-identity split.

In countries of former “real-socialism” in Central and Eastern Europe, the ideology-identity split between pro-regime communist forces and anti-regime forces fell by the wayside soon after the fall of the Berlin wall: political consensus on the necessity of building a liberal-democratic system and of joining Euro-Atlantic integrations was reached during the crucial, initial

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3 Regarding national and state interests from the economic perspective, see the text by Vladimir Gligorov in this book.

4 Regarding the international dimension of national and state interests, see the text by Vojin Dimitrijević in this book.

5 See the text by Mirko Đorđević in this book.

6 On the official modernization strategy there is disagreement, for example, between the Democratic Party (DS), in favor of Euro-Atlantic integrations, and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), which explicitly opposes NATO membership. (See the text by Vladimir Goati in this book).

period of bringing down those authoritarian regimes.<sup>7</sup> In Serbia, however, fundamental ideological disagreements on strategic courses of development of state and society persist to this very day. As much as seven years after democratic change and the beginning of democratic reforms, Serbia is still burdened by ideological differences between the forces of the old regime and the reformers, as well as symbolic differences, based on issues of ethnic and cultural identity and its protection, between “patriots” (ethno-nationalists) and pro-European individuals and groups (mondialists, anti-nationalists, “traitors”). Jointly, the ideological and symbolic/identity divisions in Serbian society and politics has yielded the dominant ideological-political rift, which erodes the political and social fabric, blocking both democratic reforms and integration processes.

The process of transition in Serbia was not only delayed (because of the Milošević regime and the wars), blocked (because of poor cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, and the assassination of the first democratic prime minister, Zoran Đinđić, in March 2003), but it has also been challenged and seriously jeopardized by the abovementioned dominant ideological and symbolic disagreements.

This state of affairs is directly connected to the fact that the historical level of consciousness and the “spirit of the nation” is significantly below the regular standards of modernity: society and politics in Serbia are scarred by these profound ideological-political divisions. The problem is that there is no consensus within the political sphere and the general public on the necessity and desirability of the development of modern Serbia.

7 Here we will put aside the fact that later on in these countries, arose certain signs of old and new forms of ideology-identity splits again. Namely, in the most successful transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, more than 15 years after the fall of the Berlin wall and the abovementioned consensual political and overall strategic decision to establish a liberal-democratic system and become engaged in Euro-Atlantic integrations, signs of social discontent with the results of transition are more and more vivid, along with signs of Euro-skepticism; while social revolt and political conflicts have been, to a great extent, marked by issues of ethnic and cultural identity, ideological rifts and historical memory are marked by them. More and more often, it is referred to as “post-accession crisis” (Attila Agh), namely, to the fact that there are different manifestations of political instability and/or economic crisis and social discontent among the masses in ex “real-socialist” states, i.e. in those countries where economic and political transition was most successful and which have already become members of the EU and NATO. Thus, for example, the economic discontent of the population of “transition losers” – combined with political trauma – led to massive street riots in Hungary in 2006 and 2007. The occasion motivating these riots was the jubilee of the Hungarian anti-communist revolution, quenched in blood by Soviet Block military intervention in 1956. Mass discontent focuses on the idea of “cultural politics” or identity issues (Euro-skepticism combined with nationalism and xenophobia). In the vacuum of an underdeveloped civil political culture and civil society, mass discontent is not articulated in requests for greater democratization of the state and society, or the defense of endangered social and economic rights, but rather in manifestations of extreme right-wing ideas and violent street riots accompanied by anti-democratic, anti-European, racist and anti-Semitic messages. (See: Erke, M. *Madarski nemiri – Simptom centralno-evropske krize pristupanja Evropskoj Uniji?* (*Hungarian riots – Symptom of Central-European Crisis of Accessing the EU?*), Beograd: FES, 2006, p. 6. ([http://www.fes.org.yu/thira\\_publikacije/2006/24\\_Madjarski\\_nemiri.pdf](http://www.fes.org.yu/thira_publikacije/2006/24_Madjarski_nemiri.pdf)).



The extreme right-wing Serbian Radical Party (SRS), is proportionally much stronger than is usually the case in consolidated democracies.<sup>8</sup> In a situation of mass discontent with the quality of life, compounded by the fact that the Kosovo issue generates nationalist sentiments and is, by its very nature, easily and widely used for ethno-nationalistic purposes, SRS uses its egalitarian and populist rhetoric to increase its electoral support and popularity amongst citizens. In addition, an increasing number of extreme right-wing organizations, groups and movements in the field of civil society as well, are congregating around the extreme political right, motivated by problems stemming from Kosovo, but also in defense of the trend towards clericalism, traditionalism and patriarchalism.<sup>9</sup>

The aggressive rhetoric of ethno-nationalism and hate speech is being introduced in increasingly unscrupulous ways, and not only from the ranks of the proclaimed extreme right. The problem lies in the fact that the democratic option is also internally burdened by elements of the ideology-identity rift; the democratic block is also internally susceptible to the production of extreme right ideas and practice. In other words: it is not strong enough to promote and activate an official policy of democratic reform and European integration in a direct and unambiguous manner.

Thus, a systematic contamination of values, politics and the social sphere<sup>10</sup> is at work here, a contamination at the hands of value systems that are far beneath the level of universally accepted values and international standards for human rights protection, not to mention the prohibition of hate speech.<sup>11</sup>

As specified above, by “strong anti-modernizing tendencies” in contemporary Serbia, we mean a combination of all-pervasive ethno-nationalism and growing processes of clericalization, re-traditionalization and re-patriarchalization. The destructive consequences of the Milošević regime are the destruction of society (“sociocide”), the systematic endangering of civilizational standards of universal values and human rights, the criminalization of the

8 See: Ristić, I. Povratak Srpske radikalne stranke nakon 5. oktobra (Return of Serbian Radical Party after October 5<sup>th</sup>), in: Mihailović, S. ed. 2006. *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji, II (Five years of transition in Serbia, II)*, Beograd: FES.

According to the most recent research by Strategic Marketing, carried out between October 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2007, in a sample of 1017 respondents, those who would certainly participate in parliamentary elections would cast their vote for: SRS 36%, SPS 5%, NS 3%, DSS 9%, LDP 5%, G17 Plus 5%, and DS 31%. (See: *Blic*, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, [www.blic.co.yu](http://www.blic.co.yu)).

9 See: Vujadinović, D. Prepreke na putu integracije Srbije u Evropsku uniju (Obstacles in the Integration Processes of Serbia to the European Union), Lilić S. ed. *Pravni kapacitet Srbije za evropske integracije, 2 (The Legal Capacity of Serbia for European Integration, 2)*, Beograd: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2007, 90-106; See, also: Bakić, J. Radical ideological-political Extremism of the Contemporary Serbia, Wikipedia, 2006: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremism>.

10 See the text by Srećko Mihailović in this book.

11 See the text by Vesna Rakić Vodinić in this book.

economy, society and state services, the drastic impoverishment of the populace in combination with the criminalized enrichment of a minority.

The abovementioned destructive consequences are particularly linked to the militant concept of “Greater Serbia”, which was, amongst other things, behind the wars waged on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, and which – directly and indirectly – spread death throughout neighboring countries and Serbia itself, and, moreover, the destruction of values and human, cultural, material and overall civilizational resources. According to the assessment of a part of the expert public in Serbia, which refused to accept ethno-nationalism and the war option, the *Memorandum* of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU)<sup>12</sup>, represented the ideological pretext<sup>13</sup> for the disastrous project of preserving the unity of the Serbian nation or territories inhabited by Serbs, beyond the geopolitical context of the Second Yugoslavia. The SANU *Memorandum* served as both means and end of a warmongering propaganda in Serbia and all other belligerent parties, and represented an incentive for deepening the rift and animosity among Balkan nations.<sup>14</sup> In this sense one can speak about the responsibility of intellectual elite<sup>15</sup> for the wars that caused immeasurable damages to ex-Yugoslav countries and set Serbia last in line for democratic changes and European integration. The “all Serbs in one state” project suffered a defeat, and after losing four wars Serbia

12 In reality, this document was drafted by a group of academicians from the Department of Social Sciences and the Department of Historical Sciences, with the support of a smaller number of members who were not from these departments. SANU, as an entity, did not have a chance to express its joint opinion on the *Memorandum*, while the abovementioned group monopolized the authority to speak in the name of the entire SANU about “the defense of Serbian national interests”.

13 Amongst other things, the *Memorandum* states the following: “Self-determination of the nation. In modern society, any form of political repression and discrimination on national grounds is unacceptable from civilizational standards. At the beginning, the Yugoslav solution to the national question could have been understood as an appropriate model of a multinational federation in which the principle of unified state and state policy was successfully combined with the principle of political and cultural autonomy of nations and national minorities. During the last two decades, the principle of unity has become progressively weaker and the principle of national autonomy has been overemphasized, thus, in practice, changing into the sovereignty of parts (republics, which, as a rule, are not nationally homogenous). The weaknesses in this model have become increasingly visible. All nations are not equal: for example, the Serbian nation was not given the right to have its own state. Parts of the Serbian nation, living in great numbers in other republics, have no rights, unlike other national minorities, to use their own language and alphabet, organize themselves politically and culturally, and jointly develop the unique culture of their nation. The inexorable exodus of Serbs from Kosovo, demonstrates, in a drastic manner, that the principles protecting the autonomy of one minority (Albanians) are not being applied in the case of minorities within the minority (Serbs, Montenegrins, Turks and Roma in Kosovo). Given the existing forms of national discrimination, contemporary Yugoslavia cannot be considered a modern and democratic state.” (Mihailović, K. and Krestić, V. “*Memorandum SANU*” *Odgovori na kritike* (Responses to Critiques), SANU, Beograd 1995, p. 124; Serbian Academy of Art and Sciences, *Memorandum* 1986, [www.haveford.edu/relg/sells/reports/memorandum\\_SANU.htm](http://www.haveford.edu/relg/sells/reports/memorandum_SANU.htm)).

14 About the SANU and the influence of the *Memorandum* see the text by Božidar Jakšić in this book.

15 See the texts by Božidar Jakšić, Todor Kuljić and Ratko Božović in this book.



found itself standing at the back of the queue, burdened with strong retrograde, anti-modern tendencies.

Unfortunately, the leading intellectual and political elite never “sobered up”, nor has the idea of homogenizing the Serbian nation beyond state borders, and indeed beyond the reality of Serbia’s own ethnic plurality, been abandoned. Instead of a thoughtful analysis of the future of the Serbian nation and Serbia as a political community based on diverse historical and cultural foundations, spiritual forces of an even more malign, even more retrograde character have been growing since the wars, but also persisting after democratic changes in 2000. While the ideas offered in the *Memorandum*, which implied that the Serbian nation was endangered within the Yugoslav community and that there was a need for ethnic homogenization and the creation of an ethnic state of all Serbs, were still expressed within a discourse of “democracy”, “freedom” and “prosperity”, during the last few years, ideas of an anti-European, “household” Serbia are more and more overtly expressed within an archaic, anti-modern discourse. These ideas envisage a state that is neither a republic nor a constitutional monarchy, but rather a clerical monarchy and organic community of all Serbs, based on Orthodoxy, spirit of congregation and patriarchal tradition.

“The national program” of anti-modern Serbia was named *Načertanije for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.<sup>16</sup> The name was given to create an analogy with the

16 The intended national program *Načertanije for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* was publicly proclaimed during one of the celebrations to honor the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First Serbian Uprising and the founding of the Serbian state, organized on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004, by a clerical student organization “Srpski sabor Dveri”, with the support of parts of the Church and the Army, representatives of political and intellectual elite, and with the blessing of Patriarch Pavle. During the event, a university professor, historian Radoš Ljušić, after the opening question “What shall we face Karadorde with?”, promoted the idea that the future Serbian state should ‘encompass three countries – Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina’; bishop Atanasije Jević spoke of the two centuries of struggle for liberation from the West, and while opposing European aspirations, he envisioned and advocated for another two hundred year struggle for liberation from the enslaver of Europe!!! Colonel Rade Rajić, professor at the Military Academy made the following statement: “The wars that took place between 1991 and 1999, the officers, soldiers and volunteers, who gave their lives in the defense of our nation and its century old hearths, must never be forgotten. These glorious men, named and unnamed, have what is needed to face Karadorde, to face Miloš, to face God and the nation.” He went on to point out that the draft of the future national program of the youth/academic Orthodox association holds, within its thirteen points, ideas such as the following: that Saint Sava’s teachings must enter every pore of the social being, that the legacy of Vuk Karadžić, Dositej Obradović, Jovan Skerlić and Svetozar Marković needs to be re-evaluated, because, besides their merits, they had “extra-testimonial divergences and aberrations”, that religious education must become a mandatory subject in schools, and that instead of civil education “household education” should be introduced, that the creation of a Serbian Christian elite is important to guarantee the fulfillment of the national program, that both the Croatian and the Bosniak languages and literature are only variations of Serbian, that all state documents, public signs and public media must be in Cyrillic, and that this must be prescribed by law, that the “purpose of the Serbian economy must be the production of healthy food and healthy and free people” Implicit advocacy of the prohibition of abortion was expressed in the

*Načertanije* of 1844 written by Ilija Garašanin, which represented the national program to unite all Serbs within the context of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> The paradigm outlined in *Načertanije for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* does not represent an excess, marginal event, because the networking and growth of extreme right and clero-fascist organizations, associations and initiatives, promoting the abovementioned ideas on a united, organic collective Orthodox Serbian nation, is systematically at work.<sup>18</sup>

While the *Memorandum* presented a project for the unification of all Serbs into one modern Serbian state (at least hypothetically, which does not necessarily correspond to a feasible idea), *Načertanije for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* openly advocates the unification of Serbs under an anti-modern Serbian state – a clerical monarchy, without parliamentary democracy, universal suffrage or a multiparty system. It should be a self-sufficient, “household” Serbia, based on patriarchal tradition and the hierarchical servile spirit and collectivist mentality, with the unity of political and religious power modeled on a medieval concord instead of a liberal-democratic model of the division of power.

The destruction of elements of an epochal consciousness, i.e. the spirit of modernity and the modern intellectual and political discourse,<sup>19</sup> represents one of the most severe consequences of ethno-nationalism and the wars coupled with the suppression and disregard of antifascism and growing anti-communism<sup>20</sup>; furthermore, the unwillingness of democratic governments, since 2000 to truly establish the need to come to terms with the war crimes committed “by their own side”<sup>21</sup>, as a state project, and to affirm a rational concept of the national interest of the Serbian nation as well as the state interest of Serbia. This spiritual barrenness is manifested in the attempts of relativization of antifascism and the antifascist struggle, through the reaffirmation of fascist, Nazi and anti-Semite ideas hand in hand with anti-modernizing processes of clericalization, re-patriarchalization and re-traditionalization,

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following manner: “A white plague is ravaging Serbia. Non-mothers in Serbia kill 200,000 unborn children every year... Every Serbian family, regardless of its material situation, should strive towards having at least three or four children. When there are people, cities will rise. And when cities rise, battles will be won, and Serbs will return to Prizren.” The idea that there is a need to establish a clerical monarchy was expressed by the following words: “The establishment of the monarchy is an unavoidable condition for breaking links with the communist past. The Serbian king must in the first place serve God, and then his people.” (See: Vujadinović, D. *Srbija između antimodernosti i modernosti* – “Su čim ćemo pred Karađorđa?” ili “S čime ćemo pred buduće generacije?” (Serbia Between Anti-Modernity and Modernity – “What shall we face Karađorđe with?” of “What shall we offer to the future generations?”), *Helsinkiška povelja* feb/mart 2004, br. 73–74). See also: Dejan Anastasijević, Kruna, Mač i Mantija, <http://www.vidovdan.org/print269.html>; *Vreme* 685, februar 2004).

17 Latinka Perović and Vojin Dimitrijević discuss Ilija Garašanin's *Načertanije* of 1844 in their texts in this book.

18 See: Bakić, J. *op. cit.*

19 See the text by Ratko Božović in this book.

20 See the text by Todor Kuljić in this book.

21 See the texts by Vesna Pešić, Todor Kuljić and Vesna Rakić Vodinelić in this book.

and the avocation of authoritarian clerical-monarchist rule in a self-sufficient, nationally homogeneous, “household” Serbia.

The abovementioned “diagnosis” of the current state of affairs within different relevant dimensions is analyzed by authors of the texts in this book.

## Project Task and Conceptual Clarifications

However, a much more important task undertaken by the authors was to highlight the difference between the rational and irrational concepts of national and state interests; to demystify the irrational ethno-nationalistic interpretation, to point out, in different dimensions, the rational essence of national and state interests of contemporary Serbia.<sup>22</sup> Demystifying the ethno-nationalistic interpretation of national and state interests has revealed that it is not the only possible or desirable interpretation, indeed it is detrimental and counterproductive for the future of Serbia and is essentially detrimental both to the national interest of the Serbian people and to the state interest of Serbia.

The conceptual elements in the syntagm “rational national and state interests” of contemporary Serbia need to be clarified: the concepts of “interest” and “public interest” are of importance, but their meaning is – as opposed to concepts of national and state interests – commonplace in expert lexicons and literature.<sup>23</sup>

22 For example, on the interpretation of national interest as being equal to state interest in the context of foreign policy of liberal-democratic states, see the text by Vojin Dimitrijević in this book. On the economic dimension of the interpretation, see the text by Vladimir Gligorov. On the dominant interpretation of national interest from 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, see the text by Latinka Perović.

23 The concept of “interest” relates the needs of individual and collective social actors to their actions aimed at fulfilling their needs, as well as to social power, which they possess or compete for, in order to better satisfy the generally limitless needs in a constellation of limited resources. Interests determine the direction of each action, they act as an intermediary between needs and goals at all times, express the aspirations and efforts to achieve certain social power and acquire corresponding potential, in a given social context, for fulfilling specific needs, namely, for priority fulfillment of specific goals. (See: Mitrović, M. *Uvod u sociologiju i sociologiju prava (Introduction into Sociology and Sociology of Law)*, Beograd: Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2006.

From Russo onward, “general interest” is the one related in essence to the wellbeing of the community (the concept of “general will”), while “joint interest” is formally the interest of the majority. The possibility of establishing a community on the disinterested behavior of individuals, prompted modern theoreticians, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, to define the political subject as “resident” or “citizen” (citoyen), resolving the conflict of particular interests and the relationship between the pluralism of political interest and public/general interest through institutions and mechanism of representative democracy. Modern political philosophers, especially, Rawls, Nozick and Habermas deal with the same questions in a modified way. Thus, Habermas speaks about “constitutional patriotism” and interests “susceptible to generalization”, which can establish norms based on “cognitive consensus”, which, being rationally founded, can be communicated to others (See: Prpić, I., Puhovski, Ž. and Uzelac, M. eds. 1990. *Leksikon temeljnih pojmova politike (Lexicon of Basic Concept of Politics)*, Zagreb: Školska knjiga, pp. 268-270). See also: *Oxford Concise*

The concept of “rationality” is used in the Weberian sense of substantial rationality, or in the sense of practical wisdom (in the Aristotelian sense) appropriate to the modern age; namely, in the sense of political strategy of constitutional democracy as expressing the highest civilizational standards achieved by western civilization.

In the above-mentioned context, the categorical apparatus of Agnes Heller<sup>24</sup> can be successfully used in relation to the concepts of “rationality of intellect”, “rationality of reason” and “perverted rationality of intellect”. Heller speaks about the shared foundations of “rationality of reason” (instrumental rationality) and “rationality of intellect” (substantial rationality), whereby “rationality of intellect” bears the critical, utopian, reformist potential for improving modern society, while “rationality of reason” facilitates the functioning of the structures within a given system. The point is that, as much as it safeguards the given state of affairs and can be conservative, “rationality of reason” can never be as destructive as “perverted rationality of intellect”. “Perverted rationality of intellect” is destructive to the utmost degree, since it consciously strives towards destruction. This is particularly pronounced in cases where perverted rationality imposes itself as the bearer of power and dominance. In such cases, it introduces its own “norms and rules”, which cannot be either accepted or defended rationally. Heller labels the abovementioned phenomenon “dialectics of rationality of intellect”, meaning that “rationality of intellect”, as the most sublime human intellectual proclivity, can become the source of absolute irrationality if it severs its connection with “rationality of reason”.

“Rationality of intellect” is related to the rational meaning of national and state interests, expressed by the concept of constitutional democracy, “rationality of reason” is related to the functioning of a system in all its structural elements, while “perverted rationality of intellect” relates to fundamental jeopardizing of the principle of constitutional democracy in all modalities of mutating modernity, whether in the form of fascism, Nazism or ethno-nationalism.<sup>25</sup>

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*Dictionary of Politics*, Oxford University Press; *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford University Press; *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, Oxford 2001.

24 See: Vujadinović, D. *Teorija radikalnih potreba – Budimpeštanska škola (Theory of Radical Needs – The Budapest School)*, Nikšić, 1988.

25 Expressed in the theoretical discourse of Agnes Heller, ethno-nationalistically focused state policy, both before and after – and especially during – the Milošević regime, represents a stunning example of “perverted rationality of intellect”. Demystifying ethno-nationalism, as well as explaining to ordinary people the damaging effects ethno-nationalism has on all Serbs, all citizens of Serbia, and on the state interest of Serbia, is a task of prime importance on the road to creating a modern Serbia. Renewing the natural connection between “rationality of intellect” and “rationality of reason” would imply, in the case of Serbia, the normative task of introducing to the public – on a common-sense level – the interpretation of constitutional democracy as the true national and state interest. This would also lead towards the rejection of the disastrous ethno-nationalist “perverted rationality of intellect”.

## The Rational and Irrational Meaning of National Interest

National interest is yet again a construction of national identity, resulting from the interpretations of the dominant viewpoints of intellectual, political, cultural, media and educational elite in a given political-historical context. The important *differentia specifica* of types of national identity is marked by the determination of the bearer of the national interest: whether it is the nation as a specific subject or a (presumed) common interest of all nation members. This issue is important both from a theoretical and practical-political point of view: only if the national interest is concretized as the interest of all actual individuals as nation members does it follow that nation members have the right to interpret and critically reevaluate whatever is imposed on them as being national interest. If the nation, as “an organic being”, is the subject of national interest, then it follows that national interest is simply bestowed upon nation members, as an important part of their individual identity, as something given and set, which they cannot oppose.

The irrational version of the interpretation of national interest, inasmuch as the rational version of its interpretation, is an analytical-normative creation. The first directs the interpretation of national identity in a retrograde, anti-modern way of invoking “the past” and the authoritarian imposition of a common interest, while the other directs the interpretation of national identity from the viewpoint of developmental projects looking towards the future, keeping both the present and the past in mind, from the perspective of developmental/modernizing capacities, and at the same time additionally possibilities for individual reevaluation of common interest.

Rational national interest is a construction of the identity of a specific ethnic community<sup>26</sup>, which defines the past, history, historical memory, social character, cultural identity, value framework of customs and normative culture, in a way that turns the development of a specific national group towards openness for “internal” and “external” development, towards tolerance of the “other” or “diverse”, in other words, openness to cooperation, interaction, communicability, tolerance, improvement through mutual cultural and social influences, adoption of the positive achievements of others in an authentic way, acceptance of the highest civilizational standards as one’s own, and rejection of self-isolation and xenophobia.

## The Rational and Irrational Meaning of State Interest

Rational state interest is, on an essential and most general level, the normative task of building a constitutional democracy.

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26 For more details on the contextual character and politically and historically conditioned meaning of the national identity see: Eriksen, T. H. *Etnicitet i nacionalizam*, Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek (Thomas Hillan Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism – Anthropological Perspectives*, London: Pluto Press 1993).

The rational national interest of both majority and minority nations within an ethnically heterogeneous states is, from a normative point of view, related to complying with the constitutional principles of constitutional democracy and equally to respecting members of one's own and other nations within the same political community; it is not in contradiction with nurturing the cultural identity of one's own ethnic group. In this sense, there is no essential contradiction between rational state interest and national interests of ethnic groups, whether minority or majority.

While one can speak about an essential disagreement between national and state interests in ethnically heterogeneous or plural societies within ethno-nationalistic constellations (where the national interest of the majority nation is imposed as dominant and identical to state interest), there is an essential congruence in the case of a rational interpretation, a doctrinarian refusal of priority to any national interest as dominant in the constellation of a civil/republican state.

In ethnically heterogeneous states, national interest – irrationally interpreted – can by no means be identical to rationally understood state interest. Patriotism, derived from ethno-nationalistically interpreted national interest, is essentially similar to chauvinism, and is inclined towards treating “the other” as an enemy or traitor.

“Perverted rationality of intellect” lies at the foundation of both state and national interests when interpreted ethno-nationalistically (both in the case of ethnic minority groups and especially in the case of majority nations). Consequently, the destructive character of ethno-nationalism is visible in the destiny of both majority and minority ethnic groups, as well as in their mutual relations.

In the abovementioned categorical apparatus, rational state interest is the most important tool for the demystification and critical reassessment of ethno-nationalistically interpreted national and state interests.<sup>27</sup>

27 Naturally, all this is of crucial importance, conceptually and in a practical-political manner, in understanding the current state of destructive nationalism in contemporary Serbia. This type of nationalism is also destructive to the Serbian nation itself, because it isolates the Serbian nation from the world and the spirit of the modern era, and to the Serbian state, because it blocks the state in its reformist and integrative processes of consolidating democracy. In other words, it fixes the foreign and domestic policy of the state around ethnic and territorial issues, in a way which identifies the territory with Serbian ethnicity. This has multiple negative consequences: a dangerous tendency to transform minority nations into “enemies”, with a reactive reinforcement of separatist affiliations, and also constant renewal of claims on territories where Serbs live outside the Serbian state. More concretely, the destructive consequences are at work in the current situation: namely, while all attention and all issues of the state (state interest) are being related to Kosovo, problems of the abovementioned sort are building up in the Sandžak and in Vojvodina (although with active participation of ethno-nationalism of the “other side” as well). In addition, the pretensions to take over a part of B&H territory (The Republic of Srpska) are not diminishing, on the contrary, Vojislav Šešelj, leader of SRS, is promoting the idea of a Greater Serbia (“from Virovitica to Karlobag”) even from the Hague Tribunal.



Rational state interest is a normative, ideal-type concept, which expresses the “rationality of intellect”. The abovementioned highest accomplishments of modern practical rationality (related to “the best possible political system” in the Aristotelian sense) are objectified, in a strategically-political manner, in constitutions of the most developed liberal-democratic states.

The civil-republican concept of political community is articulated in constitutional democracies<sup>28</sup>, with individual freedom, equality of all residents as citizens/right holders, and institutional arrangements of limited power. Constitutional democracies offer a type of political system where the safeguarding of individual freedoms is the primary goal, while democracy represents the political form in the service of safeguarding and defending freedom. Constitutions are charters of freedom, acts formalizing the social contract, which create a modern political community, including – as the universal core – a concept of limited government and the primacy of individual rights.

Constitutions, as charters of freedom, perceived from a libertarian perspective, hold the essence of practical rationality for the modern age, and represent the highest universal civilizational standard that can be applied, despite contextual differences, to all contemporary societies: 1. the most developed – as a standard, based on reality, for constant reassessment of existing legislature from the viewpoint of its violation or compliance to the constitution, supported by the possibility for critical-corrective action defending the essential values of the constitution, by means of critical public and civil society activism, all the way to civil disobedience; 2. authoritarian – as a task, a normative-mobilizing standard; 3. finally, transition societies – as the highest goal towards which to strive; that which has not yet been achieved in reality, but is still reachable. In this sense, constitutional democracy bears a utopian, normative, ideal-type capacity, and represents the core of rational state interest of modern societies.<sup>29</sup>

The issue of identity in a political community finds a rational answer from the perspective and criteria of constitutional democracy. Constitutional democracies institute the rule of law and equally tenable freedom of all individuals, preventing the rule of people (as *ethnos*), which always turns into the rule of the dominant nation (thus violating the principles of constitutional democracy).

Although modern states were formed as national states, and initial constitutions established a political society on the premise of the identity of the

28 See: Dimitrijević, N. *Ustavna demokratija shvaćena kontekstualno* (Constitutional Democracy conceived Contextually), Beograd: Fabrika knjiga, 2007.

29 The “post-national constellation” will not be discussed here, because – although it is inevitable in modern political discourse, it is not of primary importance to this paper. (See, for example: Held, D. *Demokratija i globalni poredak*, Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 1997 (Held, D. *Democracy and the Global Order*, Cambridge: Polity Press, in association with Blackwell Pub. Ltd., 1995); Habermas, J. *Postnacionalna konstelacija*, Beograd: Otkrovenje, 2002 (Habermas, J. *Die Postnationale Konstellation, politische Essays*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt a. M., 1998).



majority nation, they further evolved, through a long historical period of struggle for universal human rights, towards the universal category of citizen, and “liberal non-problematic republican identity”. On this topic, Nenad Dimitrijević says the following: “It is true that many contemporary liberal democracies were established as national states. From a historical point of view, the political neutrality of a liberal national state was founded on the identity of the majority nation, which was later transformed into a liberal non-problematic republican identity. Typically, this was done through the ‘privatization’ of particular group identities (though history offers ample proof of the repression and nullification of minority national identities). Classical liberalism recognizes equal individual rights for all citizens, and refers at the same time to civil society as the sphere of legitimate concern for particular identities.”<sup>30</sup>

For transitional countries, constitutional democracy is a task that needs to be fulfilled, a normative ideal which the newly established democratic government should bring about artificially, “from above”, as the optimal constitutional solution to defining a new democratic order, as well as concurrent redefinition of the past, and delineation of the present and the future directed towards a liberal-democratic order. The construction of a new reality “from above” is carried out on the basis of a strategic consensus of relevant political elite on the desirable future development of the state and society.

Introducing institutional guarantees into post-communist constitutions by the measure of constitutional democracy should serve as an expression of a social contract for building a different future and for reevaluating the past, and an institutional framework for bypassing the rift, or the lack of “cohesive power within the texture of society”, namely, a lack of the social, economic and cultural infrastructure of democracy.<sup>31</sup>

30 Dimitrijević, N. *Ustavna demokratija shvaćena kontekstualno*, op. cit. p. 155.

In a different context, but having a similar message, Srđan Vrcan speaks about the coherence of liberalism and nationalism only during the phase of the creation of national states, and then about the process of the development of incoherence between liberalism and nationalism by virtue of the institutionalization of the individual citizen and universal equality, independently of any particular identity including ethnic identity, as well as about the coherence of all aspects of nationalism with maligned forms of ethno-nationalism and mutated forms of modern society in the shape of fascism and Nazism. (See: Vrcan, S. *Nacija, nacionalizam, moderna država* [Nation, Nationalism, Modern State], Zagreb: Golden marketing – Tehnička knjiga, 2006, pp. 76-110).

31 On this subject Dimitrijević says the following: “The road Western democracies followed for centuries needs to be covered here much faster... This process must be artificial, in the sense that market economy, civil society, modern state and constitutional democracy have to be defined as elements in a model of desirable future society, and carried through by a planned action of the state. Since this state wants to be democratic, not totalitarian, it will have to carry out this task through the construction of an optimal social system. In other words, while constitutional democracy in the West grew as a ‘superstructure’ on a distinctive system of social relations, in post-socialism it must function as the ‘basis’, namely, the framework which will be filled with social contents of an open society only later – if everything goes well.” (*Ibid*, p. 127).

Therefore, the civilizational deficit inherited from the communist period of authoritarian government should be compensated for by constitutions drafted in accordance with the highest standards of constitutionalism. "The task of filling the social vacuum requires teleological constitutions, with specific constitutional contents, in which goals and tasks will hold a predominant place. The limiting function of the constitution, which stands at the heart of modern constitutionalism, withdraws to the background in favor of creative functions – an effort to define an orientation towards the future in a consistent manner."<sup>32</sup>

However, a fundamental problem in all ethnically heterogeneous post-communist countries, where an agreement has been reached to replace the previous regime with a constitutional democracy, lies in the fact that their first post-communist – democratic – constitutions are based on the ethnicity principle rather than on the civil/republican principle. Therefore, while the institutional structures of a liberal economy and representative democracy have been introduced, the fundamental civil contract, on which the social, cultural and economic substance of constitutional democracy should be based, has not truly acknowledged the principles of modern constitutionalism. "It is true that their constitutions define democratic legal and political institutions, procedures of political decision making, and specify individual rights. Nevertheless, the value of these elements of liberal constitutionalism is contested, from the outset, by the nationalistic establishment of the community. Post-communist constitution-makers opted for the concept of a privatized ethnic state: a state which is the virtual property of the majority nation (in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the issue is a state whose co-owners are three nations proclaimed as 'constitutive nations'). From the constitutional-legal point of view, there are two types of citizens in these states: members of the title-holding nations and 'others'. This duality implies a difference between owner and non-owner groups of the state."<sup>33</sup>

Unlike the long Western road towards the national state, where the nation was gradually tamed through the republican concept of citizenship, in these prominently ethnically heterogeneous states, which did not undergo a long process of ethnic pacifying, the level reached by constitutionalism and democracy is far below the ideal that has been set, far from the civilizational legal-political standard that "rationality of intellect" would envision. In the words of Dimitrijević, the ethnicist approach to the issue of state identity is aimed at stabilizing the dominance of the majority nation.<sup>34</sup>

This problem is more pronounced in Serbia than in other post-communist countries, because in Serbia, as already mentioned, even basic consensus on commitment to constitutional democracy and a modern pro-European perspective of strategic development has not been reached. Furthermore, unlike other post-communist states, which have thrown themselves, despite

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32 *Ibid.*

33 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 162.

general flaws of their constitutions, deep into social and economic reforms, and have already joined the EU or are currently at its doorstep, Serbia lags far behind in the reform and integration process. Moreover, although the extreme right in these countries emphasizes ethno-nationalistic, even fascist and Nazi ideas, it is not politically strong (not maligned therefore, yet not benign either). By comparison, Serbia has a disproportionately stronger extreme right than in any consolidated Western democracy or partially consolidated democracy of transition countries. This has a strong influence on political processes “from within”: through the parliamentary system and democratic freedoms – it works towards the systematic annihilation of all initial reform and integration indicators.

Furthermore, the fact that the new constitution defines Serbia as the state of Serbian people and all citizens living within it carries special weight because of the “bad” heritage of past military attempts to implement the ethnic fundamentalist principle. Serbia is a socially (ethnically and religiously) heterogeneous society<sup>35</sup>, and is one of the extreme examples where “the long path towards the pacification of ethnicity” failed to occur. The problems that burdened the primary strategic commitment of the Serbian state during the last two centuries, related to the unification of the Serbian nation (including territories outside Serbia), combined with a neglect of a cohesive relationship with minority nations in Serbia’s own territory, still persist today.<sup>36</sup>

An ethnically focused strategic definition of state interest carries in itself, again and again, a potential or actual danger of treating the Serbian state from within as a state of Serbs, and treating all Serbs beyond the Serbian state as potentially belonging to it, which inherently implies the “conquering” principle of the inclusion of the un-included, on one side, and the “enemy” principle of excluding minority nations from the ranks of one’s own citizens. In that situation we have the inability to form a stable and complete state based on the ethnic principle<sup>37</sup>, on the one hand, and the insolvability of the minority issue in a truly liberal-democratic manner<sup>38</sup>, on the other.<sup>39</sup> In other words,

35 Including Kosovo, only around 2/3 of the population is of Serbian origin, while excluding Kosovo it is around 80%. According to the 2002 census, Serbia has around 7.5 million citizens without Kosovo, 6.2 million of them are of Serbian nationality (around 83%). See: *Nacionalni popis 2002 (National Census 2002)*, Knjiga 3, Statistički zavod Srbije.

36 See the text by Latinka Perović in this book.

37 See the text by Vesna Pešić in this book, “Nationalism of an Impossible State”.

38 See the text by Alpar Lošonc in this book.

39 Dimitrijević says: “In such a political and legal context, members of the majority tend to understand loyalty to the state as loyalty to their own nation: we are loyal to the state because it is *our* home. Thus, it follows that members of the minorities are deprived of a focus of loyalty, formulated in such a manner, to the political community they are citizens of. They might turn towards their ‘mother-state’ as the focal point of their identity, stimulating in actuality the majority practice of equalizing loyalty to the nation and loyalty to the state. The next step in this circle of bad causality will probably be the accusation of minorities for separatism, as well as deterioration of relations among states.” (*Ibid*, p. 167).

pressure from the ethnic and religious majority can radicalize the minorities, turning them into “intensive minorities”, which do not accept the rules of a democratic game where they are predestined to be “losers”.<sup>40</sup>

The aforementioned basic premises cannot provide a productive political-cultural resolution of the problem of Kosovo and Metohija<sup>41</sup>, because even if the Albanians were not absolutely determined to gain independence, the strategy of the Serbian political elite and the Church, focused on a struggle for territory, without any attempts at integration with the majority (non-Serbian) population in this region (emphasizing the “theft” of 15% of the state territory, without taking demographic loss into consideration, which amounts to around 20% of its citizens), does not present a model which has the democratic integration of the abovementioned population among its goals.

The ethnic principle in establishing the state and the identity of the political community leads to a stabilization of majority nation dominance, not towards the stabilization of democracy. This is related to a mystified interpretation of patriotism, which is related to ethno-nationalism and populism, as well as to authoritarian political culture, as opposed to the rational interpretation of patriotism as “constitutional patriotism”, as loyalty to a political community that treats all of its citizen equally as its own, in which “all who live within state borders form the nation”.<sup>42</sup>

Hence, we can unambiguously claim that for contemporary Serbia the normative ideal (the phrase “rationality of intellect”) is the concept of constitutional democracy, according to which the rights of all individual citizens are equally valued, regardless of ethnic affiliation, and group rights are additionally protected by positive discrimination and through the autonomous operation of civil society.

Rational state interest must be directly related to the normative task of establishing a constitutional democracy and the development of a civil/republican system, in its full and real sense. The abovementioned normative viewpoint inevitably imposes the normative task of revising the leading principles of the new constitution in force, which is democratic by its own aspirations.

Dimitrijević comments on the need to revise the ethnically founded constitutions of post-communist states, including the new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia: “Such a state of fundamental inequality can only be prevailed upon by consensual constitutional revision, where both the majority and the minorities agree on changes to the state’s determination. These countries require – as a standpoint preceding the establishment and stabilization of democracy – the constitutional identification of an inclusive framework of common life, acceptable to everyone, where the acknowledgment of individual identities is balanced with the universalism of rights.”<sup>43</sup>

40 See: Goati, V. *Stabilizacija demokratije ili povratak monizmu (The Stabilization of Democracy or the Return to Monism)*, Podgorica: Unireks, 1996.

41 See the text by Mirko Đorđević in this book.

42 Nenad Dimitrijević, *op. cit.* p. 158.

43 *Ibid*, p. 168.

The fundamental normative determination of rational state and national interests, related to the concept of constitutional democracy and republican civil order, can be supplemented with elements belonging to the sphere of politics, economy, culture, the value system, education, upbringing, quality of life, social policy, quality of relationship between sexes, etc, which contribute to an individual's "good" life in a "properly organized political community"; the life quality of individual citizens in a developed liberal-democratic state. This is, again, imposed as a normative ideal Serbia should strive to accomplish today in several dimensions simultaneously.

In the context of the aforementioned lack of critical mass in the electoral body, which could resolutely push the state towards constitutional democracy, a more successful market economy and a faster process of integration into the international community, a number of tasks are imposed at an empirical level, as a fundamental part of the discourse on rational national and state interests; firstly, to strengthen the democratic block and finally clearly crystallize strategic ideas uncontaminated by ethno-nationalism in the programs of democratically oriented parties; secondly, to include in the strategy of the modern development of Serbia – as a counterbalance to processes of re-traditionalization, clericalization and re-patriarchalization – all the points within the social and political field where retrograde processes are taking place, and which influence the significant presence of the extreme right in Serbia.

According to empirical research<sup>44</sup>, the older, less educated, less urban social strata, refugees, as well as marginalized groups of young people (unemployed, poor, "sport fans"), those who are, in one way or another, "transition losers", opt for the Serbian Radical Party and extreme right ideas. Thus, it is of strategic state interest to improve the market economy, prevent the corruption and criminalization of the economy, state and society, reduce poverty and the wide gap between the rich minority and the poor masses, strengthen educational structure and minimize mass functional illiteracy, encourage educational exchange and communication between the population and the outside world, renew the social services that protect endangered members of society, improve employment legislation coupled with more humane social programs for the unemployed on the basis of privatization, and to the greatest possible extent, systematically improve the situation of "transition losers".

Reducing the influence of ethno-nationalism on public opinion and overall state policy will only become possible through profiling serious political and social-economic options that can lead to a decrease in extreme-right and ethno-nationalist orientations. Only then will it become possible to establish a framework to revise the Constitution in the direction of constitutional democracy, through the democratic decision of the majority of pro-reform oriented citizens, and followed by a faster and more decisive implementation of both the reform and integration processes.

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44 See: Mihailović, S. ed. *op. cit.*.

The normative task of accepting the process of facing the “bad past” as the strategic national and state orientation in a political, cultural, socio-psychological and legal sense is directly related to the possibility of re-founding the state on the principles of constitutional democracy.<sup>45</sup>

The orientation of domestic and foreign policy towards ideas of social, cultural and economic progress of a political community of equal citizens, in accordance with the highest civilizational standards of the modern age, is of strategic national and state interest for contemporary Serbia.<sup>46</sup>

Focusing the official understanding of the state interest in Serbia on the wellbeing of the social and political community is of crucial importance. Consequently, public opinion needs to be systematically reshaped; in other words, the damaging effects of the ethno-nationalistic interpretation of national and state interests should be explained to the people in a systematic and comprehensible way.

This is exactly where the enormous responsibility of the intellectual, political, religious, media and cultural elites lies. They are faced with the normative task of articulating rational state interest on the level of official policy, in the sphere of public speech and action, with both direct and indirect influence on public opinion and the value-political orientation of citizens.

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# THE ETHNIFICATION OF POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN CONTEMPORARY SERBIA\*

## Introduction

The general aim of this text is to outline the main causes/factors which act against the democratic consolidation of Serbia, to indicate some of their consequences, and also to consider the interests and the social actors which generate anti-democratic tendencies.

From a theoretical-analytical point of view, the type of cleavage characteristic for consolidated democracies is a social-economic, interest-based, distributional one. Ideological and identity-based cleavage, however, hinder liberal-democratic consolidation. Successful transitional countries (certain East-European countries of the previous “real” socialism) managed to replace in a relatively short period of time their ideological and identity-based cleavages with interest-based, distributional ones.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to this, Serbia has been divided – even seven years after the democratic change of the government – by its ideological rift, which differentiates its political and societal body to its old-regime-forces and reformers, and an identity-based symbolical cleavage between patriots (ethno-nationalists) and pro-Europeans (mondialists, anti-nationalists, “traitors”). Together the ideological and symbolical division of Serbian society make a dominant rift between ideological-political orientations towards either an anti-modern Serbia (the ethno-nationalist option) or a modern Serbia (the democratic, civic option). The transitional process in Serbia has not been only postponed (because of the Milošević regime, wars, etc.), and blocked (because of poor cooperation with the international Hague Tribunal for war crimes and the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in March of 2003), but has also been put into question, and seriously contested by its dominant ideological and identity based split.

Phenomenologically speaking, the most relevant manifestations of the causes, consequences and social interests which act against the liberal-demo-

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1 See: AntoniĆ, S. Rascepi u Srbiji i konsolidacija demokratije (Cleavages in Serbia and Consolidation of Democracy), *Nova srpska politička misao (NSPM)*, Beograde 2007.; Goati, V. *Partije i partijski sistemi u Srbiji (Parties and Party Systems in Serbia)*, Niš 2004.

cratic consolidation of Serbia, i.e. which generate the above mentioned dominant ideological-political cleavages, have been summed up in the processes of ethnification of the Serbian political and social body.

The main idea of this text is that the ethnification of politics and society represents one of the most serious obstacles and dangers for the reformist, democratic development of Serbia and for its European integration.

Insofar, the most specific aim of this text is to explain the meaning and empirical content of the ethnification of politics and the ethnification of society, i.e. to consider the manifestations of ethnification as both the causes and consequences of the postponed and ambiguous democratic transformation of contemporary Serbia.

The concept of ethnification is used with negative connotation in the sense that social, political and cultural life in Serbia has become overburdened with questions of national identity, national self-awareness and national exclusivity; in short, with ethno-nationalist sentiments and an anti-modern spirit.

Ethnification is also connected to the erosion of value systems and the suppression of discourse on universal rights, tolerance, civic culture, the civic and secular state (which was built and maintained to a certain extent in the socialist period of Serbia and Former Yugoslavia – as the civilizational heredity of the Enlightenment), and their replacement by public discourse too often overloaded with intolerance, hate speech, mystified constructions of historical memories and perverted ideological constructions of Serbian national identity, and even sings of elementary primitivism.

This means that the historical level of collective consciousness and the “*Volksgeist*” have gone backwards in Serbia, though this backwardness has not been the common and predominant feature of the spiritual, ideological, political, cultural, and value orientation of the people in Serbia; there are strong social forces and objective indicators of the modernization potentials. However, the dangerous phenomenon of deep ideological splits between modern and anti-modern tendencies exist, visible also as a harsh conflict between authoritarian and democratic political cultural patterns; in other words, a deep rift in public opinion and in the political public between social and political actors oriented towards democratization, modernization and European integration, on one side, and those oriented towards traditionalist, ethnocentric and authoritarian patterns of thinking and acting, on the other.

### The Ethnification of Politics

The concept of the ethnification of politics is used in accordance with the above mentioned conceptual and concrete-historical clarifications.

The descriptive, empirical meaning of the ethnification of politics expresses the fact that parties in Serbia have been ethnically structured – the majority of members and sympathizers of those most relevant parties – both democratic ones and nationalist ones – are Serbs, and minorities are organized in their own parties. The point is that the party system in Serbia has been organized along ethnic lines, i.e. that ethnic affiliation characterizes both democratic parties as well as anti-democratic ones. The fact that ethnic minorities organize themselves primarily in their own parties speaks significantly about the lack of mutual trust and the cooperation between the Serbian majority and minorities in Serbian political life.<sup>2</sup>

The ethnification of politics in the most general and deepest sense means that Serbia's main ideological division has resulted in having a deep gap and severe division within the Serbian party – and political body along ideological orientations expressed in the counter-posing of old regime forces/traditionalists *versus* reformists/democrats, followed by identity-based symbolic differentiation expressed in the counter-posing of patriots *versus* pro-Europeans (often called “traitors” by the “other” side).<sup>3</sup>

The ethnification of politics is related to the fact that there is no political consensus about the democratic and European future of Serbia as well as about the social and political developmental strategy of the Serbian state and society.

This deep strategic disagreement represents an essential obstacle for democratic consolidation, because the success of other transitional countries on their path towards liberal-democratic consolidation was based on a general strategic consensus about democratic, reformist and international integration strategy among all political representatives, and generally among political, intellectual, economic, and religious elite.

According to the last parliamentary elections, held in January 2007<sup>4</sup>, almost half of the political body (parliamentary political parties) has been

2 Empirical data from 1995 shows that, with more than 90%, Serbs have been present in parties which are most relevant (at that time, the proportion of Serbs in the whole Serbian population was only about 66%, with the Albanian population still taken into account, i.e. one fourth of the Serbian population were minorities – Albanians, Muslim, Hungarians and others). However, new empirical data (for example, the National Census of 2001 does not include Kosovo Albanians and in this case Serbia has around 7.5 million inhabitants, with around 6.2 millions Serbs (ca. 83%). In this “new” situation there is a great congruency between the proportion of Serbs in the population of Serbia and their proportion in parties that are most relevant. (See: Goati, V. *Stabilizacija demokratije ili povratak monizmu* (*The Stabilization of Democracy or the Return to Monism*), Podgorica 1996; Goati, V. *Partijske borbe u Srbiji u postoktobarskom razdoblju* (*Party Struggles in Serbia in Post-October Era*), Beograd, 2006. See also: *Statistički godišnjak Srbije i Crne Gore* (*The Statistical Yearbook of Serbia and Montenegro*), Beograd: Statistički godišnjak, 2003..

3 See: Antić, S. *op. cit.*

4 In the last parliamentary elections, held in January 2007, among the parties that have a democratic orientation, the Liberal-Democratic Party won 5% of votes, the Democratic Party 23%, G17 Plus 7%, and the Democratic Party of Serbia (moderate nationalists) won

against democratic reforms, and suspicious towards European integration (especially in the case if the international community recognizes Kosovo independence), whereas the slightly bigger second half has been pro-European, democratic, and reformist (also dominantly not accepting the idea of Kosovo independence, but unconditionally oriented towards democratization and European integration).

Empirical surveys concerned with the value orientations of the people in Serbia towards EU integration, however, have shown once again very positive and optimistic results, with two thirds or even more individuals opting for EU integration.<sup>5</sup>

This disproportion between the value orientation of political elites and their voters could be a sign of a non-fully profiled ideological position (even among SRS supporters), but it could probably also indicate greater political maturity of the electoral body than of their chosen political representatives.<sup>6</sup>

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16%; among parties that have an extreme nationalist and conservative orientation, the Serbian Radical Party won 29% of votes, and the Socialist Party of Serbia 6%.

- 5 See the results of the following public surveys: Bačević, Lj. *Srbi i Evropa (Serbs and Europe)*, Center for Anti-War Action, Beograd 2001; Mihailović, S. ed. *Public Opinion in Serbia Between Disappointment and Hope*, CPA/CPS, Belgrade 2000; "Minimizovanje otpora reformama i integracija Srbije" ("Minimizing Resistance to Reforms and Integration of Serbia"), The Center for the Development of Civil Society, Zrenjanin, an empirical survey conducted in May 2003; "Javno mnjenje u Srbiji i Crnoj Gori o evropskim integracijama" ("Public opinion in Serbia and Montenegro on the EU Integration"), empirical survey conducted in December 2003, The Institute for Social Sciences and the Movement for European Serbia; Mihailović, S. ed. *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji, II (Five Years of Transition in Serbia, II)*, Beograd 2006.

- 6 There is a discrepancy between cognitive majority support (the rational insight into the need and desirability of EU integration) and the negative emotional dimension (suspicion, hesitation, even resistance) caused by the UN's sanctions, NATO's bombardment and the EU's policy of "the stick" (without a "carrot"). There is also a discrepancy in citizens' statements between the high level of acceptance and acceptability of European integration as the ultimate aim (the European level of personal and civic liberties, a well-ordered life, social benefits and especially a material standard of living are accepted by all respondents), and a much lower level of acceptance of the instrumental aims (aims which gradually lead to the realization of the ultimate aim, such as work discipline, readiness for the risks of a free market economy and privatization, concern for environmental problems, acknowledging the rights of minorities and especially marginal groups such as homosexuals, religious sects, etc.). (See: Bačević, Lj. "Serbs and Europe", *op. cit.*)

If over 80% of the population were to vote for EU integration (according to the above mentioned December 2003 survey), and if at the same time about 30% or 40% of the electoral body actually voted for anti-democratic and anti-European political options (as in the parliamentary elections held in December of 2003), we can obviously speak of a paradoxical phenomena. These controversial indicators imply that there is neither a fixed nationalist, extreme right (anti-European) political body nor a clear idea of what European integration really means in the sense of obligations concerned with political, economic and value orientations.

On the basis of unstable and still undefined political options within the electoral body in Serbia, it may be concluded that the political body in Serbia remains immature and ill-profiled. Consequently, the greatest responsibility lies in the political, intellectual, media

This estimate could be based on the fact that, for a few times in the recent history of political turbulence, the Serbian people have behaved in a more responsible, realistic and mature way than their politicians (for example, in the civic protests of 1996/97, or many times when citizens insisted on the unity of mutually alienated democratic forces, or when the average population has shown a more realistic approach towards the Kosovo problem).

The ethnification of politics expresses also the fact that the political discourse in the Parliament, in public life, and in the media has been focused on and overwhelmed by questions of national identity, national interest, sovereignty, and “patriotism” versus “betrayal”. This trend has been strongly connected, on the one hand, to the Kosovo problem, because not only nationalist parties but also the majority of democratic parties do not accept the idea of Kosovo’s independence. It is also connected to the fact that the strongest political party in Serbia is the ethno-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS), which systematically condemns pro-European parties and citizens as “national traitors” and which constantly contaminates public life and political discourse with ethno-nationalist, traditionalist, populist demagoguery, and also with a very low level of political culture and a low level of culture in general.<sup>7</sup>

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and religious elite to articulate one dominant option. In short, the biggest responsibility is on democratic political parties and democratic individuals in Serbia to promote the pro-European and the pro-reform option, and especially for building the institutional and overall mechanisms for its realization. (See: Vujadinović, D. Democratic Deficits in the Western Balkans and Perspectives on European Integration, *Journal for Institutional Innovation and Democratic Transformation*, JIIT, Ljubljana 2005).

- 7 The above mentioned contamination of the political field by the discourse and actions of extreme right-wing parties and social groups contributes not only to the ethnification of the political field but also to its brutalization and vulgarization, which – while being constantly repeated and existent – become less and less shocking and excess-like, and more and more “normal” in a perverted way. This process leads to a lowering of the level of general cultural patterns and primitivization, to a destruction of value systems and value criteria.

A drastic example of the “brutalization of politics” was shown by the SRS leaders before the assassination of Zoran Đinđić (by making public allusions before his death about his wounded leg, reminding that Tito also had had a wounded leg before his death as well as in their expressing many times after the death of Zoran Đinđić a lack of respect for his tragic destiny and for him as politician. The last drastic example of the “brutalization of politics” is the action of certain extreme right groups which demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the City of Belgrade government naming of one street – the Boulevard of Zoran Đinđić – by posting paper imitations of street-name tables with the name of the war crime suspect Ratko Mladić. When two of those extreme right-wing young men were imprisoned, SRS reacted by a scandalous bringing of the same posters – named the Boulevard of Ratko Mladić – into Parliament and proclaiming in Parliament that SRS members together with their leaders will do the same which those imprisoned men had done before. And soon after the SRS leaders and members carried out that shameful proclamation in a way that assisted the protestors against naming that street as the Boulevard of Zoran Đinđić.

Another drastic example of the “brutalization” and “primitivization” of the public political scene was when SRS leaders recently entered the Parliament with a poster designed as

The ethnification of politics also means that the political field in a more general sense and the field of civil society conceived as “politics in a wider sense”, have become more and more occupied and contaminated with extreme right-wing organizations, which act complementary to and in mutually supportive relations with the extreme right political party – the SRS. There are scores of new extreme right-wing ideas and organizations – anti-Kosovo independence group initiatives announcing possible para-military activities, ethno-nationalist clerical groups, anti-abortion, anti-homosexual initiatives, as well as initiatives for defending the war crime suspects Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, and even Nazi groups.

The ethnification of politics also means using “double standards” towards the international community and international law. While it is expected from the international community to respect international law when considering the status of Kosovo, disrespect is at the same time demonstrated for international law in the case of the Hague Tribunal.

The ethnification of politics has also been directly and essentially connected to the way official politics articulates the war crimes issue. A few democratic attempts to pass a Parliamentary declaration which would condemn atrocities in Srebrenica have not been successful, because the representatives of anti-democratic parties insisted on an (equal) condemning of all war crimes which had been made during the bloody dissolution of the Former Yugoslavia.

### *The Ethnification of Society*

The concept of the ethnification of society has had its social-economic and political basis in the processes of destruction of society, or so-called “sociocide”.<sup>8</sup> The processes of destroying Serbian social, political, cultural institutional and value systems had been on the agenda especially during the Milošević regime as well as afterwards. This took place, firstly, through the militarization of society and state and taking the “side of the bad guys” in the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo (which had tragic consequences for human and all other resources in the region of the Former Yugoslavia but also in Serbia) and through the rise of ethno-nationalism, war-profiteering, corruption, the gray and black economy; secondly, it took place, through UN sanctions and massive pauperization, hyper-inflation,

a combination of the title “Safe House” and the photo of Ratko Mladić. They wanted satirize the huge and efficient public campaign (ongoing among the pro-democratic media and civic sector in Serbia), for building safe shelters for abused and violated women and children, and to send at the same time a political message to the world and democratic political and social body in Serbia that extreme right-wing and anti-Hague forces are so strong that even the Serbian Parliament represents a safe shelter for those indicted for the worst war crimes.

8 See: Lazić, M. *Razaranje društva (The Destruction of Society)*, Beograd: Filip Višnjić, 2000; Bolčić, S. and Milić, A. eds. *Srbija krajem milenijuma: razaranje društva, promene i svakodnevni život (Serbia at the End of Millennium. Destruction of Society, Social Changes and Everyday Life)*, Belgrade, ISI FF, 2000.



isolation, xenophobia; thirdly, through the NATO bombing. The fact that the hard and long fight against the Milošević regime did not result in expected radical changes and quick enough improvements after the democratic victory in the year 2000 also contributed to this process, as well as the fact that the anti-Milošević corpus – which represented a mixture of democratic forces and anti-communist and ethno-nationalist ones – had to differentiate itself from the inside after overturning Milošević. That internal differentiation also contributed to the generating and sharpening of the main ideological cleavage which has divided internally the elites, the political parties and the population in Serbia.

A deep ideological and cultural split exists in Serbian society, the gap inside the Serbian social body between those oriented towards the future, i.e. towards reforms, democratization, European integration, a common well-being from the point of economic advancement, democratic consolidation, cultural progress in the sense of democratic political culture, the affirmation of universal human values, the acceptance of international law, integration into the international community, on one side, and those oriented towards the past, i.e. towards mystified notions of self-identity and self-dignity, on the other. It expresses the expansion of traditionalist, anti-modern, anti-European, xenophobic sentiments among the people. Ideological constructions of the past, of tradition, of a victorious history – in order to stimulate re-traditionalization, clericalization, and re-patriarchalization – have been systematically used by right-wing political, religious, intellectual, and media elite.

The ethnification of society highly depends on what, how and to what extent the anti-democratic factions of the elite do in order to block the consolidation of democracy.

The already mentioned empirical indicators that the pro-European orientation of people in Serbia have constantly shown high rates of positive affiliations (about an 80% of a positive response), lead to the possible insight that ethnification of discourse and ideological and value orientations is more existent among the political elite than among the average population.

The decisive refusal of Kosovo independence among politicians (which is the only question around which there is a consensus in Parliament and public political discourse) has also been to some extent in collision with these statements. According to recent empirical surveys<sup>9</sup>, the people of Serbia show a more realistic approach than politicians: up to the year 2005, 40-50% of the sample was against independence, none for independence, 20-30% were for dividing Kosovo into a Serbian and an Albanian part, and 10% opted for it to be a UN protectorate. In the 2005 surveys, 1-3% of the sample opted for Kosovo independence and this trend rose to 10% in the year 2007. Two fifths of the sample in these most recent surveys think that Kosovo will gain independence, 22% do not know what will happen, 15% think that Kosovo should

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9 See: Mihailović, S. *Danas*, Saturday/Sunday May 2-27, 2007, p.4., [www.danas.co.yu](http://www.danas.co.yu)



remain in Serbia, 15% that Kosovo should be divided into a Serbian and an Albanian part, and the rest opt for a long-lasting UN protectorate.

However, politicians and those who dominantly create public opinion work systematically on generating tempered emotions and sentiments among those against Kosovo independence, and they do that with certain aims and political interests. They all want to influence the international community; in addition, extreme right-wing politicians and the strong right-wing part of the Orthodox Church want to mobilize the Serbian people around the Kosovo issue, so as to widen the right-wing electorate and impose more and more traditionalist, anti-modern ideas.

The ethnification of society is based on the contamination impact of right-wing political representatives, which has a fruitful basis in a deeply inherited authoritarian political culture, bad social-economic situation, a low level of the standard of living, and the economic and social insecurity of the “losers of transition”.

### The Social Agents of Ethnification and Interests in the Background

Ethnification is strongly connected to the great strength of the right-wing political parties – in the first place the Serbian Radical Party (SRS)<sup>10</sup> and right-wing political extremism in general. To this ideological block belongs, however, also the Socialist Party of Serbia (the so-called “red-black” coalition).

Social actors are a wide range of SRS voters (more than one million), the right-wing part of Serbian civil society<sup>11</sup>, supporters of the previous Milošević

10 It turned out, after the parliamentary elections of Serbia in December 2003, that more than 50% of the electoral body chose the civic option, and 35% chose anti-systemic parties (the extreme right-wing Serbian Radical Party – SRS, and Milošević’s Socialist Party of Serbia – SPS), while in the October and December 2000 elections, in which the previous authoritarian regime was turned over democratically, the democratic bloc of parties had 64.4% of supporters and the undemocratic bloc had 27.3%. From 2000 to 2003 at the parliamentary elections about 700,000 votes were transferred to the extreme right (from 322,333 votes to 1,008,074 votes). It is important to bear in mind that SRS also received great support in the presidential elections during the last reform years. In the first unsuccessful presidential elections in 2002 Vojislav Šešelj won around 845,000 votes (Vojislav Koštunica and Miroljub Labus in the second round – 1,123,000 and 995,000), in the second again unsuccessful presidential elections in 2002, Šešelj won 1,063,296 votes (Koštunica – 1,670,000), and in the third (again unsuccessful) elections held in December 2003 the new “rising star” in SRS – Tomislav Nikolić (in the meantime the war crimes suspect Vojislav Šešelj had departed for the Hague Tribunal) won 1,166,896 votes (the democratic candidate Dragoslav Mićunović won only 894,000).

The parliamentary elections in January 2007 had the following results: the Liberal-Democratic Party won 5% of votes, the Democratic Party 23%, G17 Plus 7%, and the Democratic Party of Serbia (moderate nationalists) won 16%; the Serbian Radical Party won 29% of votes, and the Socialist Party of Serbia 6%.

11 There is nowadays a rising number of the extreme right-wing informal social groups and initiatives as well as NGOs – Nazi, skin-heads, clerical, clero-fascist, pro-life and against

regime (including the army, police, and secret police representatives), the Orthodox Christian Church nomenclature, strong informal centers of economic and military power (a fusion of state and societal crime and corruption), and the masses of “new believers”. This social milieu is located among the older, less educated, agricultural inhabitants of Serbia; the mass basis of right extremism is found amongst ill-educated, older, and less urbanized parts of the population. That is an uncompetitive part of the population from the aspect of free market demands, and their value orientations can be qualified by a xenophobic-egalitarian syndrome (a common appearance of ethno-nationalism, xenophobia, egalitarianism, and an anti-free market orientation).<sup>12</sup>

New radical extremists recruit their members also among young unemployed Serbs and marginalized groups, Serbian refugees from Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, as well as among those young people who had not witnessed the Milošević regime and its disastrous results inside and outside Serbia as mature persons, and who did not obtain enough information about the wars and the role of the Serbian regime in them (because this was more than insufficiently publicly recognized in Serbia), who also have not had many chances to travel outside Serbia and have been xenophobic (the “visa” regime for traveling abroad, UN sanctions, isolation, pauperization), who experienced the NATO bombardment and know a lot about the intentions of the international community that have enabled Kosovo independence, and who have had patriotic sentiments, which can easily be misused and converted into ethno-nationalism and chauvinism, traditionalism, even anti-modernism.

The social milieu of extremism encompasses, on the one hand, those among the common people who fear losing their sense of life strictly linked with ethno-nationalist sentiments, those among elites who do not want to lose their “messianic” role and prestige based on promoting ethno-nationalism, as well as those who fear losing their economic and social privileges gained in the previous regime. On the other hand, this social milieu encompasses the economic “losers of transition”, i.e. the social deprivation of a great part of the population in the new context of privatization and a free market economy.<sup>13</sup> Right-wing recruitment among the youth has been directly con-

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the “white plague”, along with organizations for safeguarding the cultural heredity and tradition of the “household” Serbia and Serbian “synodian” collective spirit (“sabornost”). Some of these extreme right NGOs and groups are specifically rooted in Serbian context whereas some belong to the general trend of European right-wing extremism. Recently, there has also been an outburst of organizations for defending Kosovo (which more or less openly show para-military or terrorist affiliations). (See: Bakić, J. *op.cit.*

12 According to the empirical survey, done by the NGO CESID, the electoral support for SRS comes 20% from peasants, 18% from low-qualified workers, and much less from professionals (6%), officials (7%), and students and pupils (8%). (See: Goati, V. 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

13 Srećko Mihailović, one of the most prominent empirical surveyors in Serbia gives data about party affiliations and the standard of living in the population of Serbia during the past five transitional years. The results show a correlation between the self-assessment of individuals that live well and the fact that they belong to the Democratic Party, or to

nected with the “transition losers” (a high level of unemployment among the young people). In some way, SRS represents – with its nationalist populism and economic egalitarian demagoguery – a “shelter for the losers of transition”. It has offered to the old, the marginalized, the ill educated, those expelled from their jobs, the unemployed, and those unable to accommodate to new working conditions and competitive market economy; their “biggest welfare” is the stopping of privatization, working class egalitarian capitalism, and belief in shameful lies about unrealistically cheap food (“bread for three dinars”).<sup>14</sup>

The phenomenon of “new believers” is connected to the great expansion of religiosity in Serbia from the 90’s and until the present. According to the results of the last National Census of 2002, there are – among 7,5 million inhabitants in Serbia – 6,2 million of Serbs, and 6,4 million Orthodox Christians by religious orientation (with ethnical Serbian Orthodox Christians, there are also those who chose as their ethnical identity – Montenegrin and Yugoslav). There are only 40,000 of “non-believers”, which together with 138,000 individuals whose religious status is “unknown”, makes only 0,5% of those without religious identity.<sup>15</sup> There is a great discrepancy in comparison with the “real-socialist” period in which secularism and atheism were closely connected and massively existent. The results of an empirical survey concerned with religiousness and done complementary with the National Census in 1991 demonstrate a big difference in the religious status of the Serbian nation. That empirical survey encompassed 4,804 individuals of Serbian nationality. Among them there were only 8,5% of “convinced believers”, 16,2% of believers who did not fully accept religious dogma, 13% of those who were not sure about whether they were believers or not, 47% of “non-believers”, and 3% of those who were non-believers and were also against religion.<sup>16</sup>

Ethnification is strongly connected with the rising impact of the Orthodox Christian religion and Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) – with their anti-modern and anti-European ideas which result in real tendencies of clericalization and efforts (from inside the Church and among clerical right-wing organizations) to annihilate the achievements of the processes of secularization and the separation of the State from the Church. Social promoters of anti-modern tendencies are right-wing representatives of the Orthodox Church,

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other parties within the liberal-democratic block, and *vice versa* – those citizens who assess their own standard of living as “more or less unbearable” primarily choose the Serbian Radical Party. (See: Mihailović, S. Duga put ka kapitalizmu (The Long Trip towards Capitalism), in: Mihailović, S. ed. *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji (Five years of Transition in Serbia)*, Beograd, 2005, p. 61.

14 Ristić, I. Povratak Srpske radikalne stranke nakon 5. oktobra – nužnost ili iznenađenje? (The Return of the Serbian Radical Party after the 5<sup>th</sup> October – Necessity or Surprise?), in: Mihailović, S. ed. 2006, *op. cit.* p. 138.

15 See: National Census 2002, Book 3, Statistical Office of Serbia.

16 See: Marković, S. Srpska pravoslavna crkva i država: klerikalizacija i cezaropapizam (Serbian Orthodox Church and the State: Clericalization and Cesaropapism), *Nova srpska politička misao*, NSPM, [www.nspm.org.yu/Debate/2005\\_CP\\_slmarkovic\\_klerika.htm](http://www.nspm.org.yu/Debate/2005_CP_slmarkovic_klerika.htm).

but the Church in general shows great interest in obtaining economic and political power<sup>17</sup>, and minimizing the results of secularization.

The fact that the number of “believers” among the Serbs has raised drastically, together with the fact that all empirical surveys of the public opinion show that the Serbian Orthodox Church has been ranked as the most trusted and respected institution, speak about how the social milieu in Serbia has become fruitful for the great impact and penetration of the Orthodox religion and the Church into social life. The huge social acceptability of Orthodoxy and the Church in contemporary Serbia, together with open and often aggressive attempts of the Church to penetrate all fields of social life and to take an active part in political decision making, together with its systemic efforts to promote anti-modern ideas among the believers in general and especially among the young, as well as its dubious role in generating militarization and ethno-nationalism during the wars, give strong arguments in favor of diagnosing the process of clericalization in Serbia.<sup>18</sup>

Mirko Đorđević, the analyst of Orthodox Christianity in Serbia and a “convinced believer”, assumes that the SPC today in Serbia – with its attempts to pronounce Orthodox Christianity as the official religion and itself as the official state Church, which has attempted to create a union of the State and the Church, and has demanded that the economic wealth of the SPC be left outside any control by the state – represents a “drastic version of clericalization, with anachronous ideas which fall far below the level of civilized Europe”. He also adds that this kind of clericalization is also “unusual”, because it is not only imposed by the SPC but also promoted and supported by certain political elites.<sup>19</sup>

Ethnification in its most perverted manner means a lack of readiness to accept the responsibility for war crimes on the Serbian side, attempts of officials as well as of the common people to equalize war crimes “of all sides in the wars”, and in the most disastrous cases – attempts to give “objective” explanations and apology, for example, of the atrocities done in Srebrenica.

17 Denationalization of expropriated real estate after the Second World War is still far from realization in Serbia, except for the Church that already has had its huge real estate returned and started doing business in a secular sense, but without paying taxes. Together with commercializing religious services and large donations, the Serbian Orthodox Church has become richer than ever in its history from the XIII century to the present. (See: Đorđević, M., Aggiornamento in: Lukić, S. and Vuković, S. eds. *Peščanik – Zašto se šapuće u crkvi? (Why is there a Whispering in the Church?)*, the textbook of interviews with the highly ranked anti-nationalist intellectuals, in the Radio program called “Peščanik”, pp. 94-108.

18 *Ibid.*

However, there are political analysts who neglect the diagnosis of clericalization, with the argument that this is more a question of pseudo-religiosity (fashionable affiliations) or that the fact that 99% of citizens are religious people conceals the fact that among them there are much less “convinced believers” than all other categories. (See: Marković, S. *op. cit.*)

19 See: Đorđević, M., Aggiornamento, in: *Peščanik, op. cit.* pp. 94-108.

Social agents of this un-readiness are right-wing political elite, Church representatives, army, police and secret police representatives, parts of the media and intellectual elite, i.e. all those who took part in the wars or in generating a war-like atmosphere. In short, all those who can be questioned and subjected to law for war crimes, subjected to lustration for generating a pro-war atmosphere and for supporting the Milošević regime in an active manner, and – in the case of war profiteers – those who could be deprived from their illegally attained wealth and subjected to law because of their support of wars for personal interest.

Social actors of the ethnification of politics and society have been, in an indirect way, also political representatives of democratic parties and democratically oriented intellectual elite, in a sense that they have not done enough in favor of articulating a comprehensive strategy for overcoming the disastrous consequences of the Milošević regime, wars, pauperization, and isolation; in other words, they failed to build a substantial democratic strategy of social, political, and cultural development of modern Serbia.

In contrast to the strategic vacuum related to the failure of articulating the project of a prosperous Serbia, the promoters of the ethno-nationalist strategy have done their job “very well”: the first step in this sense was a document known as the *Memorandum* of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, whereas the second step presented an even more retrograde, clerical document “Načertanije for the XXI Century”.<sup>20</sup>

Milošević’s shift from communist towards nationalist ideas in the late 80s received its programmatic and ideological basis in the *Memorandum* of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, a document announced in 1986 (though it had never been officially published). The *Memorandum* did not contain explicitly the idea that the Serbian national and state question must be solved in military attempts to gather “all Serbs in one state”. However, the *Memorandum* – a strategic document created by the highest level of Serbian intellectual elite – did contain ethno-nationalist implications:

“In these fateful times, the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences feels obliged to express its views on society’s condition in the conviction that this will help us find a way out of our present troubles. The nature of this document, however, obliges us to limit ourselves to the key issues of Yugoslav reality. Regretfully, these issues include the undefined and difficult position of the Serbian nation, a position brought to the fore by recent events. With the exception of the Independent State of Croatia from 1941– 45, Serbs in Croatia have never been as persecuted in the past as they are now. The solution to their national position must be considered an urgent political question. In so much as a solution cannot be found, the results could be disastrous, not just in relation to Croatia, but to all of Yugoslavia. The question of the Serbian people’s position is given considerable weight by the fact that a large number of Serbians live outside of Serbia, especially Serbia proper, and that their number is larger than the total number of people of some other nations. According to the census of 1981, 24% of the Serbian people (1,958,000) live out-

20 “Project for the XXI Century”.

side of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, which is considerably more than the number of Slovenians, Albanians, and Macedonians and taken individually, almost the same as the Muslims. Outside of Serbia proper there are 3,285,000 Serbs or 40.3% of their total population. In the general disintegration process which has taken over Yugoslavia, the Serbs are hit with the most intense disintegration. The present course which our society in Yugoslavia has taken is totally opposite from the one that has moved for decades and centuries until the formation of a unified state. This process is aimed at the total destruction of the national unity of the Serbian people.”<sup>21</sup>

A great part of Serbian intellectuals and political elite accepted these ideas in the time of the dissolution of the Former Yugoslavia and gave significant support to the Milošević regime, to the wars, and to the ethno-nationalist option.

The democratic change of the regime, however, did not mean a full and essential break-up with ethno-nationalism and, somewhat paradoxically, it opened an even wider space for the rise of ethno-nationalist extremism.

With a process of gradual replacement of socialist-communist and pro-Yugoslav rhetoric with new anti-communist rhetoric, it started to be more and more often on the agenda to overlook the social context of anti-fascism and to create confusion about who was who (and on which side) during the Second World War.

Value confusion and confusion of historical memory (the right-wing reconstruction of the history), became fruitful background for generating clerical intellectuals and a proliferation of right-wing organizations among young people. One of these organizations called “Srbske dveri”<sup>22</sup> offered – with strong support of right-wing Orthodox Church representatives and Army members, a strategic political document/project “Načertanije for the XXI Century”. The clerical XXI century developmental strategy for the Serbian state and society was deliberately announced using archaic words, with the aim to symbolically designate that the future of Serbia has to be modeled according to its “great” past. It outlines organic and extremely collectivist ideas about the priority of the nation-state’s interest (the interest of the “household” Serbian community) over individual rights, and the idea of the nation-state offered in it is completely out of the modern and postmodern context of international integration processes and processes of globalization. Serbia is presented as an organic body, a unity of people homogenized by religion, patriarchal tradition, and as a clerical monarchy of pre-modern times. It also contains xenophobic sentiments, followed by the mythologization of the uniqueness of the Serbs as a “people chosen by God”, Serbs as victims of a world conspiracy or victims

21 See: Serbian Academy of Art and Sciences, *Memorandum* 1986, [www.haveford.edu/relg/sells/reports/memorandum\\_SANU.htm](http://www.haveford.edu/relg/sells/reports/memorandum_SANU.htm).

22 The word “dveri”, which is, due to its archaicness, practically untranslatable, means something along the lines of “stronghold”. It has been co-opted by the extreme right-wing organization, and combined with an archaic way of writing the word “Serbian” (“srbske” instead of “srpske”); non-governmental organization “Srbske dveri” intends to symbolize with its title and activities the fight for a strong Serbian state, built as a pre-modern political form.



of their neighborhoods' atrocities (abusing historical memories from the Second World War, such as Ustasha genocide of the Serbs).<sup>23</sup>

While the *Memorandum* had offered the project "all Serbs in one state", "Načertanije" offers the project "all Serbs in one Serbian anti-modern state", a hereditary clerical monarchy, without parliamentary democracy, universal vote, division of political power. It is supposed to be a self-sufficient "household Serbia", based on patriarchal patterns and a hierarchical collectivist spirit, without any modern political division of power but only with a pre-modern unity of political and religious power.

To sum up, the social milieu of extremism encompasses the "losers of transition", together with ethno-nationalist and traditionalist intellectual, political, cultural and religious elite.

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## The Background Causes of the Ethnification of Serbian Politics and Society

As mentioned above, the general aim of this text is to outline the processes of ethnification of politics and society as the main factors acting against

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23 This ethno-nationalist and clerical program for the recovery of Serbia, for its "healthy" future, articulated by the association of the young Orthodox academics ("Srbske dveri"), and supported by representatives of the SPC, the Academy of Arts and Sciences (Prof. Dr. Radoš Ljušić), the Army's right-wing representatives, was publicly presented in February 2004, in the moment of the celebration of 200 hundred years of the Serbian liberation from the Ottoman Empire (the First Serbian uprising against the Turks was in the year 1804). This document, "Načertanije", contains 13 articles, with ideas like the following: Orthodox Christianity has to penetrate all pores of Serbian society; the legacy of the XIX century Serbian representatives of Enlightenment and modernization (Vuk Karadžić, Dositej Obradović, Jovan Skerlić, Svetozar Marković), has to be questioned; religious education has to become obligatory and instead of introducing it in parallel with civic education into primary and high schools, it should be introduced with "domestic" (in accordance with patriarchal household tradition) education; it is essential to produce a Serbian Christian elite as a guarantee of the realization of the national program; the Croatian and Bosniak language are only versions of the Serbian language; all official documents, public announcements and media have by law to use Cyrillic alphabet; the aim of the Serbian economy has to be to produce healthy food and healthy and free people; abortion is the killing of unborn babies and each family – independent from its material conditions – has to attempt to have at least three or four children.

It is not directly said that the new-born are important as future soldiers, but this has been implicated: "(M)ore people mean more settlements, and more settlements mean victorious fights, through which the Serbs will return to Prizren (Kosovo – D.V.)."

The idea of establishing a clerical monarchy is expressed in the following way: "The establishment of the monarchy is an unavoidable condition for breaking links with the communist past. The Serbian king must in the first place serve God, and then his people." (See: Vujadinović, D. *Srbija između antimodernosti i modernosti* – "Su čim ćemo pred Karađorđa?" ili "S čime ćemo pred buduće generacije?" [Serbia Between Anti-Modernity and Modernity – "What shall we face Karađorđe with?" of "What shall we offer to the future generations?"]], *Helsinška povelja* feb/mart 2004, br. 73–74; See also: Dejan Anastasijević, *Kruna, Mač i Mantija* [Crown, Sword and Priest's Mantle], <http://www.vidovdan.org/print269.html>; *Vreme* 685, februar 2004).



the democratic consolidation of Serbia, and also to consider interests and social actors which generate anti-democratic tendencies. The aim is also to outline the main background causes and indicate some of their manifestations and consequences.

The main causes of contemporary anti-democratic tendencies are multiple and are also related to the political and cultural history of modernization in Serbia (the First and Second Yugoslavia).

The *Historical Aspect* – Speaking from the point of European modernity, the achieved level of social, economic, political, and cultural results of the modernization processes in XIX century in Serbia was low, and it was followed by an authoritarian political culture and strong anti-modern sentiments among the people as well as among a significant part of the intellectual and political elite.<sup>24</sup>

For the last 160 years – considered as a period of constituting the nation state of Serbia, and of its modernization, according to the historian Latinka Perović, a constant cleavage has been outlined within both the political elite and the people – between two historical tendencies and ideological orientations. This basically has meant a deep division in moral and political views, societal differentiation of standpoints towards Western Europe and modernization. Intellectuals educated in Western Europe opted for the modernization of Serbia, i.e. a revolution from “above” was proclaimed by the minority of well educated intellectuals and democratic parties. On the other hand, affiliations in favor of Russian influence, were supported by the majority of patriarchal, traditionalist, socially homogenized agricultural people, as well as by the authoritarian (monarchical) regime, and were followed by ideas of the State and the Church unity, about the safeguarding of Serbian cultural patterns, Slavic tradition, and so on.

Latinka Perović assumes that the most general cleavage in the essence of Serbian modern history has been between patriarchalism and modernization. She says that egalitarian, authoritarian, patriarchal, collectivist ideology has characterized deeply and essentially Serbian history, not only in the “real-socialist” period, but also in its whole two century long history of modernization: “... (I)t is often neglected – partly intentionally and partly because of the lack of knowledge – that (in Serbia – D.V.) a long time before the last fifty years an ideology had been formed which favored more the peoples’ welfare than the national wealth, distribution than production, equality than liberty, collectivism than individualism.”<sup>25</sup>

The *Aspect of Political Culture* – Authoritarian political culture had been inherited from the time before the Second World war (characterized by undeveloped capitalism and unsuccessful modernization), and was maintained

24 Institute for the Newer History of Serbia published three books: *Srbija u procesu modernizacije u XIX i XX veku* (Serbia in the Processes of Modernization in XIX and XX Century), Beograd 1994, Beograd 1998, Beograd 2003.

25 See: Perović, L. *Između anarhije i autokratije – Srpsko društvo na razmeđu vekova (XIX-XXI)* [Between Anarchy and Autocracy – Serbian Society on the Crossing of Centuries (XIX-XXI)], Beograd, 2006, p. 31.

and reproduced in socialist Yugoslavia, although modified and influenced to a certain extent by the civilizational standards of the XX century, a modern value system, secular and cosmopolite ideas.

Serious empirical surveys from the 90s and later on – concerned with social character, political culture, social-psychological stereotypes – showed high rates of authoritarian, traditionalist, etatistic, paternalist affiliations among the Serbian population.<sup>26</sup>

Zagorka Golubović writes ten years after the above mentioned empirical surveys, the following about obstacles for developing a democratic political culture in Serbia: “We have already spoken about the still predominant authoritarian type of ‘social character’, and it should only be added that it is still nurtured by a paternalistic understanding of the state, both by those in power and by the citizens, thus weakening the positive energy that was revealed on October 5<sup>th</sup> 2000, and making the citizens passive in the process of creation of the conditions for a democratic political culture as the basis of a civil society. Concerning the issue of the so-called national character, which is opposed to the sociologically based concept of ‘social character’ (presumes the historical, national, not contemporary social heritage), the latest analyses show that dealing with the past dominates over the concern about the future. As for the values, features like heroism and bravery (boasting with the latest ‘won wars’) and national liberation are appreciated more than individual freedoms, diligence, efficiency, and responsibility in the projects for a better present-day and future life. That is why it is so hard to adopt one of the most important conditions for the creation of a new political culture, i.e. to face all sideways of the past in order to go through the necessary catharsis and form a more realistic perception of the capacities of the nation for democratic processes.”<sup>27</sup>

*The Aspect of the Recent Political History* – The socialist authoritarian regime of the post Second World War Yugoslavia (SFRY) was substituted by the authoritarian ethno-nationalist regime of Milošević from the late 80s (the essential shift from the extreme Left towards the extreme Right, though within the same socialist symbolical framework); a multiparty system was established from the beginning of the 90s in the SFRY. In Serbia, multiparty elections brought about a continuation of the great dominance of the Milošević’s Socialist Party; in addition, the multiparty system in Serbia was designed along ethnic divisions and in a non-democratic political context.

The bloody dissolution of the SFRY and the role of Serbia in it caused disastrous consequences: economic collapse in 1993 (hyper-inflation), isolation, impoverishment, the criminalization of the state – through militarization, para-military organizations and their involvement in the wars in Croatia

26 See: Golubović, Z., Kuzmanović, B., Vasović, M. eds. *Društveni karakter i društvene promene u svetlu nacionalnih konflikata (Social Character and Social Changes in the Light of National Conflicts)*, Beograd: Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 1995.

27 Golubović, Z. Authoritarian Heritage and Obstacles to Development of Civil Society, in: Vujadinović et al. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2005, p. 264.

and BiH, the financial robbing of the population (phantom banks), the rise of the black and gray economy, the disintegration of social services, social security, the emptying of social funds, the destruction of society ("sociocide"), the militarization of the people, the rise of ethno-nationalist populism, and the break-up of normal value systems.

*The Aspect of a Postponed and Blocked Democratic Transformation* – Serbia started democratic reforms coupled with great support of the population after the 2000 elections, which acquired democratic orientation through the more than decade-long resistance against the authoritarian regime of Milošević and his militant, war-oriented politics. However, even during the civil protests of 1996/97 and after the democratic change of the regime in 2000, there were good reasons for suspecting the real democratic orientation of all parties (and individuals) who took part in the victorious coalition called the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS). This is due to the fact that in the struggle against the Milošević regime representatives of nationalist and liberal-democratic orientations worked together.

Immediately after the democratic regime was established in the year 2000, an evident disharmony appeared in the behavior of different political agents in DOS. The "nationalist" part of DOS – the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and its leader Vojislav Koštunica – opted for solutions that led to preventing legal, institutional and general discontinuity with the previous regime. This conflict of interests and political affinities within DOS resulted in its disintegration. The parties emerging from DOS focused primarily on their mutual conflicts instead of fighting against SRS and SPS (parties representing the previous regime and which have become anti-systemic parties, while retaining their anti-reform programs).

What was fatal for Serbian democratization and its integration into EU was that – in contrast to all other countries of previous "real-socialism" – there has been no real, full and essential political consensus about the need for the total breaking off of the authoritarian legacy of communism and ethno-nationalism.

In short, the lack of a basic consensus for the liberal-democratic transformation of the country singles Serbia out from other ex-communist countries and indicates the low level of historical consciousness and a civilization immaturity of Serbian political and intellectual elite. As a consequence, not only did the transitional process start a whole decade later in Serbia than in other countries in the region, but this process has yet to be clearly defined as systemic, well-rooted and guaranteed. In addition, there are open problems of statehood, national identity, territory, and the status of Kosovo.

Particularly important for another blocking of the "postponed", but strongly and quickly forced forward transitional process after the year 2000, was the murder of Zoran Đinđić – the Prime Minister of the first democratic government. The assassination of Đinđić was obviously aimed at stopping the reform process and at political destabilization. The planners and executors of this murder carried out these aims very successfully.

Zoran Đinđić was clearly oriented towards rapid economic reform, pro-European politics and a modern Serbia, co-operation with the international community and the Hague Tribunal, and making a radical break from the previous regime. However, the slowing down of economic and political reforms already began in 2002. This happened because of the obstruction created by the departing members of DOS, the many mistakes of democratic government during the “walking forward too fast” period, the growing conflicts between democratic agents, the poor (or at least insufficient) financial aid of the West for economic recovery, inefficient international instruments for solving the Kosovo problem, the excessive burden of poverty, corruption, criminalization (inherited from the previous regime), ongoing corruption and misuse of power even among some representatives of the new government, and slow institutional transformation.

To be clear, the institutional presuppositions for the change of political order were not established even during the Đinđić government. However, the institutional vacuum was relatively successfully substituted by the cohesive energy, extraordinary efforts and international dignity of the government and especially of Đinđić himself. Since his assassination, the reform course has essentially been put at stake. The struggle inside the democratic political body has become predominant and the political agents of the previous regime have acquired a wide space for their restoration of power. This was followed by their renewed attraction to a great part of the electoral body.

The real question is why the voters have returned to supporting the right-wing extremists. A wider and deeper sense of the question is why the reforms have been slowing down and the retrograde process has been gaining strength?

Responses here can be found among the following factors: institutional changes have been insufficient; economic improvement is very poor; democratic parties mostly fight against each other instead of focusing on the demystification of the extreme right actors, who are, in contrast, well organized, disciplined, and successful in using social demagoguery and stimulating authoritarian/egalitarian social mentality. Coupled to this is that social insecurity of endangered social groups has been insufficiently minimized, the privatization process is poorly accepted because people are not prepared for free market competition and its risks, but also due to existing irregularities, corruption, the lack of social dialogue and social security for those who have lost their jobs. In addition there is a long-lasting destruction of social institutions, the erosion of value systems, the destruction of people's habits and ways of life, the criminalization of the state and society, the tendencies of re-patriarchalization, re-traditionalization and clericalization.<sup>28</sup> And finally, retrograde processes have also been the result of people's short memories and even more the forgetfulness regarding the previous regime disastrous politics, and the suppression of memories about the Serbian role in the wars of the Former Yugoslavia.

28 See: Vujadinović, D. et al. eds. 2005, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-163.

Representatives of the democratic option (in party life, public space, the media, education, culture, family) have not paid enough attention to the abovementioned issues. They have also not fully supported the need to confront the memories mentioned and have not sufficiently clearly affirmed and promoted the European integration perspective. Consequently, too wide a space has been left for clerical and extreme right agents to bolster anti-reform, anti-Europe and anti-Hague notions.

The prolonged postponement of democratic consolidation has been caused by strong anti-modern tendencies and their social actors and the given situation of blocked democratic reforms contributes again to the strengthening of political extremism in Serbia. In addition, a solution to Kosovo's independence – without rational attempts by the international community to combine the solution of the Kosovo problem with the process of EU integration of Kosovo and Serbia – would certainly contribute to a further rise of right-wing extremism, possibly even a para-military one.

All that which has been stated above – focusing on the “dark side of a two-sided coin” – not at all means that Serbia necessary is going in the “wrong direction”.

Serbia has been at a real historical crossroads, but still has real chances to recover and speed up its democratic reforms.

The liberal-democratic consolidation of Serbia depends, generally speaking, on its capacities for strengthening its democratic option in society and politics as well as on its capacities for replacing ideological-political cleavages with a socio-economic ones. The crucial responsibility of the democratic, political and social elite is to urgently articulate and implement a consistent strategy of Serbian democratization and its European integration.



## OBSTACLES IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESSES OF SERBIA TO THE EUROPEAN UNION\*

*The integration of Serbia into the European Union represents a necessary, unstoppable and wishful process. It is so from the point of view of geographic, historical, cultural belonging, and especially according to the strategic political and security basis of Serbia and Europe. The processes of internal democratic reforms of the Serbian society and state have been in an essential interconnection with the processes of its EU integration, as well as with its inclusion into the international community. Persistent ethnification of the political field in Serbia represents the main obstacle for its accession process to the EU. Due to these same reasons, the democratic consolidation of Serbia has been also slowed down and made insecure, with its scope and content contested. Ethno-nationalism imposes its perverted and reductionist interpretation of national and state interests, which have also been counter-productive from the point of developing Serbia as a modern state. The process of ethnification of politics and society cannot prevent and stop EU integration and the democratization of Serbia in the long run, although they can seriously slow down and endanger these processes.*

**Key words:** Serbia and the EU, transitional countries, democratic reforms, ethnification of the political field, “transition losers”.

This article analyzes the political, social and cultural obstacles on Serbia's path to EU integration, and is written with the underlining conviction that this process is necessary from the point of view of geographic, historic, cultural and strategic interests, as well as desirable for Serbia itself on the way to its full inclusion into the international community and to internal democratic reforms of the government and society. In other words, the democratic development of government and society and the integration of Serbia into the EU are mutually substantially connected social processes and institutionally, politically and legally related projects. It is also crucial in this context that official Serbian policy is determined towards the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

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1 In June 2005 the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the *National Strategy for the Accession of Serbia-Montenegro to the European Union* ([http://www.kombeg.org.yu/aktivnosti/c\\_eko\\_pol/20050622/strategija.pdf](http://www.kombeg.org.yu/aktivnosti/c_eko_pol/20050622/strategija.pdf)).



The main thesis is that the persisting ethnification of the political domain in Serbia represents a basic obstacle which is in the way of its integration into the European Union. The democratic consolidation of Serbia is slow, ambivalent, uncertain and its reaches and contents are contested. The European integration of Serbia, compared to other former socialist countries, is the slowest, most ambivalent, most contradictory and most uncertain.<sup>2</sup>

The mentioned analysis of obstacles related to the integration processes in Serbia is set in the context of a comparative analysis of transition and integration processes in respect to other former real-socialism countries of Central and Southeastern Europe (Western Balkans).

### The Transitional Countries of Former “Real Socialism”

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe (after the fall of the so-called Soviet Empire in 1989) entered the transition process of abandoning their authoritarian one-party socialist regime and started to embrace a capitalist model of market economy and parliamentary democracy, in combination with strategic foreign-affairs priorities related to Euro-Atlantic integrations.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe showed different transitional capacities and results in regard to their pace when transforming themselves into a capitalist economy and their pace of integration into the EU, depending on their cultural heritage, geographic proximity to Western Europe and its influence, depending on their being under the authority of one of three empires – the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and Ottoman empire, as well as depending on religious influence – Catholic, Orthodox and Islamic, and depending on the strength of ethnic factors and nationalism within them. This connection of cultural heritage and transitional capacities, or “transitional costs”, is analyzed by Steve Pejovich.<sup>3</sup> His main thesis is that even if egalitarianism and collectivism – as a common heritage of real-socialism – is present in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the culture of egalitarianism and collectivism is stronger the more South and Southeast you go.

Countries that belonged to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, or had a strong connection to the Western world, now have “fewer transitional costs” and are more successful in welcoming an open market economy, and have fewer obstacles concerning cultural issues when adopting new behavior models. Not all this can be claimed for those countries that were under Rus-

2 See Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavićević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Institutional Framework*, Belgrade, 2003.

3 Pejovich, S. Uneven Results of Institutional Changes in Central and Eastern Europe: The Role of Culture (prepared for the conference *Justice and Global Politics*, Bowling Green University, October 21-24, 2004); Vujadinović, D. Democratic Deficits in the Western Balkans and Perspectives on European Integration, *Journal for Institutional Innovation, Development and Transition, JIIT*, Volume 8, 2004.

sian influence (where there was strong egalitarianism and collectivism) and Turkish influence (where even today you cannot find the concept of a legal personality).<sup>4</sup>

Generally speaking, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which experienced a stronger influence of Western culture in the pre-communist period, and which also had a more rigid communist regime (within the USSR) and thereby less accepted and more imposed, the transition processes developed faster, easier and more successfully.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe started their transition process a decade and a half ago, which has been characterized by (despite different dynamics success index, directed by their mentioned different pre-communist cultural and historic heritage) a clear definition of state policy for internal democratic reforms and for integration into the EU (as well as NATO) and, consequently, by the acceptance of such a policy by all relevant political entities.<sup>5</sup>

The processes of the EU integration of Central and Eastern Europe countries have successfully ended, or are on the way to being completed. At the Copenhagen Summit (1993), Europe defined the criteria these countries had to fulfill in the project context of the “eastern” spreading of the EU. The European Union offered regular procedures – starting from economic reforms and then political ones – that (with substantial financial and logistical help

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4 Trying to prove a connection between cultural heritage and transition, Pejovich divides the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into two groups: one group made up of countries which had more cultural and political influence from the West, and the other group made up by countries that had no Western influence, or very little of it. The former group includes: the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia (as former member-countries of the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy), Poland (the Catholic Church was the mediator in accepting Western cultural influence), and the Baltic countries (they were connected to Western countries by religious and trading contacts). The other group is made up of countries which had much less Western influence, thanks to the self-isolation of the Russian Empire (except in the period of the short reign of Peter the Great), and thanks to the anti-western orientation of the Eastern Orthodox Church in Russia, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belarus, Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Montenegro, as well as due to the influence of the Turkish Empire on the Balkans (*Ibid*, p. 9).

5 The character of the real-socialist regime in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which belonged to the USSR, represented a rigid combination of Soviet domination and internal authoritarianism, that had elements of a totalitarian regime. The regime was experienced as an occupation, as an imposed repressive regime, to which intellectual and other groups of the population had serious animosity. In the situation of an absence of Soviet military intervention in 1989, for which at the time of “perestroika” there was no political will in Russia, the massive readiness of the population and intellectual and political elite was shown to have brought down the socialist regime. Old communist nomenclature was forced to accept the new shape of things and to be ready to cooperate, i.e. to be willing to enter, as much as possible, the new political elite. In this sense, these countries nurtured a political space and political will – general consensus – for new political ideas, democratic reforms and European integration (*Ibid*; See also Vujadinović, D. *Democratic Deficits in the Western Balkans and Perspectives on European Integration*, *op. cit.*, p. 13).

from the EU) these countries had to fulfill on their path to integration, and thereby not endangering the core of the EU. The enlargement process of the EU was formally conducted in 2004 by accepting 10 new members (along with the already 15 members at that time): Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Cyprus, Poland, Slovenia, and, by the end of 2006, Romania and Bulgaria.<sup>6</sup>

The transition processes in the countries of former real-socialism – which have successfully ended the process of EU integration, which are appropriately considered successful in conquering the economic logic of the open market and creating significant economic improvement, as well as establishing liberal-democratic models of developing the state and society – are not uniformly positive, in the sense of guaranteeing political, economic, social and culture prosperity to their people and countries. Advancement is obvious in abandoning the authoritarian, undemocratic models of governing and implementing a constitutional democracy and the rule of law. Institutional framework and legal systems are definitely improved by the process of harmonization with EU standards, which are connected, among other things, to establishing mechanisms of government control, fighting corruption and criminalization of the state and society, and improving the politics of human rights protection. Regarding the economic domain, certain progress in starting production, entrepreneurship, market competition, investments, and infrastructure development has been made, especially by establishing the privatization process over the means of production, abolishing the state economy and establishing a market economy, and all of this has been accompanied by significant improvement within private property rights protection, as well as the protection of state, legal and economic denationalization processes, and restitution.<sup>7</sup>

However, transitional processes in these countries carry within themselves certain controversial elements and negative social, economic consequences to the wide masses. Namely, the European model of the “social welfare state” offers an increased range of different “generations” of human rights protection, but one can also say that the economic and social rights of the people are jeopardized, and mass “transition losers” are among the previously

6 In the 90s the EU treated Southeastern Europe in different stages of integration processes in different ways, and certainly as a region with weak economic and political conditions, and thereby, as a region in which a more unique integration policy had to be implemented. First of all, the mentioned region was divided into 4 sub-groups: 1. advanced countries (Slovenia, Hungary); 2. promising countries (Romania and Bulgaria); 3. countries with regional treatment by the EU (Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia); 4. Turkey. In the meantime, the first two sub-groups gathered speed on their way to the EU, and the classification and nomination of countries/region was changed. By 1996, the EU used for the less developed countries of South Eastern Europe – countries of the former SFRY plus Albania – the term “certain countries of South Eastern Europe”, only later officially naming them “the Western Balkans” (*Ibid*, pp. 5-7).

7 See Mihailović, S. ed. *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji (Five years of Transition in Serbia)*, Beograd, 2005.

employed population in companies owned by the state, and are among the old, women, less educated classes and marginalized groups.<sup>8</sup>

The European model of the “social welfare state” is endangered by the dominant neo-liberal logic of globalization. The project of a united Europe is at a strategic crossroads between preserving and promoting a liberal democratic and republican model of constitutional democracy, social justice, civil society development on the one hand, and, on the other, preserving competitiveness on the global scale of a neo-liberal economy and fitting into the globalizing neo-liberal model of development, which in some important elements contradicts the model of development based on the principles of social justice.<sup>9</sup>

The European Union is at a crossroads between the need to offer the European perspective of the search for social justice, in the sense of finding social-democratic instruments of politics and economy for the establishment of the social state project on a European/transnational level, on one hand, and, on the other, sinking under neo-liberal and, in many ways, anti-democratic, globalization processes.<sup>10</sup>

The model of integration offered by the EU is inherently endangered by the supposed democratic deficit often seen within the political, legal and security establishment of the stated project of uniting Europe. The expression “constitutional crisis” clearly speaks in that name as well as the discrepancy between executive and legislative power, the growth of the EU bureaucratic apparatus, the inefficiency and procedural difficulties in the EU’s functioning. All of these is followed by a growing “Euro-skepticism” within “old” and “new” member-countries.<sup>11</sup>

The neo-liberal globalization model dictates a decrease of social justice, a weaker protection of economic and social rights for a great number of people, the relative substitute of the human rights paradigm with the paradigm of safety; consequences appear on a global level (European as well) related to the formation of a global pyramid of power (consisting of financial, economic, political, military centers of power), and followed by the concentration of wealth in a small percentage of owners and tycoons, and the spreading of poverty in an ever larger percentage of the world’s population.<sup>12</sup>

8 *Ibid.*

9 See Golubović, Z. *Pouke i dileme minulog veka (Edifications and Dilemmas of the Past Century)*, Beograd, 2006; Brunkhorst, H. *Solidarnost. Od građanskog prijateljstva do globalne pravne zajednice (Solidarity. From Citizen Friendship to Global Legal Community)*, Beograd/Zagreb 2004.

10 See Prpić, I. ed. *Globalizacija i demokracija (Globalization and Democracy)*, Zagreb 2004; Samardžija, V. ed. *Reforms in Lisbon Strategy Implementation: Economic and Social Dimensions*, Zagreb 2006.

11 See Kaelble, H. *Wege zur Demokratie – Von der Französischen Revolution zur Europäischen Union*, Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart-München, 2001.

12 See Hardt, M. and Negri, A. *Empire*, Harvard University Press, 2001; Brunkhorst, H. 2004, *op. cit.*

The transition processes in countries of former real-socialism, besides following the logic of a more or less successful, faster or slower process of European integration, also fit into the world processes of globalization in economy, law, politics, culture, which are not primarily liberal-democratic, but rather neo-liberal.<sup>13</sup>

The transition processes in countries of former real-socialism are based on requests for affirming private property while insufficiently caring about social and economic rights, which are based on labor and related to vulnerable social groups, and thereby contribute to the emergence of a large social division among people and result in a significant rise in the number of “transition losers”.<sup>14</sup>

The trend of the growing right extremism in transitional countries (except for that which represents a part of the world’s trends in growing fundamentalism, terrorism, the relativization of anti-Nazism and the holocaust),<sup>15</sup> can also be related to the EU post-accession crisis. The problem is that “transition losers” become aware of their dissatisfaction and mobilize it even in the form of street violence (for now only in Hungary). Furthermore, it is a paradox that – despite a long-term official dedication to democratic reforms and European integration and after successfully ending the formal process of integrating into the EU – some anti-European and anti-modernization ideas are promoted by the government itself, for example in Poland during the presidential reign of the Kaczyński twins and during a two-year domination in the Polish Sejm of the prime-minister Kaczyński’s “Law and Justice” party.<sup>16</sup>

The mentioned congregations of so-called “transition losers” is at the moment more or less visible in all countries of Central and Eastern Europe<sup>17</sup>,

13 See Prpić, I. ed. 2004, *op. cit.*; Golubović, Z. 2006, *op. cit.*

14 See Bolčić, S. ed. *Društvene promene i svakodnevni život: Srbija početkom devedesetih* (Social Changes and Everyday Life: Serbia at the Beginning of the 90s), Beograd, 1995; Bolčić, S., Milić, A. eds. *Srbija krajem milenijuma: Razaranje društva, društvene promene, svakodnevni život* (Serbia at the End of the Millennium: Society, Social Changes, Everyday Life), 2002; Milić, A. ed. 2004. *Društvena transformacija i strategije društvenih grupa: svakodnevica Srbije na početku trećeg milenijuma* (Social Transformation and Strategies of Social Groups: Everyday Life at the Beginning of Third Millennium), 2004; Lazić, M. *Razaranje društva* (Destruction of Society), Beograd, 2000; Goati, V. *Partije i partijski sistemi u Srbiji* (Parties and Party Systems in Serbia), Niš, 2004.

15 Women in Black ed. *Preteći znaci fundamentalizma: feministički odgovori* (Threatening Signs of Fundamentalism: Feminist Answers), Beograd, 2006; Dugandžija, N. *Etnonacionalni sindrom* (The Ethno-Nationalist Syndrome), Zagreb 2004; Vrcan, S. *Nacija, nacionalizam, moderna država* (Nation, Nationalism, Modern State), Zagreb 2006.

16 See Ast, S. *Poljski izbori 2007: Sačuvali obraz – Kraj dvogodišnjeg eksperimenta u izolacionizmu, nacionalizmu i netrpeljivosti* (Elections in Poland 2007: Preserved Dignity – The End of a Two-year Experiment of Isolation, Nationalism and Intolerance), *Vreme*, 25. October 2007. pp. 64-65.

17 Erke, M. *Mađarski nemiri – Simptom centralno-evropske krize pristupanja Evropskoj Uniji?* (Hungarian Riots – Symptom of Central-European Crisis of Accessing the EU?), FES, Beograd, 2006. ([http://www.fes.org.yu/thira\\_publikacije/2006/24.Madjarski\\_nemiri.pdf](http://www.fes.org.yu/thira_publikacije/2006/24.Madjarski_nemiri.pdf)).

The mentioned text states the following: “Riots in Hungary, the fall of the governing coalition in Poland, an unaccountable coalition government in Slovakia, the non-existence

especially in Hungary. "Hungary, in a double sense, plays an avant-garde role in Central Europe, in the economic and structural field and the political: the country, which is the leader in approaching the EU, has gone the furthest in modernizing its production structure to foreign investments. At the same time, Hungary has the biggest budget deficit not only in the region, but in the entire European Union. This, however, is not a paradox, but a necessary consequence. The budget deficit does not derive from the country's stagnation, but from the country's advancement. Politically, Hungary represents, at first glimpse, the most prominent Central-European democracy. The party system is balanced and Hungary has no longer constant processes of political breakdown, reorganization and renewal, and complicated coalitions, as are present in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. At the same time, Hungary is the only new member of the EU, which terminated by repression political processes against the government, against its economic program of consolidation and against the EU. This is not a paradox either, but a political consequence: the process of economic and social decomposition followed political consolidation at the institutional level, which in Hungary went much further than in neighboring countries of Central Europe."<sup>18</sup>

The economic disappointment of a wide mass of the "transition losers", combined with political trauma, led to significant riots in Hungary in 2006 and 2007, which used (as their impulses) the anniversary related to the Hungarian anti-communist revolution put down in blood by the military intervention of the USSR in 1956 (October 23<sup>rd</sup> has been established as a national holiday dedicated to the 1956 revolution).<sup>19</sup> Basically, the riots were a result of the disappointment with both the results of the transfer into capitalism and EU integration. Mass disappointment is concentrated around the idea of "culture politics" or identity issues (Euroskepticism combined with nationalism and xenophobia). On this occasion, mechanisms of a newly imposed democratic order were used (freedom of expression and association) in a way that – in the vacuum of an insufficiently developed civil political culture and civil society – was not articulated in the direction of demanding wider de-

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of a government in the Czech Republic: the Central-European members of the EU are going through serious internal political breakdowns, even two years after entering the EU, which shows that the entire region is in crisis after the accession (post-accession crisis) (Attila Agh). Accession to the EU ended a sixteen year old transformation process. This, however, created a political vacuum *per se*, because political elites do not have any new 'projects' to offer their citizens. Accession to the EU has not changed quickly enough the living standard of the majority. On the contrary, membership in the Euro-Zone is today on the agenda not as an option, but as constitutive part of accession. This means fulfillment of the Maastricht criteria, and thereby the politics of stabilization, which, as shown in the Hungarian example, can have severe social consequences." (p. 2)

18 *Ibid.*

19 Riots appeared for the first time in Hungary on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006, and were characterized by violent street clashes between the police and demonstrators. In these riots, some 2000 demonstrators threw glass bottles and stones at cars and house facades, police intervention was retaliated with by throwing Molotov cocktails at them, fire crackers, and stones. Fourteen police officers were hurt and five civilians (*Vreme*, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007).



mocratization of state and power, and for defending endangered social and economic rights, but rather to express extreme right-wing ideas and provoke violent street riots with anti-democratic, anti-European, racist, anti-Semitic ideas and messages. The economic dissatisfaction of the population due to the government's call for "belt tightening", in a situation of vast accumulation of wealth by minority groups (economic and political elite) and not enough growth in the general social standard, has lead for now to the mobilization of the marginalized and militant groups of young men/sport fans, gathered around the idea of the extreme right: "The carrier of social and political riots in Hungary is the extreme right. Globalization and the critique of capitalism in Hungary is articulated by the right. The avant-garde of violence was presented by a mass of drop out young males, which were easy to mobilize (most of them football fans); they are closely connected to right-wing oriented radicals. The organizational center of the protest were the right-wing oriented radicals, who feed on unsolved problems from national history. Leading organizations 'Jobbik' ('More right'), 'The 64 Counties Movement' and 'The Movement for a Better Hungary' (free from the EU) do not play any role in the elections, and their view of the world and history among a large number of the population (as well as in the base of the Fides Party) attract some attention."<sup>20</sup>

Pressure coming from the EU onto its new members (transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe) – that have been the least consolidated in the economic and political sense – to fulfill economic standards, practically disables the faster growth of the people's living standards; insofar, it most likely represents EU politics not well balanced enough towards new members, meaning that it contributes to the worsening of crisis and creates tension spots in these "young democracies". The relevant diagnosis of the crises that came about after accession to the EU by countries of former real-socialism is as follows: "Elements of the Hungarian crisis are present all over Central Europe. All countries in the region have one thing in common: accession to the EU, the end of the European narrative, the forthcoming accession to the Euro-Zone and the pressure of the EU to fulfill the Maastricht criteria; the economic model, whose most dynamic component is foreign investments which "objectively" are connected to low tax income and high demands when the budget is concerned, and diversities of the economy and society, which go hand in hand with internationalization. All of Central Europe has a common political frame: strong political polarizing based on the national and religious quest for identity; the domination of *culture politics*, the direct fusion of political questions with values of national identity; conservatism without civil tradition and foundation mobilizes, above all, "transitional losers"; the general loss of trust in democratic institutions; and finally, the aggressive potential of outclassed masses of violent young males. When will these elements, and on what occasion, turn into an explosive critical mass, differs from one country to another. The possibility of such an event was shown by

20 Erke, M. 2006, *op. cit.*, p. 6.



Hungary. In these situations, the EU contributes to the crisis worsening. The European Union is not capable of acting in the sense of resolving the conflict, which is not only internal, but connected to the accession of new members; the EU aggravates the situation by deriving an incorrect conclusion from the referendum in 2005, and to its new and least consolidated members imposes specially hard obligations (rich member-countries are usually spared of these obligations). Just as the referendums in France and Netherlands were not only a French and Dutch problem, but also a problem of the EU, the new crisis is not only a Hungarian problem, but also represents, as some form of balance to referendums, the mirror of the EU crisis. The fact is that this problem is not addressed properly and it probably represents the biggest problem in the region.”<sup>21</sup>

### The Transition Process in the Western Balkans and in Serbia

A problem present in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which represent the most successful transition countries, and are now members of the EU, is also present in the Western Balkans, especially in Serbia, but in a much more complex and sharpened way. Problems facing the EU on a global scale – democratic deficit and unsuccessful referendums of the Constitution in 2005 (substituted recently by a less demanding text for a new, reformed agreement of the EU, which will in the coming period have to pass democratic checks in the parliaments of all EU members), and problems arising in some EU countries, in mutual relations, and relations of members towards the EU, will surely be an additional difficulty and will slow down the process of accession of the Western Balkans and Serbia. Also, the Euro-skepticism that exists due to different reasons in the “old” and in “new” members of the EU, carries within it the danger of spreading to public life in Serbia and the countries of the Western Balkans, because it represents the “wind to the back” of beraers of the anti-European tendencies in these countries.<sup>22</sup>

As already mentioned, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which experienced a stronger Western cultural influence in their pre-communist period and in which communist regimes were also more rigid (within the USSR), and thereby less accepted and more imposed, the transition processes developed faster, easier, more successfully.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>22</sup> All empirical investigations in Serbia in past years have shown a high degree of determination for Serbia's accession to the EU (see more, Vujadinović, D. Serbia and the European Union – The European Union's Strategy towards the Western Balkans and Its Implementation in Serbia), in: Lilić, S., ed: *Pravni kapacitet Srbije za evropske integracije, 1*, (*The Legal Capacity of Serbia for European Integration, 1*), Beograd, 2006, pp. 127-128). According to the last relevant investigation, conducted by the Office for EU Accession in Serbia, in cooperation with Strategic Marketing in June 2007, based on a representative sample of 1,047 examined citizens older than 18 years of age, more that 69% of citizens stated a positive attitude towards EU accession. (*Blic Online*, August 3, 2007).

The former Yugoslavia, generally speaking, had a real-socialist regimeless rigid and more open towards the influences of the West. Therefore, the social regime's authoritarian value system and undemocratic political culture were better accepted and internalized by the population as being desirable ones. However, it (especially in Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia)<sup>23</sup>, had in some paradoxical way negative consequences related to the harder, slower, even bloodier break-up of the socialist regime (especially in the FRY, Serbia and Montenegro, but more so in Serbia), and the impossibility to achieve a peaceful separation of the former republics belonging to the common federal state.<sup>24</sup>

Within the mentioned context fits the fact that the authoritarian political culture, inherited from the time of the First Yugoslavia (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians), which was modified and kept during the time of real-socialism of the Second Yugoslavia (SFRY), was fertile ground for the mass acceptance of an authoritarian political culture and nationalist ideology in extreme forms of ethno-nationalism in the period of the break-up of the SFRY. "(I)t must be remembered that nationalism was a systemic part of Yugoslav socialist ideology, meaning that nationalist ideology was carefully prepared and structured by the Communist Party throughout its uncontested rule. This peculiar blend of socialist and nationalist ideologies was clearly formalized in the last, 1974, Constitution of the socialist Yugoslavia. Consequently, nationalism was given free rein to permeate value orientations and political culture... Thus, the constitutional framework of nationalist socialism established the basis of the future radical ethnicizing of politics and the politicizing of ethnicity, the ultimate consequence of which was the break-up of the SFRY. Fully liberated by the break-up of Yugoslavia, the ideology of exclusionary ethnic nationalism, based on the 'one nation, one culture, one state' triad (Gellner), led to the transformation of national and cultural differences into animosities. Thus, in the post-Yugoslav context, nationalism acted as an instrument for activating and mobilizing the relics of tribalism for political needs and purposes: it revived the simulacrum of the alleged eternal animosities and lent legitimacy to them. This is the background of the so-called tribal nationalism and brutality of the wars on the territory of what used to be a socialist Yugoslavia. In the above-mentioned context we can look for an explanation (which, of course, would demand more detailed elaboration) as to why, in the former Yugoslavia as well as during its break-up, emancipatory potentials of social and political life failed to develop and why anti-civilizational, extreme nationalism prevailed, the destructiveness of which was expressed in the cruel wars which took place from 1991 to 1999."<sup>25</sup>

23 Vujadinović, D., *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Transitional Processes in Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia*, Preface to the book: Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavićević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Institutional Framework*, Belgrade 2003, pp. 15-17.

24 See Pantić, D. *Politička kultura i vrednosti (Political Culture and Values)*, in: Vasović, M. *Fragments of political culture (Fragments of Political Culture)*, Beograd, 1998, pp. 38-80.

25 See Vujadinović, D. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy – Transitional Processes in Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia*, Preface, in: Vujadinović, D. et. al. eds. 2003, *op. cit.*, p 16.

Transition processes were conducted easier, faster and more successfully (with “smaller transitional costs”) in those countries emerged after the fall of Yugoslavia which were geographically, culturally and religiously closer to Western influence. In this manner, Slovenia represents “the cleanest” case, which in 2004 became an EU member. Croatia fell behind because of the war in its territory in the 90s, but has the status of “a potential candidate”, just like Macedonia. Montenegro has recently signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). Bosnia and Herzegovina has successfully overcome the first step in a positive evaluation of reforms and harmonizing their standards which resulted in the so-called Feasibility Study, but further negotiations for signing the SAA are falling behind because of enormous problems related to territorial, political, legal and institutional matters, as well as identity issues of the state.

Serbia is in the worst position of all regarding difficulties accomplishing the program called the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP)<sup>26</sup>, which, from the beginning of this program’s existence, were connected to Serbia’s cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY); SAP moved from a dead spot in 2005, by signing the Feasibility Study (for Serbia and Montenegro),<sup>27</sup> but only to be suspended for Serbia in 2006, with no deadlines on this moratorium, until all suspects wanted for war crimes, especially Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić, are transferred to the ICTY in the Hague.

### The Etnification of the Political Field as the Main Obstacle of Serbia’s EU Integration Process

At the time of the country’s partition, the ethnification of politics and societies was present all over the former Yugoslavia, and in a way represented a mobilizing force in all the republics of the SFRY. In most of the republics of the former Yugoslavia, the ethnification of the political field was put into the context of creating independent countries, and as such, did not interfere in the reached political consensus on establishing liberal-capitalist regimes and Euro-Atlantic integration. However, all these countries possessed strong elements of ethno-nationalism, which endangered democratic reforms and integration processes (even including Slovenia).

26 The SAP program was established by the EU in 2000, aiming for the special encouragement of integration and reform/transition processes in countries of the Western Balkans. The plan was to end the SAP with the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), which every country in the Balkans – along with the Feasibility Study – should sign with the EU. By signing the SAA, every single country receives real chances for attaining a “potential candidate status”, i.e. countries of the Western Balkans – conditioned by certain requests – open a road to future EU membership. (See Vujadinović, D. in: Lilić, S. ed. 2006, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-135).

27 The Feasibility Study was signed with the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro and the SAP was separated, after Montenegro declared independence in June 2006.

The ethnification of politics and society, which has been systematic ever since the 90s in Serbia, and which was not stopped even after the break-down of the previous, nationalist regime in 2000, represents the main inhibition in Serbia's way towards democratic and European values. The question is why the mentioned ethno-nationalism has damaged Serbia the most. Also, the question is why these factors were not stopped after 2000, but became even stronger; these elements of ethnification represent an opponent to the country's decision of remaining on the road to European integration.

We have already said that, in the long run, the democratic and reform process of Serbia is unstoppable and even unavoidable, but that also strong retrograde tendencies are present in Serbian society, which deliberately and systematically tend to slow down and disable democratic and integration reforms. This sets the scenery for mutation, the deformation of Serbian reform road to a proto-democratic model of delayed and partial transition, and for a slow and uncertain EU integration.

Today, Serbia faces a deep ideological-political division among its citizens and leading political parties, related to, on the one hand, the ideas and supporters of modernization, and on the other, ideas and supporters of an anti-modern development. Unlike the other countries of former real-socialism, in which very soon after the Berlin wall came down, the ideology-identity split between pro-regime communist forces and anti-regime forces was successfully replaced by social-economic cleavage (which is a characteristic of consolidated democracies), Serbia still struggles with these ideological-political divisions. After seven years of a democratic government and the beginning of democratic reforms, Serbia is still burdened with ideological differences between old regime agents and the reformers, as well as with the symbolic split (based on the issue of ethnic and cultural identity) between "patriots" (ethno-nationalists) and pro-European oriented individuals and groups (anti-nationalists, "traitors"). The ideological and symbolic/identity splitting up of Serbian society and politics together result in the dominant ideological-political division, which destroys the Serbian political and social being and blocks Serbia's democratic reforms and integration processes. The transition process in Serbia has not only been postponed because of the Milošević regime and wars, blocked because of its weak cooperation with the ICTY and the assassination of the first democratic Prime-minister Đinđić, but also the accession of Serbia to the EU also has been endangered and at stake because of the dominant ideological and symbolic cleavages, based on issues of identity and ethnos.

The direct cause for this state of affairs is the mentioned fact that the society and political fields in Serbia are marked by a deep ideological, political division, which is in sharp opposition with the fact that the basic split in pluralist societies (consolidated democracies), and even other transitional countries of the former real-socialism is mostly socio-economic. Thus, Serbia's problem is the non-existence of a consensus in its political sphere and public life on the matter of the necessity and desirability for developing Serbia into a modern country; there is a deep division in its society and politics when choosing the past or the future.

In this sense, people are divided between a democratic, pro-reforming block on one side and an anti-democratic block on the other. The extreme-right-wing Serbian Radical Party (SRS) is much stronger than it should be in as much as consolidated democracies are concerned.<sup>28</sup> They enrich their popularity and political support due to their egalitarian and populist rhetoric, in a combination with the mass dissatisfaction of the people who have a poor quality of life, as well as with the fact that the difficult Kosovo issue generates strong sentiment in the people and can easily be used for nationalist propaganda. Furthermore, the extreme right congregates into extreme organizations, groups and movements.<sup>29</sup> Ethno-nationalist rhetoric is not a foreign matter within some democratic parties (the Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia), so not only do the Radicals generate aggressive nationalist rhetoric and hate speech, but some of the parties in power do as well. The consequence of which is a heavy systematic contamination of the value, political and social domain, which is far beneath universal values and international standards of human rights protection. Another side of the problem is that the democratic government is divided from the inside following the stitches of the ideological-identity split, and because democratic forces are still not strong enough to more dominantly promote and realize the official politics of democratic reforms and European integration.

The concept of “ethnification” is used in a negative connotation, meaning that social, political and cultural life in Serbia has become chronically occupied with questions of sovereignty, national identity, national self-consciousness; it is followed by an unrestrained glorifying one’s own ethnos, connected to the victim syndrome in regard to the regional environment (viewed from the point of past and present wars and crimes done under the key of “damnation of small differences” among similar people in the territory of the Former SFRY). It is also connected to the conspiracy theory of the international community, making a strong difference between “patriots” and “traitors” among the Serbian people, as well as with the mass acceptance of religiosity as a desirable/fashionable socio-psychological model combined with the growing influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC) – which is very often involved in open advocacy of anti-modern and anti-European ideas.<sup>30</sup>

28 See Ristić, I. *Povratak Srpske radikalne stranke nakon 5. oktobra* (Return of the Serbian Radical Party after October 5), in: Mihailović, S. ed. *Pet godina tranzicije u Srbiji*, II (Five Years of Transition in Serbia, II), Beograd, 2006. According to the latest investigation of Strategic Marketing, conducted between October 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007, based on a sample of 1,017 examined people, citizens would vote in the elections for the Parliament as follows: the Serbian Radical Party 36%, the Serbian Socialist Party 5%, New Serbia 3%, the Democratic Party of Serbia 9%, the Liberal Democratic Party 5%, G17 PLUS 5%, the Democratic Party 31% (*Blic*, November 2007, [www.blic.co.yu](http://www.blic.co.yu)).

29 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremism>.

30 See Popović Obradović, O. *Crkva, nacija, država – Srpska Pravoslavna crkva i tranzicija u Srbiji* (Church, Nation, State – The Serbian Orthodox Church and Transition in Serbia), in: Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavićević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, Belgrade, 2005; Lukić, S., Vuković, S. eds. *Zašto se šapuću u Crkvi?* (Why is there a Whispering in the

Within this context, the national interests and state interest of Serbia are interpreted in an ethno-nationalist manner and contribute to intolerance toward every critical and different opinion (by qualifying it as unpatriotic or traitorous), and to the rise of xenophobia among its citizens, as well as to the isolation and self-isolation of Serbia.

Ethno-nationalist sentiments and the anti-modern spirit persistently overflow into social and political life: the political discourse in Parliament, public life, the education system, media, everyday life of citizens, are focused on an anti-modern approach to issues of national and culture identity. It imposes the understanding of national identity not in the context of its preservation and promotion according to the standards of civic political community and constitutional patriotism, but in the context of an organic unity ("homebred Serbia", "communal ethnic unity"), based on orthodoxy, homogeneity, the submission of an individual to collectivity; on the agenda is also the clerical-authoritarian-patriarchal model of the community – starting from the family, all the way to the state (the promotion of traditionalist family relations, collectivist authoritarian sentiments, and negation of a multi-party system and parliamentary democracy),<sup>31</sup> which cumulatively result in retrograde tendencies of re-traditionalization, clericalization and re-patriarchalization.

Why is ethno-nationalism so strong and so active in stopping democratic change and the European way in Serbia? Without trying to obtain a complete answer to this question regarding the main mechanisms of inhibitory power when concerning democratic reforms and integration process, the focus is placed on the manifestations of ethnification of politics and society in Serbia.

Deep down, the not so visible samples of these manifestations must be connected to the history of Serbia's modernization, which, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was partly conducted along with weak social, economic, political and cultural results, followed by a strong presence of an authoritarian political culture among Serbian citizens and its intellectual and the political elite. The last 160 years of constituting the national state and its modernizing were designated by constant conflicts between two historic tendencies and ideological orientations. This has basically been the division and differentiation of the social and political body on moral and political views, seen from the point of accepting, or not, the Western European values.

As Latinka Perović says about the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of the Serbia's modernization, intellectuals educated in the West, or a minority of highly educated intellectuals and democratic parties chose the modernizing of Serbia, the revolution "from above". Conversely, the choice of Russian influ-

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*Church?*), Beograd: Pešćanik, 2006; Đorđević, D. *Religijsko-crkveni kompleks u postoktobarskom periodu (Religious-Church Complex in the Post-October Period)*, in: Mihailović, S. ed. *op. cit.*

31 [www.vidovdan.org](http://www.vidovdan.org), [www.srbskedveri.org](http://www.srbskedveri.org), <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extremism>.



ence was supported by a majority of the patriarchal, traditional, agricultural population, as well as by the authoritarian (monarchical) regime, and was followed by the ideas of the unity of the State and the Church, as well as with the ideas of preserving Serbian culture and customs, Slavic tradition, and Orthodoxy. In this sense, this author has concluded that the basic division in Serbia's modern history is the division between modern tendencies and patriarchy. Also, the author states that egalitarian, patriarchal, collectivistic, and authoritarian ideology characterizes the entire two-century period of Serbian history, not only the period of real-socialism.<sup>32</sup>

The authoritarian political culture was preserved – in a modified way – in the period of real-socialism, and it was very easily combined with the authoritarian form of nationalism, and ethno-nationalist populism since the 90s. Further on, this value system matrix and the type of political culture was not abandoned even when starting democratic reforms in the post-October period from 2000, until now.<sup>33</sup>

The real causes in the field of socio-economic and political factors must be tied to events in Serbia during the 90s, wars, economic collapse, hyperinflation, economic sanctions, the burgeoning grey economy, corruption, society and state criminalization, the destruction of society and its value system, the NATO bombing and the chronic and barely solvable problem of the status of Kosovo, the fall of the Milošević regime but without achieving discontinuity of his political heritage, the slow economic development and weak political stabilization after 2000, the disembodied and ideologically dissonant, and yet not strong enough, democratic parties.

Related to this, there is an absence of political will to establish full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in Hague, to decriminalize formal and informal centers of power, to decrease the influence of the extreme right by an economic and social strategy of modernization, and to accomplish democratic reforms and the European integration of Serbia.

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32 See Perović, L. *Između anarhije i autokratije – Srpsko društvo na razmeđu stoleća (XIX–XXI)* (Between Anarchy and Autocracy – Serbian Society Between the Centuries (XX–XXI), Beograd, 2006, p. 31.

33 See Golubović, Z., Kuzmanović, B., Vasović, B. ed. *Društveni karakter i društvene promene u svetlu nacionalnih konflikata* (Social Character and Social Changes in the Light of National Conflicts), Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, Beograd, 1995; Golubović, Z. *Autoritarno nasleđe i prepreke za razvoj civilnog društva* (Authoritarian Heritage and Obstacles for Civil Society Development), in: Vujadinović, D. et al. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, Belgrade, 2005.





## SERBIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION – The European Union's Strategy towards the Western Balkans and its Implementation in Serbia\*

From the point of a democratic transition and integrative processes, during last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century the European Union showed extreme concern towards the real-socialistic countries of Central and Eastern Europe and weak interest in South Eastern Europe (the Western Balkans). Nevertheless, the EU has positively changed its approach towards South Eastern Europe during 2000/2001 through a program entitled the Stabilization and Association Process – SAP.

The EU official dictionary categorizes the Western Balkan countries as: the ex-SFRY countries without Slovenia, plus Albania (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Kosovo based on its position defined by the 1244 Resolution of the United Nations and Security Council from 1999). Western Balkans countries are included into the project of EU enlargement in a special way – through the already mentioned regional approach defined by the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) and its determined version for each of these countries separately.

In July 2003, an EU–Western Balkans summit was held in Thessalonica, where the Council of Europe confirmed its support to the European perspective for the Western Balkans. The Thessalonica agenda was established for the implementation of those steps necessary during the pre-accession period for the listed countries; that represented the EU partnership project with each Western Balkan country, i.e. European Partnerships within the SAP framework.

Three years after the summit, progress in most of the Western Balkans is evident in the fields of economic and political reforms and the systematic adoption of European standards. Croatia started the accession negotiation process (EU officials in the second half of 2006 have been talking about the accession of Croatia right after Romania and Bulgaria, and at the end of 2006 there has been talk about Croatia accession by the end of the current decade). Macedonia has significantly advanced toward the beginning of negotiation for joining the EU, Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the process of SAP implementation (negotiations for signing the SAA), Albania has recently signed the SAA. Serbia and Montenegro started SAP negotiation in 2005, but the EU temporarily suspended the process explaining that the

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condition for continuation of negotiations is an active cooperation with the Hague Tribunal.

Meanwhile, the referendum for independence in Montenegro brought about the creation of two independent states – Montenegro and Serbia. Therefore the EU accession strategy had, logically, become differentiated, and the international community and the EU's negotiation suspension issues and expectations for the extradition of those suspected for war crimes and genocide in Srebrenica were thereafter much more focused on Serbia.

In the third European Commission annual report, the Western Balkans includes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, but not Croatia. With this regional approach toward the SEE countries, the Western Balkans presents a kind of interconnected web where entering the EU presents the reduction of everything that in geographical, political, and security sense means the concept of the Western Balkans. In the end, it reflects some sort of balance, control of political and economic processes in the region that is burdened by risks, but it also reflects an open link and mutual influence that is shared with the EU. Additionally, the EU supports the strengthening of mutual economic cooperation between the countries in the region aiming at the creation of economic reconciliation prerequisites and rebuilding/deepening regional cooperation. Western Balkans chiefs of state have taken on the obligation to join the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) by the end of 2007. Ex-Yugoslav republics will, through CEFTA and then membership to the EU, become economically more connected than was the case in the SFRY (when they had considerably independent economies). According to this projection, during 2007 the free movement of almost 90% of goods will be provided, and other measures concerning free trade will be gradually harmonized (rules about the movement of goods, competition policy, customs policies). A regional energetic union is also being formed which has a symbolic importance concerning the fact that forming the EU (EEC – The European Economic Community) had started by forming the European Community for Coal and Steel. A regional road network has been formed as well, which will additionally connect 4,300 km of railway and 6,000 km of roads. CEFTA anticipates bilateral agreements for the improvement of economic cooperation between countries in the region. The aim of CEFTA anyway is not to form a Balkan Union but the networking of Western Balkan countries for these countries' way into the EU (the improvement of their cooperation together with simultaneous harmonizing with the standards for EU enlargement). CEFTA primarily serves for the creation of economic prerequisites for the membership of these countries in the EU and the scope of them will be reduced by their gradual entry into EU.<sup>1</sup>

The strengthening of economic politics in Western Balkan countries is especially important for mutual interests like strict requests concerning

1 Trbović, A. Put u Evropu vodi preko Balkana (*The Road to Europe goes through the Balkans*), *Blic*, June 3, 2006.

standardization in compliance with the highest European criteria in the areas of justice, freedom (human rights, political democratization), security (regional reconciliation, cooperation on relevant issues in joint the fight against the drug trade, sex-trafficking, terrorism, and organized crime networks) as well as education and trade. Justice, freedom, security, education and trade, according to the agenda of SAP and Thessalonica are the best means for strengthening the credibility of the process of Western Balkan integration into the EU and also the best means for reducing political risks.

In December 2005, the European Commission – in line with tracing development after the Thessalonica summit and in line with the decisions to intensify policy and political instruments for supporting Western Balkan countries in the process of EU integration – adopted a Strategic Paper for Enlargement, and, in December, the European Council concluded that the Strategic Paper was a solid base for enlargement issues discussed during 2006. Member states are invited to adopt measures determined by the document and to provide necessary support for reaching the goals the EU has in the region.

The European Commission adopted a document on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, 2006 in Brussels in which it confirmed the determinations stated in the Thessalonica agenda about SAP and the need for SAP to be annexed with partnership contracts. The Commission concluded that the implementation of the project framework required intensive efforts of all countries as well as stronger EU financial and logistic support for better achievements in the fields of removing obstacles in trade and investments in the Western Balkans, in the field of the visa regime and facilitating the movement of people, in the field of more direct acquainting of people and institutions in the region with EU modalities of local governments, administration, justice, parliamentary cooperation, education, science, research, making dialogue with civil society and within civil society functioning.<sup>2</sup>

It is in the EU's as well as the Western Balkan countries' interest to continue the SAP process and that each country in the region makes progress in its implementation.

### The European Union's Strategy towards Serbia (The Necessity of Reconsideration)

The quest of European integration of Serbia (S&M) did not begin during Milošević's time, it became relevant only after 2000, an entire decade after it happened in other previous real-socialist countries (the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and also Slovenia and, with some delay, Croatia from the ex-Yugoslav area).

2 Manuscript: Communication from the Commission: *The Western Balkans on the Road to the EU: Consolidating Stability and Raising Prosperity*, Brussels 27/01/2006. <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/>.

The strategy of the European Union towards Serbia (the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro) is not synchronized and consistent in the sense of strong, unreserved and continuous support to the internal processes of political/economic consolidation of democracy and European integration. The EU's strategy is dominantly restrictive and its help is limited and often indifferent. Regarding economic domain, financial help and investment injections, even during the best days of the first (Đinđić's) democratic government, were not exemplary for the needs of a discouraged economy, empty social funds, impoverished citizens, and so, it did not provide sufficient and full support to this appointed but weak democratic government; in the field of politics it was dominant and still dominates the "use of the stick" instead of the "carrot offer". The "carrot" strategy was generally less applied, but it had been unreservedly used only in one moment – in the form of accelerated reception of Serbia into the Council of Europe, as a direct consequence of the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić; the "price" for that "carrot" was obviously too high.

The pressure policy is mirrored in, let's say, depriving some important parts of support during 2002 as a reaction of the EU to the failed negotiations between Serbia and Montenegro concerning the functioning of the Serbian and Montenegrin State Union. After that, even stronger pressure and aid restrictions followed because of poor cooperation with the Hague Tribunal. Even further restrictions were announced and expected for Serbia in case the extreme national right-wing had won the presidential elections in June 2004.

The EU's policy of threats/conditions/sanctions ("the stick demonstration"), instead of "awarding carrots", aimed to contribute to the positive processes in Serbia and Montenegro, since it lacked other real-policy instruments for "pushing" the governments towards solving hard political issues. Europe chose an approach: Keep them out of the club until they start to behave, showing itself as a fortress. Nevertheless, Europe could have also applied an alternative choice, which can be defined as "let them into the club so we can socialize them". This approach would have been more open and generous (less conditional and asymmetric) and it would present a less technocratic decision made in Brussels (which by itself presents the expression of a democratic deficit inside the EU).

The European reintegration of Serbia is facing not only internal limitations but also external obstacles connected with the EU's restrictive approach and the implementation of a strict conditionality policy. This restrictive approach, in fact, contributes to the growth of the country's anti-European mood, which additionally makes the integration of Serbia more difficult. Nevertheless, the conditionality policy could further spread the gap and move Serbia away from Europe, with having the consequence of importing the problems of the region's instability into Europe. A more generous and flexible approach would, on the contrary, promote the pro-European majority of citizens, especially if it would be followed by the improvement of conditions in economic, social and political life. This approach would mean exporting the

economic and general stability from Europe into the Western Balkans instead of importing problems of regional instability from the Western Balkans into the European Union.<sup>3</sup>

The restrictive approach is not only the consequence of insufficient reforms and political efforts from the side of a current Serbian political establishment, but it has, for certain, also a substantive nature – related to the negative position of the EU and the international community towards the role of Serbia from Milošević's time in the wars in the former Yugoslavia (B&H, Croatia and Kosovo). Substantive reasons for this restrictive approach, although never sharpened enough nor directly expressed – in the sense of the stern and constant insisting of Europe upon the necessity that the Serbian political elite, army and church representatives, as well as experts, public opinion agents, and citizens, support facing ethical and political responsibility, and also processing criminal responsibility for war crimes in Serbia itself. Instead, Europe and the entire international community focus mostly on the constant reminding of the fact that Serbia has yet to complete international obligations towards the Hague Tribunal. This kind of focus has been misused in the Serbian public for pushing an objective responsibility and guilt issues, as substantial issues, into the background, and for interpreting the EU's pressure and current restrictions/sanctions for anti European and antidemocratic purposes – as “undeserved” punishment, “a conspiracy theory”, Europe's bias (the international community's, the Hague Tribunal's bias).

If there had not been the NATO bombing (for which Europe and the international community felt guilty, morally and politically responsible because of civil suffering as well as the lack of legality and legitimacy from an international law point of view), the above mentioned condemnation of the Serbian heritage from the Milošević regime, would have probably been more direct and clearly articulated; and as such it would have contributed to the process necessary for the citizens of Serbia to face, i.e. to face not only the truth about the war, but also the essential reasons for the European restrictive approach. The negative consequence is, as already has been stated, that the citizens of Serbia easily accept the ideas of a “conspiracy theory”, of an insincere Europe and international community in the sense of giving insufficient economic help, being biased to Serbia's disservice and giving support to (conditional) independence of Kosovo and Metohia. Also, the negative consequence is that the constantly high percentage of pro-European (for EU integration) opinion among the citizens of Serbia<sup>4</sup> is not, as it should be in direct proportion with the readiness for accepting EU standards of system of values, working eth-

3 See: Ilić, G. 2002, *European Union Policy towards Western Balkans and the Position of Serbia*, Belgrade: Institute G17, p. 40.

4 According to research of the Institute of Social Sciences and Movement for European Serbia, in December 2003 more than 80% of the population in S&M (82% in Serbia, 83% in Montenegro) wanted integration into the EU. Nevertheless, there were less positive responses towards obediently cooperating with the Hague Tribunal.

ics, and proposed efforts, obligations and responsibilities; it also is not, as it should be in direct proportion with the readiness for and commitment to cooperation with The Hague Tribunal.<sup>5</sup> Rather, it is, as it should not be, in direct proportion with the stable high popularity or even growth of the popularity of the extreme right.<sup>6</sup>

Objectively, responsibility also lies with the EU in the sense that EU should have done its best for contra-balancing antidemocratic tendencies and fighting the agents of retrograde tendencies in Serbia: it should be primarily

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According to research carried out in May 2003 in Vojvodina, EU Integration opponents were located among poorly educated and unqualified workers – “transition losers”, among representatives of the extreme right-wing and extreme left-wing from the previous regime, inside the Army and Church, among nationalistic elites and strong informal centers of economic and military power (The Center for Civil Society Development, Zrenjanin, May 2003).

According to the Center for Anti-war Action Research from 2000/2001 and the study *Serbs in Europe*, there is a discrepancy between the rational insight for the necessity of entering the EU and its negative emotional dimension. Doubts, hesitations even rejections have been in effect under the influence of UN sanctions of 1992, the NATO bombing of 1999 and the continuous primary “using the stick” method towards Serbia. There is also a discrepancy between positive orientation (all examinees) for the final goal (European integration) and primer European standards related to personal and civil rights, well ordered life, social benefits and especially the material standard of life, and, quite less acceptable middle steps (instrumental goals) which should bring about the final goal (EU integration) like work discipline, readiness for a trade economy and privatization, care about ecology issues, the recognition or rights of minority groups (like homosexuals, different religions, etc.).

- 5 The latest Strategic Marketing survey from July 2006 shows that 52% of examinees are against the extradition of Ratko Mladić, less than a third are for his extradition and even less are willing – under pressure, and not according to their own belief – for the extradition.
- 6 In the parliamentary elections of December 2003, more than 50% of the voting body chose the democratic option, 35% were for the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and partly for SPS, in contrary with State Union elections in October 2000 and in the national elections of December of 2000 when 64.4% of voters choose the democratic option. Thus, three years after democratic changes and the hold up of reform processes after the assassination of Prime Minister Đinđić, 700,000 voters returned to the extreme right-wing (322,333 out of 1,008,074 voters); they returned because SRS had more than a million votes in the parliamentary elections in 1992. In the unsuccessful presidential elections of 2002 Vojislav Šešelj received 845,000 votes and Vojislav Koštunica and Miroljub Labus in the second round respectively received 1,123,000 and 995,000. In the second but also unsuccessful presidential elections at the end of 2002, Vojislav Šešelj received 1,063,296 votes and Vojislav Koštunica 1,670,000. In the third unsuccessful presidential elections of 2003 SRS Vice President Tomislav Nikolić received 1,166,896 votes and the democratic candidate Dragoljub Mićunović only 894,000. In the last successful presidential elections in May of 2004, the democratic candidate Boris Tadić won against the extreme right-wing candidate Tomislav Nikolić.

Public opinion research during the last few years has shown a stable sustainability of SRS's high popularity of 35-40%. SRS is individually the strongest parliamentary party. The united democratic options still, as a rule, have a majority, although several public opinion polls have indicated that SRS could also form a parliamentary majority with some smaller parties.



expressed by social and economic support to the country's recovery as well as by mediation in a more sophisticated presentation to the Serbian public of its own opinion about Serbia's "bad past" during Milošević's rule.

Since the aforementioned restrictive political approach is determined by the attitude towards the role of Milošević's Serbia in the wars at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (and more or less the tacit stand that Serbia has had to face consequences for, even though the Milošević regime was defeated), as well as explicitly by the conditions provided for Western Balkans countries (the regional approach defined by the SAP program) on the one hand, and the weak results of Serbia's cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, on the other, there has been a slowdown in negotiations for Serbia's accession as a result and it is significantly lagging behind the rest of the countries in the region.

Situations like this suite both xenophobic and anti-European ideas which are favored by the extreme-right and they block democratic consolidation in the internal political field.

The internal blockage of democratic consolidation contributes to the distance between Serbia and Europe. This distancing has been also emphasized by the above mentioned restrictive strategy of the EU and the international community; however, it is primarily produced by the attitude of the Serbian ruling elite. The substantial problem is that power holders of democratic governments are determined ambivalently for the civic option and the European future of Serbia; the conflict of traditionalism and modernism, civic and nationalistic commitment, an enlightened and clerical system of values are present in the very heart of the political decision-making. Actual democratic power is partly reformist; it is reflected in legal, economic and institutional dimensions of political system reforms. However, according to the number of political, military-security, international-legal, cultural moments, this democratic government seems to be acting in an anti-European manner and at the same time contributes to the blockage of the democratic process. The essential index of the unreadiness of political elite in power for pro-European and modern politics is also the unreadiness for making a clear distance from Milošević's war politics and for facing – in a socio-psychological, cultural, legally-political sense – war crimes that were committed in the name of the Serbian people. "Janus with two faces" in this context means that political consensus about the European future of Serbia does not exist, and consequences for economic recovery and democratic consolidation of power and development of a democratic political culture within citizens are destructive.

The important question is also whether Europe will find a balanced answer and productive instrument to push Serbia towards further democratic reforms and integration efforts, or Serbia will be left out of the processes of integration. The second solution for Serbia would mean that it would become a "black hole" of Europe, in regard to which Europe would be related as the "fortress".



According to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Progress Report of the European Commission from 2004, Serbia and Montenegro did not make any progress since the zero point in 2002 and it should resume its efforts in the sense of proving its full readiness for the project of Stabilization and Association. The European Community sent quite clear signals that the road to enter is, on principle, opened, but not without honest and complete attempts “from inside”. On the other hand, this report stresses that it has been planned for the Partnership Agreement to be signed with Serbia and Montenegro as well, in order to give a chance to them to take a part in particular European programs in the fields of science, education, technology, ecology. Yet, it still depends on the fulfillment of demands for internal reforms, for functional development of the State Union, regional cooperation, as well as showing clear determination for European ideals and practice. In the meantime, Chris Paten, the European commissar for foreign affairs, announced in public a very sharp critique of the political situation in Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>7</sup>

In keeping with the “Thessalonica agenda” from 2003, The Council of Europe adopted on June 14, 2004, the first document about the principles, priorities and conditions for the European partnership (the first European Partnership) with Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo), which anticipated that there would be further updates of priorities in the second European Partnership (for 2005) in accordance with future reports (Progress Reports) of European officials. This document was substituted by the new document of The Council of Europe from January 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, which, in bureaucratic language, in fact repeated principles and priorities of the European partnership for Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo) without mentioning the (negative) Progress reports (let’s say, the report of Chris Paten from 2004, in which was stated that Serbia made insignificant progress compared to 2000 and that the new democratic authority abandoned the spirit of October 5<sup>th</sup>), and without changing their approach towards in that moment the already predictable process of separation of Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>8</sup>

7 Chris Paten, the European commissar for foreign affairs, visited S&M in May of 2004 and spoke on April 28<sup>th</sup> in the German Parliament about perspectives for the Western Balkans for their EU integration. His estimation for the whole region and especially for S&M was pretty pessimistic. For Serbia he mentioned the “tragic situation” and the necessity to revive the spirit from the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, 2000. He expressed his opinion that promised democratic institutional reforms had not gone far enough. More exactly, the first democratic government with Prime Minister Đinđić at the head, did not do enough, and that new democratic government lead by Koštunica abandoned the spirit of October 5<sup>th</sup> and that growth of the extreme right pointed to endangerment and the ambivalent status of major support for democratic reforms and the European integration of Serbia.

8 Manuscript: Council Decision on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10 1999 and repealing Decision 2004/520/EC, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/>.

The European approach to the Western Balkans, even though it was considered asymmetrical or ineffective, demands from each country to put maximal systematic effort and persistent hard work towards all-encompassing reforms. The European approach towards Serbia and Montenegro has received objections, especially from the Montenegrin side for the unreal and artificial insistence on a functional union, which obviously had been unsustainable. For some time Europe has in a rigorous manner replied suspiciously to “the lack of political will” in the two states to make the union functional. However, European politics adopted the idea gradually of the unsustainability and unreality of the union and, according to this, moved the focus from insisting on the State Union’s functionality to supporting democratic reforms and steps toward the EU in each state separately. The EU promptly set strict criteria for the success of the referendum on the independence of Montenegro; in fact it accepted the idea of the independence, i.e. the formation of two independent countries!

As has been mentioned, in the report from January 2006, the EU in its bureaucratic language automatically repeated formal requests for the realization of the functionality of Serbia and Montenegro Union, even though during 2005 it started giving up on quoted understandings. Serbia and Montenegro as a state union ceased to exist in June of 2006 and a formal request for a functioning state union was abandoned under the pressure of the real perspective of Montenegro’s independence. SAP negotiations were moved from the standstill by signing the Feasibility Study and negotiations for the SAA project was soon divided for Serbia and for Montenegro. In spite all of this, the request for regional cooperation and respect of European values and the practice of the field of legislature, judiciary, economic reforms, etc. were continually affirmed for both states, but the request for full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal focused first of all on Serbia. Since Serbia did not deliver the main war crime suspects, the International Court suspended Serbia in May 2006, indefinitely, or, to be more exact, until the expected delivery of them.<sup>9</sup>

The political-historical moment is utterly negative for Serbia. The idea that Serbia is “a loser” in the entirety of the Euro-Atlantic process of integration has been confirmed by the suspension of EU negotiations with Serbia, and the real possibility of losing sovereignty over Kosovo speaks in favor of this. Serbia is on the back end of European integration, destined to losing a part of its territory as “punishment” for its “bad political past”, isolated and suspended from the outside, and inside worn-out by poverty, political disension, nationalism, xenophobia, and torn between anti-modern and ethno-nationalist tendencies on one hand, and capacities for modern and civil, liberal-democratic option on the other.

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9 Suspension has referred to Montenegro as well as a member of S&M. However, Montenegro has been meanwhile – according to the referendum results – determined as an independent state and it expects soon to be seated in the UN, The Council of Europe and separate EU accession processes.

It is in the interest of not only Serbia but Europe as well that Serbia continually makes progress on the road towards European integration, and Serbia should, for the sake of that goal, as soon as possible fulfill prerequisites for the continuation of suspended negotiations within the SAP.

We should, in this sense, look for an answer to the question of why the European chiefs of states give, a month after the suspension of the negotiations for Stabilization and Association process, strong support to Serbia and made a suggestion to form a joint team of EU and Serbian institutions which will follow the "Mladić case" solution. The answer is that the problem of war criminals has to be solved, but that the process of Serbia's approach to Europe also has to be continued and intensified since it is not only in the interest of Serbia, but also in the interest of Europe itself.

The Declaration for the Western Balkans, which was adopted by the chiefs of the EU's member states in June 2006, says that the Union is determined to support the region financially, as well as to discuss visa liberalization for the citizens of Serbia and Western Balkans. This document followed the meeting of EU Ministers for Foreign Affairs who expressed their readiness "to help Serbia in the moment in which it stands in front of large challenges".<sup>10</sup>

Not by accident (but synchronized and certainly in accordance with the EU officials), right after Serbia received these positive signals from the EU (in spite of and contrary to the announced suspension) followed an initiative of G17 Plus (as the part of the Government of Serbia) in July and August 2006, which was accepted as the official politic of the Government, called "The Action Plan for the Ending of Cooperation with The Hague". Also, the initiative of the same part of the Government connected to G17 Plus followed (tacitly supported by the Government as a whole, which was called "Package plus".

The coordinative and intensified performance of all relevant security services (The Security Informative Agency and the Military Security Agency) and political ruling circles were anticipated with the first initiative. The coordinators of the Action Plan in order to catch Ratko Mladić (Rasim Ljajić and Vladimir Vukčević) have the aim – if he is not captured by September 15<sup>th</sup> of this year – of delivering all convincing proof about the facts of the effort that has been made and the reasons for the impossibility to fulfill the Hague Tribunal's request (such as the proof that he is no longer in Serbian territory). Given proof would lead either to the Hague Tribunal not asking for the suspension of the Stabilization and Association negotiations or it would even lead to activate SAP negotiation immediately, but signing the SA agreement would still unconditionally depend on the fact of Ratko Mladić's extradition.

The second initiative, also, has been in direct connection to the mentioned proclaimed readiness of Europe to intensify financial support to the

10 J. T. Šargarepa ili osećaj krivice (*The Carrot or the Feeling of Guilt*), *Blic*, June 18, 2006.

region as well as Serbia and, in spite of the suspension of negotiations, to keep the door open for the process of association and for the EU to have widely conceived efforts to find a solution for Serbia. The "Package Plus" represents a significant part of a financial plan by the Ministry of finance, with Mladen Dinkić at its head, and it was used, in direct contact with Brussels and the European Commissioner for Enlargement, Olli Ren, on September 14<sup>th</sup>, to ask the EU to intervene and help by lobbying in the Paris Club of creditors to write off a billion Euros of Serbia's remaining debt, and that the Government of Serbia is obliged to invest that amount in regional infrastructural projects (first of all into the building of Corridor 10), which is in harmony with the EU decisions mentioned from the June of 2006 and the Thessalonica agenda from 2003. The Package Plus represents not just an important initiative of economic diplomacy, but more of political diplomacy, since it is questioning, over an important financial issue, a much more important possibility for the extension of negotiation with the Government of Serbia during the autumn of 2006. Further on, the "Package Plus" or the "Plan Plus" predicts and demands a gradual suspension of the visa regime (it envisages a direct exemption from visas for science workers and students, and gradually for wide groups of citizens, as well as the abolition of visa payments). Thereafter it also estimates the possibility for Serbia to use the resources from the EU pre-accession funds for improving investment plans and, with that, for improving the employment process. As strategically most important, the "Package Plus" predicts support to accelerate the process of putting Serbia on the list of candidates for membership into the EU (for candidacy in 2008).

It could be said that the moment for the initiation of the "Package Plus" was either well chosen or even agreed with the EU; certainly it was well chosen in the sense of fitting the proclaimed intentions of the EU "to help Serbia in the moment when it is facing great challenges". It could be interpreted that the EU is aware of the importance of Serbia's stability for the greater stability in the region and of Europe; that the EU wants to push Serbia on the road of signing the SAP (with the assumption of more convincing and, finally, more successful cooperation with The Hague). Perhaps the EU has sent signals to the authorities in Serbia that the "loosing" solution of Kosovo's status could be compensated by "the winning" acceleration in the process of putting Serbia (and Kosovo?) on the list of candidates for membership in the EU. Supposing this politically wise and productive approach (the approach of "showing the carrot" brought to its maximum) would contribute to the relativity of border issues and the amortization of negative political reactions in Serbia because of the loss of sovereignty over Kosovo, then it would contribute to strengthening the pro-European and democratic orientation in Serbia, faster economic development and political consolidation. By doing so, it could contribute to even better control of the political processes in Serbia and the region from a joined European political and security point of view (Common Foreign and Security Policy, CFSP).

## Conclusions

The European Union's strategy towards the Western Balkans and its implementation are put in the context of the current situation of the EU suspended negotiations with Serbia regarding stabilization and association, due to uncompleted commitments of Serbia toward the Hague Tribunal and the non-extradition of Ratko Mladić.

The recommendation referring to EU strategy is – in the interest of stability in Europe and especially in the Western Balkans – that the EU should help the recovery of the economy of Serbia more extensively and systematically. Furthermore, the EU should also contribute to the political consolidation of the democratic process through Serbia's economy, and, most importantly, it should articulate "a shortcut strategy" i.e. a rapid and extraordinary procedure of favorable accession of Serbia and the Western Balkan region in its frame.

Therefore, when the European policy towards Serbia is in question, regarding the process of stabilization and association, it would be advisable to replace the used security-type of approach with an economic and social recovery approach, which would mean focusing less on the problems of territories and sovereignty (together with weakening borders) and more on the quality of life and economic prosperity – as these are important counterweights to the danger of reviving conflicts on the ethno-nationalist basis, as well as of the growth of right extremism and fascist retrograde ideas and movements.

Different aspects of the readiness and capability of Serbia for the integrative process, in other words, for democratic reforms from which they only come out, must be put in the context of the democratic deficit in Serbian society and the state. Institutional changes in the field of economy, justice, state administration, the system of security as well as legislative reforms are in progress and they present a significant potential and unavoidable factor in the process of integration, whenever it is in action. However, legal-institutional reforms are necessary but not sufficient (nor formally or essentially) prerequisites for the EU's integrative process. The biggest obstacles are located in the field of authoritarian political culture based on the cumulative effect of communist heritage and nationalism and a dominant system of values (there is at stake the contamination of citizens' value orientation, under the influence of the destructive impact of wars and impoverishment, and re-traditionalization, re-patriarchalization and clericalization). In short, under the influence of a long-term and deep process of destruction of society and because of the lack of a united and consistent political will to stop Serbia's retrograde process and to strongly support the process of consolidation of democracy, it has come to the crisis of democratization of Serbia and its European integration.



Serbia is, from a short-term and long term perspective, the Western Balkan country where we cannot be certain of what will happen to its projected European integration. Serbia risks throwing itself totally out of these processes and becoming a “black hole”, isolated from the context of European integration, with immeasurably destructive economic, political, social and cultural consequences. The EU has, over the past years, most often responded with restrictive methods using “the stick” and more rarely with the rewarding method by “offering the carrot” to all negative political responses from Serbia (the lack of its political will to fulfill SAP demands completely, including the cooperation with the International Tribunal for War Crimes). The culmination of a restrictive (security) approach would be the recognition of Kosovo independence without the adoption of a strategy for rapid process of integration of Serbia (and Kosovo) into the EU. A balanced approach would certainly be one that would offer the mentioned rapid admission of Serbia into the EU and other international organizations.

The strong political determination of Europe and the “wind to Serbia’s back” from the EU for European integration should have been much stronger in order for it to be fruitful. The political will in Serbia should also be more clearly and strongly profiled in order to be productive. There is the threat that the cumulative effect of the two mentioned insufficiently strong and insufficiently profiled political intentions for admission of Serbia into Europe could have turned into a political isolation of a xenophobic Serbia. For Serbia this would mean permanent stagnation and be unsatisfactory in any sense. For Europe however, this would mean the possession of a permanent focus of crises and instability in its geographical and historical space.

The culmination of positive political trends could be possible if the rapid admission of Serbia into Europe and the establishment of a clear and unique democratically profiled government in Serbia went together. The first would mean a solution for Kosovo’s status and the destiny of Serbia inside the geopolitical and cultural space of the EU, the second would mean the formation of a new democratic government with emphasized political consensus about both the meaning of (better) future for Serbia in the XXI century and recognizing the (bad) past of Serbia at the end of the XX century.

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# DEMOCRATIC DEFICITS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS AND PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPEAN INTEGRATION\*

## Summary

*The point of consideration is the relationship between the European Union (EU) and certain South-east European countries (the Western Balkans), with special emphasis placed on the position of Serbia (State Union of Serbia and Montenegro – “SCG”) within it. The main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate deficits in the liberal-democratic transformation of both the state and the developing civil society in the Western Balkan region, and especially Serbia (considered one of the key countries of the Western Balkans – in other words, the country with the most serious problems of state identity, economic and social destruction, but also extremely important for regional security). In a wider sense, the purpose is to emphasise the need to rebuild the war-damaged societies and polities in the Western Balkan region, along with the need to connect the internal consolidation of the democratic system in each country with regional co-operation and security, as well as with the processes of the European integration of all Western Balkan countries.*

*When speaking about European policy on Serbia from the aspect of accelerating Serbian stabilization and association, the security policy approach has to be much more supplemented with economic and social policy recovery (poverty as the basis for ethnic conflicts returning, the rise of the right-wing and militancy), which would mean less focusing on territorial and sovereignty problems (together with a weakening of frontiers) and more on quality of life and economic prosperity as an important counter to ethnic nationalism and the growing right-wing extremism.*

*Similarly as the founders of today's European Union envisaged economic integration as a way of preventing another war in Europe through the step-by-step deepening of integration, the economic recovery of Serbia and Montenegro and the EU integration of the Western Balkans as a whole is of the utmost importance for the peace and stability in Europe.*

*In relation to Serbia itself, it could be concluded that this country is again at a real historical crossroads: either to turn towards a future modern, normal state in Europe or to be pushed backwards and to become an ever more traditionalist, xenophobic, isolated, and prospectless entity. The first presupposition*

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*for a positive solution to this historical dilemma is a well articulated pro-European and pro-reform policy which must be carried out by a reunited democratic block of political parties and social agents and by the urgent focusing – well supported by EU partnership – on the solving of the country's economic and social problems.*

Key words: Western Balkans, SCG, Serbia, SAP, SAA, Feasibility Study, the EU Accession

## 1. Introduction

The point of consideration here is the relationship between the European Union (EU) and certain South-east European countries (the Western Balkans), with special emphasis given to the position of Serbia (the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro – “SCG”) within it.<sup>1</sup> The main purpose of this paper is to demonstrate deficits in the liberal-democratic transformation of both the state and the developing civil society (the civic option) in the Western Balkan region, and especially Serbia (considered one of the key countries of the Western Balkans – in other words, the country with most serious problems of state identity, economic and social destruction, but also extremely important for regional security). In a wider sense, the purpose is to emphasise the need to rebuild the war-damaged societies and polities in the Western Balkan region, along with the need to connect the internal consolidation of the democratic system in each country with regional co-operation and security, as well as with the processes of the European integration of all Western Balkan countries.

To meet these objectives, the analysis in Section I will focus on the genesis and present relations between the EU and Western Balkan countries, by considering the regional approach and comparative view of the actual prospects of European integration of each Western Balkan country. An attempt will be made to explain some reasons underlying the different transitional capacities followed proportionally by different phases on the road towards European integration.

Section II summarises the obstacles facing the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and especially Serbia, in its moves towards both internal political democratization and integration with the European community.

1 In most documents these countries are labelled the “Western Balkans” in order to express the difference between the rest of the geographical region of South-eastern Europe (considered more advanced in its European integration efforts: Romania and Bulgaria), or the rest of the Balkans (Romania, Bulgaria, plus Turkey) and the countries that used to form the area of the former SFRY (excluding Slovenia), and Albania. See: “Opening up new perspective for South-Eastern Europe – Stabilization and Association Process”, European Commission, Brussels 2000.

Up to 1996, in its documents related to these countries the EU used the term “certain countries in South-Eastern Europe”. See *Bulletin of the EU*, 1997/4, pp. 132-144.

*Section I***European Union Policy on the Western Balkans**

A regional approach and the approach involving integration with the European Union and NATO and other international legal, economic and security associations provides an advantage over the nation-state framework of analysis due to the facts that: 1. trends of integration are dominant on a global scale; 2. the Western Balkans include the transitional countries of the previous "real-socialism" in Central and Eastern (also South-eastern) Europe; 3. the merits of transition can and have been measured, relatively speaking, objectively through different parameters such as: free market economy, electoral processes, governance, constitutional, legislative and judicial framework, corruption, independent media, development of civil society; 4. an approach that encompasses regional co-operation is relevant in terms of the legacy of the wars and the need for peaceful reconciliation and regional security.

After the break-up of the Soviet Empire in 1989, Central and Eastern European ("CEE") countries declared Euro-Atlantic integration to be within their strategic foreign policy priorities. The EU defined at the Copenhagen Summit (1993) the criteria that need to be fulfilled in order for any Eastern enlargement to occur successfully without endangering the EU's own substance. In this context, the EU offered regular procedures – starting from economic reforms and then political ones – along with financial and general support for CEE countries to enter and carry out integration processes.

However, in the case of South-east European countries ("SEE") the extremely bad political and economic conditions did not allow the application of such general rules and procedures. Principally, integration with the EU starts from economic processes, followed by political ones. However, the main problem in the Balkans have been concerned with security issues which cannot be properly managed by economic instruments. Therefore, the EU classified these countries into different groups and defined specific and gradual accession procedures. In relation to general economic efficacy and political preparedness of all SEE candidate countries, the EU divided them into: 1) advanced countries (Slovenia, Hungary); 2) promising countries (Romania and Bulgaria); 3) countries embraced by the EU's regional approach (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia ("FYROM"), the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – ("FRY"), since March 2001 – the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro ("SCG")); and 4) Turkey which is associated with the EU through a bilateral customs union. Therefore, the SEE region is very heterogeneous in its structure given the international position of the countries concerned as well as the region's economic dimensions. Political classification and economic differentiation are the reasons for "extracting" the "Western Balkans" region out from the rest of the region of South-eastern Europe in terms of the EU's approach.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Ilić, G. *European Union Policy towards Western Balkans and the Position of Serbia*, Belgrade: Institute G17, 2002.

EU policy on the Western Balkans is primarily based on a security approach, which means the EU is trying to prevent conflicts and ethnic rivalry in the Balkans. The regime change of 1989 was followed by the transformation of a power balance in international relations. The bloody break-up of the former Yugoslavia demonstrated the inefficiency of the old international mechanisms for maintaining international peace and security. The Yugoslav wars demonstrated the EU's inability to coherently implement its common foreign and security policy (CFSP) established in legal terms in the Maastricht Treaty (1993). Therefore, the EU left the final solution of the crisis up to the US, as well as other international organizations such as NATO, the UN and the OSCE.<sup>3</sup>

The Western Balkans region is a working term for the countries of ex-Yugoslavia (excluding Slovenia), plus Albania. It encompasses Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia, and Albania. These countries have represented the least integrated part of Europe and their common treatment stems from the EU's intentions during the last few years to contribute to the stability of this region with its regional approach (stigmatized by the wars of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and mostly being distant from both liberal-democratic internal transformation and the processes of European integration).

The rest of the Balkan region – in spite of the many economic, political, and cultural obstacles – has enjoyed an open path towards European integration. Special features of the Western Balkans countries are connected with the abovementioned wars from 1991 to 1999, the still unresolved questions of territorial identity and state sovereignty (Serbia, Montenegro, SCG, the status of Kosovo relative to Serbia and concerning SCG, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the status of the “Republic Srpska” within it, the weak national consolidation of Macedonia and the territorial aspirations of Albanians in Macedonia). This is a region in which there is a latent or actual collision between desires to realise state sovereignty on one side, and European integration on the other. Besides the ad-hoc political arrangements which characterise a great part of the Western Balkans, the European Union has been faced with the abovementioned unstandard agenda of integration. Contrary to the EU's official arrangements with Central European countries, and with Romania and Bulgaria as Balkan countries, the contracts that should be signed with Western Balkan political entities have been articulated conditionally in the sense they presuppose success in both the political stabilization of each particular country and success in their mutual co-operation.

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3 “As it was shown during the wars in former Yugoslavia, the EU could not efficiently perform crisis-management policy in its courtyard without outstanding help of the US nor could it implement a coherent CFSP in that case. Some authors find CFSP deficiency causes exactly in its decision-making procedures, i.e. in intergovernmental character that is similar to classic international organization decision-making. Consensus in the European Council which decides on CFSP general guidelines and common strategies proves this thesis:’ (*ibid*, p. 11)

The EU's policy on the Western Balkans has developed from an EU Regional Approach (Luxembourg 1997) to a much more positive policy framed as the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP-2000) and the proposed Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA), which offer better long-term prospects of future EU membership for the countries concerned. This is achieved through adjustment and approximation in line with European (EU) standards and norms, while also time initiating a process of regional integration. The "Europeanization" of the Balkans and of Serbia includes the economic, legal and social preparation of the countries involved for their EU accession once they satisfy the "Copenhagen criteria" (June 1993). These criteria encompass the rule of law, democracy, strong institutions, human and minority rights protection, and a market economy capable of resisting competition pressure within the EU's internal market. Besides, EU membership also involves the ability of a relevant country to take on membership obligations, including the acceptance of economic-monetary and political union aims. The "Copenhagen criteria" are supplemented by the regional co-operation schemes and by the internal relevant legislation test.<sup>4</sup>

In the first phase of the Stabilization and Association process (SAP), the EU foresees a process that is to lead to the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA)<sup>5</sup> between the EU and individual Balkan countries, becoming the general framework of their economic and all encompassing transformation within the SA process. The opening of negotiations between the EU and a particular Balkan country depends on the respect of the relevant political and economic conditions by the country concerned. Consultative task forces between the EU and concerned Balkan countries have been formed with the idea of giving guidelines for the governments of these countries in their approach to EU standards and in their harmonization of national legal systems with EU regulations. After the EU estimates that a particular country has fulfilled the EU criteria, the positive "Feasibility Report" (by the EU Commission) marks the beginning of the SAA negotiations. Un-

4 Ilić, G. *op. cit.*, p. 35.

5 The Stabilization and Association Agreements represent the bilateral dimension of EU measures for Western Balkan countries that is contained in the SA process and is linked with respect for key democratic principles and the crucial elements of the EU's single market (i.e. the four freedoms: goods, capital, services, and labour) in each of these countries. Effective implementation of the SAA as a legal framework in each Balkan country is a *conditio sine qua non* for assessment of the country's accession prospects by the EU and for economic reintegration with Europe. In terms of economic stabilization, the SAAs promote market economy principles and, in terms of political stabilization, they regulate several different fields of co-operation, such as: political dialogue, regional co-operation, free capital circulation, free movement of labour, freedom of establishment, freedom of providing services, free movement of goods, law harmonization and implementation, justice and home affairs co-operation, co-operation policy, financial co-operation and institutional framework with general principles in the preamble. The aim of SAAs is to prepare the countries concerned for their future accession, including necessary legal harmonization/coordination with the EU's rules and standards. It is especially important that the SA agreement contains the evolutionary clause leading to "status of potential candidate" (see: *ibid*, pp. 37-38).



less the EU judges that the political conditions have been met and the country would have the institutional capacity, using EU aid, to implement its commitments under the agreement, the negotiations will not start. Negotiations over signing a bilateral SAA with the EU are focused on the EU's evaluation of the state of play related to the transition process in each SEE country. As mentioned, these SAAs, although offering real EU-integration prospects, rest on the EU's conditionality principles. Consequently, the EU's evaluation is based on strictly defined conditionality criteria that are to be fulfilled with the view of having a formal association with the EU.

There are differences between these countries concerning the measure of distance from/closeness to the EU and, in that sense, Macedonia and especially Croatia belong ever less to the Western Balkans. Namely, a month ago Croatia received a positive EU opinion to its candidacy for EU membership and it may be expected to obtain the "status of a potential candidate" like Romania and Bulgaria, even though Croatia's SAA has not been ratified by all European countries yet. On the other hand, Macedonia's SAA came into effect in April 2004 and Macedonia has already applied for membership status and had the chance to follow Croatia's path (as well as the path of Romania and Bulgaria). Bosnia's "Feasibility Study" – the first step in estimating the quality of reforms and accommodation of the European standards – was accepted by the EU and it got the chance to start negotiations on making the Agreement on Stabilization and Association, although in its case there are enormous obstacles concerned with territorial, political, legal, institutional and state-identity problems. Albania has been negotiating for a year and half on signing the SAA.

The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro ("SCG") is the most distant from the Stabilization and Association process. The SAP was officially opened with the Consultative Task Force's (CTF) expert meetings in 2001 and 2002 for the FR of Yugoslavia. During the CTF meetings expert discussions focused on various sector reforms and ways of making them EU-compatible. Nevertheless, the internal political confusion caused by the unresolved issue of Serbian-Montenegrin relations within the state union, and the absence of any genuine co-operation with the Hague Tribunal has significantly postponed even the European Commission's positive report on the "Feasibility Study". Only on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2005, Serbia-Montenegro received a positive assessment of the Feasibility Study for concluding the stabilization and association agreement with the EU. In addition, there is no consensus between the member state governments at the level of the state union of SCG on European integration. The Serbian Government did not accept the "Draft National Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for SCG's EU Accession" until June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

The European Commission's third annual report on the Western Balkans included Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, without Croatia.

According to the poor results of the Balkan region's EU integration till now, the programm offered by the SAA, or, in a wider sense, the SAP, has not



proven very successful. A dispute arose as to whether the instruments for the political and economic linking with the EU – offered through the bilateral system of SAA within the SAP – are efficient enough to ensure the political stability of the region.<sup>6</sup>

Strict conditionality has been shown to be an insufficiently productive approach to EU integration in the case of Western Balkan countries, especially those with serious political, economic and stability problems like SCG, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EU's primarily security approach to the Western Balkans has been endangered by developments on site – the very slow implementation of the SAA and the SAP, as well as conflictory situations still on the agenda concerning Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The more balanced/partnership-like and less conditioned (less asymmetrical) EU approach to the unstable, economically and politically under-developed region of the Western Balkans has been the task on the agenda. This asymmetrical strategy did not yield the results promised and was criticized by the countries of the Western Balkans. To complement this, there is pressure on the EU to develop further incentive measures and conflict-prevention (together with crisis management) activities as a supplementary segment of the Stabilization and Association Process, i.e. to improve its Common Foreign and Security Policy (EU CFSP) in this respect.<sup>7</sup> According to decisions at the EU conference in Thessalonica held in June 2003, all of these countries will receive from this year an "Offer for Partnership", which is envisioned as a new stimulative instrument for hastening the process of accommodation of each of them individually to European standards. This will be followed by financial support for specific projects and for reforming particular fields.<sup>8</sup>

However, the regional approach is still dominantly applied to SCG (including Kosovo), while there is more and more of a bilateral approach concerning the other countries of the Western Balkans. The reason for the ongoing regional approach reflects the still acute stability problem – concerning the unresolved mutual relations of Serbia and Montenegro within SCG and

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6 Specifically, the case of the FYR of Macedonia in the second half of 2001, with which in April 2001 the EU concluded the first SA agreement in the region; despite its internal fierce conflict, the FYR of Macedonia illustrates trends opposite to the desired economic prosperity and stability in the region. In short, even the highest stage in the SA process, i.e. the fact that Macedonia was the first to enter into an SA agreement, did not prevent subsequent internal conflict nor did it contribute to stability in the region.

7 See: Ilić, G. *op. cit.*, p. 40

8 The particular "Offers for Partnership" aim at greater EU support for these countries. These "partnership contracts" presuppose concrete short- and long-term measures and actions which have to be implemented on the side of these countries while, the EU has the obligation to engage more technical and financial support for their realization. Still, the stress is on the individual efforts and the goodwill within these countries to do their best in the given context. These "Offers for Partnership" might also contribute to diminishing the asymmetry between insisting on a regional approach without paying enough attention to the internal democratization, and especially economic stabilization of each country, and to a bilateral approach in order to solve the particular problems of each country.

especially concerning Kosovo. In addition, Serbia and Montenegro have done the least in terms of institutional, legal, political, economic, cultural transformation and accommodations.<sup>9</sup>

### Reasons for Different Transitional Capacities

In an attempt to explain some of the reasons for the different transitional capacities followed by different phases on the road towards internal democratization and European integration, the following will be considered: a) the interconnection between cultural/historical legacies and transitional effects in Central and Eastern Europe (including South-eastern Europe, and the Western Balkans); b) the heritage of “real-socialism” and its impact; c) the destiny of the “real-socialist” federations; and d) specific features of the ex-Yugoslav political space and the legacy of its wars.

a) *Legacies and transitional effects.* In exploring this relationship, I rely on the analysis offered by Steve Pejovich.<sup>10</sup> I start from the presupposition that, since the culture of individualism is a Western phenomenon, the results of institutional restructuring should correlate with the extent of Western influence in these countries.<sup>11</sup> Pejovich emphasized on the relationship between a country’s achievements in development of a free market economy and its prevailing cultural heredity, with the main conclusion that the transitional costs of implementing the new rules in institutional economic framework were proportionally higher and institutional change leading towards a free market economy was lower where the dominant cultural models were less individualistic, i.e. less influenced by the Western culture of individualism.<sup>12</sup> He used the Heritage Index which ranks countries only in terms of economic freedoms. However, his interactive and comparative approach can be applied more generally to transitional results as a whole. Namely, his analyses will be combined here

9 However, the same fact could be taken as an argument for the counter-strategy, i.e. for a greater insisting on the bilateral approach to Serbia and Montenegro. This means that much more attention should have been paid by the European Union to solving the specific problems (economic, social, political) of Serbia and Montenegro. This could have been in the interest of not only Serbia and Montenegro but the European Union itself. Security problems might have been better solved with the suggested counter-strategy.

10 Pejovich, S., *The Uneven Results of Institutional Changes in Central and Eastern Europe: The Role of Culture*, prepared for the conference *Justice and Global Politics*, Bowling Green University, October 21-24, 2004.

11 See *ibid.*, p. 11

12 “The relationship between new formal rules and the prevailing informal rules, the interaction thesis, can be summarized as follows: When members of the community perceive the consequences of new formal rules to be in conflict with their prevailing culture, the transaction costs of integrating those rules into the institutional framework will be high, consume more resources, and reduce the production of wealth. And when members of the community perceive the consequences of new formal rules to be in harmony with their prevailing culture, the transaction costs of integrating those rules into the institutional framework will be low, consume fewer resources, and increase the production of wealth.” (*ibid.*, p. 5)

with Freedom House's comparative scores of democratic changes in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), including the Western Balkans.

Speaking about the cultural commonalities of CEE countries, Pejovich concludes: "The prevailing culture in C&EE has a bias toward collectivism, egalitarianism, and shared values. The community on C&EE tends to be seen as an organic whole in which individuals are expected to subordinate their private ends to the pursuit of common values (whoever defines them). Predictably, the extended family plays an important role in most C&EE countries... Analysis suggests that in the early 1990s, the prevailing culture in C&EE was not in tune with the behavioral incentives of the basic formal institutions of capitalism. This means that the conflict between the behavioral incentives of the institutions of capitalism and the prevailing culture in C&EE creates transaction costs *specific to the process of transition*."<sup>13</sup>

Further on, he remarks that while egalitarianism and collectivism have been important common traits in CEE, the prevailing culture in the region is not homogenous. "The culture of collectivism and egalitarianism gets stronger the farther east and southeast one travels."<sup>14</sup>

Pejovich takes into consideration the impacts of the different cultural heredities ("heterogeneity of informal rules") of three empires: Austro-Hungarian, Russian, Ottoman; three religions: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Islam, as well as the impact of "the internal strength of ethnicity and/or nationalism".

Those countries which belonged to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy or had strong relations with the West had lower transitional costs, bigger success on their paths towards a free market economy and liberal-democratic order, as well as lower cultural obstacles for accepting new behavioural models. However, this could not be said for the domains of the Russian Empire (that had a strong presence of egalitarianism and collectivism) and the Ottoman Empire (where "the idea of immorality of charging interest and the absence of the concept of legal personality, still prevalent in many Islamic countries, have influenced the development of both formal and informal rules in the areas that used to be controlled by the Ottoman Empire").<sup>15</sup>

In order to clarify the interaction between cultural heredity and transitional results, the author divides CEE countries into two groups: those that have had more cultural and political interactions with the West, and those that have had less or none.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 9-10

<sup>14</sup> Pejovich offers the following general conclusion: "The prevailing culture in C&EE not being homogenous, the transaction costs of transition differ from one country to another. And those differences in transaction costs translate into different transition results. Since the culture of individualism is a Western phenomenon, this analysis suggests that the results of institutional restructuring should correlate with the extent of Western influence in C&EE. To verify this proposition, we can divide C&EE countries into two groups: those that have had more cultural and political interactions with the west, and those that have had less or none." (*ibid*, p. 11).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9

The first group of countries (which experienced much bigger Western influence) includes: Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia (as member states of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), Poland (according to the Catholic Church's mediation in implementing Western culture), and the Baltic states (through religious and trade contacts).<sup>16</sup>

The second group includes those countries which experienced much less Western influence thanks to Russian self-isolation (except during the brief rule of Peter the Great) and the anti-Western orientation of Eastern Orthodox churches (in Russia, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belarus, Greece, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Montenegro), as well as the Ottoman Empire's influence in the Balkans.<sup>17</sup>

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16 The Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia used to be part of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The monarchy was short on democracy but strong on the rule of law and the enforcement of property rights. It is reasonable to expect that the prevailing informal rules in those countries have retained memories of the rule of law and individual rights. Western culture entered Poland via the Catholic Church. In addition to playing a major role in the development of informal rules in that country, the church also helped the Poles preserve their customs and traditions during several periods of Russian aggression (including the post-World War II years). For centuries, the Baltic States maintained strong contacts with merchants from Germany, Sweden and Finland. Christianity arrived in the Baltic States from the West. Estonia and Latvia have become predominantly Lutheran, while Lithuania is Roman Catholic. Through religious and trade contacts, Western culture contributed to customs and traditions in the Baltic States. (See *ibid.*, p. 11).

17 The specificities and heterogeneity of "the second group" is explained in the following way:

"After a brief rule by Peter the Great, who appreciated the importance of Western culture, the Romanovs chose to isolate the middle and lower classes in Russia from the West. The Russian Orthodox Church played a major role in helping the ruling elite to preserve this cultural isolation of Russia (and the countries dominated by Russia, such as Belarus, Moldavia, and Ukraine) from the West. To say that Eastern Orthodox churches, including the Russian church, have historically shunned the culture of individualism is merely a factual observation, which does not imply a judgment about the worthiness of their religious beliefs and dogmas. As recently as the late 1990s, the Russian church lobbied the state to prohibit or at least restrict the spread of Western influence via Protestant and Catholic churches.

The Ottoman Empire also influenced the development of informal rules in the Balkans. However, two factors limited Turkish influence on local cultures. First, the Turks did not interfere in civil disputes between Christians, which helped to preserve local customs. Second, Christians were obliged to wear distinctive clothing, which, while marking them as second-class citizens, reinforced their ethnic loyalties. Contrary to many local myths, the Ottomans did not repress Christian religious services. In fact, until the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman rule was quite tolerant. ... [The fact that] the Ottomans did not embark on wholesale forcible conversions enabled the Balkan people to maintain their identities into the nineteenth century."

"While maritime trading helped the Greeks (and we could add Montenegrins and Croats living along the Adriatic coast) to learn about other cultures, Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Montenegro had no permanent access to Western culture until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Renaissance and Reformation, new discoveries, classical liberalism, and Adam Smith all had their effects long before those countries opened their borders up to the West. Interactions with the Serbs from the Austro-Hungarian monarchy helped the

TABLE 1.  
Economic Freedom in Central and Eastern Europe  
and the Effects of Prior Western Influence

COUNTRY	ECONOMIC FREEDOM	
Greater Western Influence	2004	1996
Estonia	1.8	2.4
Lithuania	2.2	3.5
Latvia	2.4	3.2
The Czech Republic	2.4	2.3
Slovakia	2.4	3.2
Hungary	2.6	3.0
Slovenia	2.7	3.7
Poland	2.8	3.2
Croatia	3.1	3.5
<i>Average</i>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Lesser Western Influence	2004	1996
Bulgaria	3.1	3.5
Moldova	3.1	3.5
Albania	3.1	3.6
Russia	3.5	3.6
Ukraine	3.5	3.7
Romania	3.7	3.4
Belarus	4.1	3.4
Macedonia	3.0	not rated
Bosnia	3.3	not rated
Serbia and Montenegro	4.2 (2003)	not rated
<i>Average</i>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>

Values are from the Heritage Index scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing the greatest economic freedom.<sup>18</sup>

people of Serbia, for example, to open their first important window to the West only in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.” (*ibid*, pp. 12-13).

- 18 “Table 1 divides C&EE countries into those that were influenced by the West and those that were not. Then, the Heritage Index of Economic Freedom is applied to measure the results of institutional restructuring. Since institutional restructuring is a process rather than an event, the table shows the results of transition in two different years, 1996 and 2004. The Heritage Index scales run from 1 (the best) to 5 (the worst) and separate all

Table 1 "...provides striking evidence in support of the interaction thesis, which says that the conflict between the incentive effects of the formal rules of capitalism and the prevailing culture creates transaction costs specific to the process of transition. From 1996 to 2004, the mean rating of countries influenced by the West improved from 3.08 to 2.41. That is, the memories of Western culture and the rule of law were strong enough to overcome resistance to institutional changes. During the same period, the mean rating of the second group of countries remained almost the same."<sup>19</sup>

Table 2 is the Freedom House *Nations in Transit 2003* (CEE) Democratic Development Rankings (DEM score – Political Democratization, and ROL score – Rule of Law establishment)<sup>20</sup>

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countries into four broad categories of economic freedom: *free* (1.95 or less), *mostly free* (2.00-2.95), *mostly unfree* (3.00-3.95), and *repressed* (4.00 or higher)." (*ibid*, p. 13).

19 *Ibid*. The case of Croatia is exceptional in the abovementioned context.

20 The Freedom House *Nations in Transit* ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level and 7 representing the lowest level of democratic development or progress.

The Freedom House ranking of democratic development is as follows: *consolidated democracies* (1-3), *democracies (some consolidation)* (3-5), *transitional governments* (4-5), *autocracies* (5-6), and *consolidated autocracies* (6-7).

The DEM score (DEMOCRATIZaTION) represents the average of ratings for the electoral process, civil society, independent media, and governance. The ROL (Rule of Law) score means an average of ratings for constitutional, legislative, and judicial framework, plus corruption.

### DEMOCRATIZaTION

**Electoral Process** – examines national executive and legislative elections, the development of multiparty systems, and popular participation in the political process.

**Civil Society** – assesses the growth of nongovernmental organizations, their organizational capacity and financial sustainability, and the legal and political environment in which they function; the development of free trade unions; and interest group participation in the policy process.

**Independent Media** – addresses the legal framework and present state of press freedom, harassment of journalists, editorial independence, the emergence of a financially viable private press, and Internet access for private citizens.

**Governance** – considers the stability of the governmental system; the authority of legislative bodies; decentralization of power; the responsibilities, election and management of local governmental bodies; and legislative and executive transparency.

### RULE OF LAW

**Institutional, Legislative and Judicial Framework** – highlights constitutional reform; human rights protection; criminal code reform; judicial independence; the status of ethnic minority rights; and checks and balances among legislative, executive, and judicial authorities.

**Corruption** – looks at perceptions of corruption in the civil service, the business interests of top policy-makers, laws on financial disclosure and conflict of interest, and anticorruption initiatives.

See: Freedom House *Nations in Transit 2003*, Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, Inc, pp. xi-xii.

Table 2.

	DEM Score	ROL Score
<b>Consolidated Democracies</b>		
Poland	1,63	2,00
Slovenia	1,75	1,88
Hungary	1,81	2,25
Slovakia	1,81	2,63
Lithuania	1,88	2,63
Estonia	1,94	2,13
Latvia	1,94	2,88
The Czech Republic	2,00	3,00
<b>Democracies (Some Consolidation)</b>		
Bulgaria	3,13	3,88
Romania	3,25	4,38
Croatia	3,44	4,50
Serbia and Montenegro	3,50	4,63
Albania	3,94	4,63
Macedonia	3,94	5,00
<b>Transitional Governments or Hybrid Regimes</b>		
Bosnia	4,31	5,00
Moldova	4,38	5,38
Ukraine	4,50	5,13
Armenia	4,69	5,38
Georgia	4,69	5,13
Russia	4,88	5,13
<b>Autocracies</b>		
Azerbaijan	5,31	5,75
Tajikistan	5,50	5,88
Kyrgyzstan	5,63	5,75
<b>Consolidated Autocracies</b>		
Kazakhstan	6,13	6,25
Uzbekistan	6,56	6,25
Belarus	6,63	6,13
Turkmenistan	6,94	6,63



Table 3 is made by combining the mentioned Heritage Index results in 2004 and the FH report in 2003.

Table 3. Prior Western Influence, Economic Freedom, Democratization Ranking (DEM score and ROL score) in CEE

COUNTRY	ECONOMIC FREEDOM	DEMOCRACY Consolidated
<b>Greater Western Influence</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Estonia	1.8	1.63, 2.13
Lithuania	2.2	1.88, 2.63
Latvia	2.4	1.94, 2.88
The Czech Republic	2.4	2.00, 3.00
Slovakia	2.4	1.81, 2.63
Hungary	2.6	1.81, 2.25
Slovenia	2.7	1.75, 1.88
Poland	2.8	1.63, 2.00
Croatia	3.1 mostly unfree	3.44, 4.50 some consolidation
	<b>Economic Freedom (Mostly Unfree)</b>	<b>Democracies (Some Consolidation)</b>
<b>Lesser Western Influence</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Bulgaria	3.1	3.13, 3.88
<i>Moldova</i>	3.1	4.38, 5.38 hybrid regime
Albania	3.1	3.94, 4.63
Russia	3.5	4.88, 5.13 hybrid regime
Ukraine	3.5	4.0, 5.13 hybrid regime
Romania	3.7	3.25, 4.38
Belarus	4.1	6.63, 6.13 consolidated autocracy
		<b>Hybrid Regimes</b>
Macedonia	3.0	3.94, 5.00 (some consolidation)
Bosnia	3.3	4.31, 5.00
Serbia and Montenegro	4.2 (2003)	3.50, 4.63 (some consolidation)

If we want to follow the ranking of CEE countries according to their prior Western influence and their ranking not only in economic terms but also in legal-political democratization, we clearly come to the following conclusion:

1. The transition to a liberal-democratic order was more or less directly proportional to the heritage of prior Western influence.

2. If we want to follow the logic of the Heritage Index scales which run from 1 (the best) to 5 (the worst) and separate all countries into four broad categories of economic freedom: *free* (1.95 or less); *mostly free* (2.00-2.95); *mostly unfree* (3.00-3.95); and *repressed* (4.00 or higher), and to follow the Freedom House's ranking of democratic development: *consolidated democracies* (1-3); *democracies (some consolidation)* (3-5); *transitional governments* (4-5...); *autocracies* (5-6); and *consolidated autocracies* (6-7), we come to the conclusion that most economic and political reforms have occurred in countries marked by greater Western influence, and much less in the countries of the Western Balkans (where economic freedom is ranked as *mostly unfree* (Bulgaria, Albania, Croatia, Romania, Macedonia, and Bosnia) or *repressed* (Serbia and Montenegro), and political democratization is ranked as *some consolidation* (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Macedonia) or *hybrid regimes* (Bosnia). Croatia is the exception because, according to the economic and political criteria, this country is put together with those marked with less of a Western influence.

3. However, this comparison shows that some of these countries, like Serbia and Montenegro and Macedonia, are ranked better according to political reforms rather than economic ones.

4. The main conclusion is that there is a great democratic deficit in all of these countries as in democratic institutions, the development of civil society and overcoming of the problem of corruption.

Table 4 involves a combination of the rank order of Western Balkan countries (plus Bulgaria and Romania) according to their prior Western influence, as given in Table 1, and the results of Freedom House's rating of these countries presented in the *Nations in Transit* Report 2004, in terms of indicators of democratic development – concerning Electoral Processes, Civil Society, Independent Media, Governance, Constitutional, Legislative and Judicial Framework, and Corruption (i.e. without grouping the results into DEM and ROL scores, and which are again measured from 1 (the highest level of democratic development) to 7 (the lowest one)).<sup>21</sup>

21 *Nations in Transit* 2004, FH

The 2004 ratings reflect the period January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003. The Freedom House *Nations in Transit* 2004 report introduces separate ratings for Serbia, Montenegro, and Kosovo in order to provide a clearer picture of processes and conditions in the three different territories, without indicating the FH position regarding the territorial integrity of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, nor indicating the position on Kosovo's future status. The ratings encompass the following countries: Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Table 4. Western Balkan Countries in Transition 2004  
– Democratic Development

2004	Electoral Processes	Civil Society	Independent Media	Governance	Constitutional, Legislative and Judicial Framework	Corruption
Bulgaria	1,75	3,00	3,50	3,75	3,25	4,25
Albania	3,75	3,50	3,75	4,25	4,25	5,25
Croatia	3,25	3,00	3,75	3,75	4,50	4,75
Romania	2,75	2,50	3,75	3,75	4,25	4,50
Macedonia	3,50	3,25	4,25	4,00	4,00	5,00
Bosnia	3,50	3,75	4,25	5,00	4,50	4,75
Serbia	3,50	2,75	3,50	4,00	4,25	5,00
Montenegro	3,50	2,75	3,25	4,00	4,25	5,25
Kosovo	5,25	4,25	5,50	6,00	6,00	6,00
FRY* (2003.)	3,75	2,75	3,25	4,25	4,25	5,00

If we compare Serbia to Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia – being the countries better positioned in respect of European integration – we can conclude that there are no key differences concerning their level of political democratization except for the democratic quality of elections in Bulgaria. Civil society development is scored better in Serbia than in all three of them, there are almost the same results in the case of quality of the media, governance, constitutional, legislative and juridical framework (Bulgaria is somewhat better scored), while Serbia is scored somewhat worse concerning corruption.

This implies that the reasons for Serbia's worse position on the road towards Europe must be sought in other factors. According to the analysis following in Section II, these specific factors could be: the ill-functioning of the State Union SCG, unsatisfactory co-operation with the Hague Tribunal, the lack of a political and national consensus, i.e. the lack of a European spirit (connected with anti-modern tendencies – re-traditionalization, re-patriarchalization, clericalization, and the actual expansive misuse of deep socio-economic problems, value disorientation and political confusion by both the Orthodox Church and extreme right-wing parties, especially the Serbian Radical Party (SRS)

Table 5 involves the same logic as Table 3, but is again applied only to the Western Balkan countries.

Table 5. Prior Western Influence, Economic Freedom, Democratization Ranking (DEM Score and ROL Score) in the Western Balkans

COUNTRY	ECONOMIC FREEDOM 2004	DEMOCRACY DEMs, Rols 2003
<b>Lesser Western Influence</b>	<b>Mostly Unfree</b>	<b>Democracies (Some Consolidation)</b>
Bulgaria	3.1	3.13, 3.88 some consolidation
Albania	3.1	3.94, 4.63 some consolidation
Croatia	3.1	3.44, 4.50 some consolidation
<b>Lesser Western Influence</b>		
Romania	3.7	3.25, 4.38 some consolidation
		<b>Hybrid Regimes</b>
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>
Macedonia	3.0	3.94, 5.00 (some consolidation)
Bosnia	3.3	4.31, 5.00
Serbia and Montenegro	4.2 repressed	3.50, 4.63 (some consolidation)

*b) Legacies of “Real Socialism”.* Concerning the statements that the Western Balkan countries experienced a low level of Western culture and influence of the rule of law, that the prevalent culture in all Western Balkan countries was collectivist and egalitarian up until the 1990s, that all these countries belonged to “real-existing socialism” and almost all of them to the USSR (“Soviet Empire”) up to the 1990s, we must further consider the cultural impact (and impact on the transaction costs of transition) of the communist ideology and its dominance in these countries during a significant part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

We may assume that the merit of the internalization of the communist ideology and building emancipatory capacities of the struggle against authoritarian communist regimes depended on: 1. previous Western culture impacts and memories; 2. features of “real-socialism” in different countries; and 3. the level of openness of the “real-socialist” regime towards the West.

This might be summarized as follows: In countries where Western culture had a bigger previous impact and in which communist rule was more oppressive and imposed, the transitional process went easier and faster. In the SFRY, where communist rule was more internalized and softer, and contemporary Western culture had a greater impact, the transitional process has been much slower and endangered. For the SFRY, contemporary Western influence led to

a certain level of development of the market economy and civil society. Still, the high level of openness of the “real-socialist” regime to the West was, in the case of former Yugoslavia, even counterproductive, especially for Serbia and Montenegro (and all of its parts characterized by a poor historical legacy of Western influence, but also Croatia): socialist ideology was mostly internalized and absorbed the advantages of Western influence, while the seeds of civil society and market economy were not strong enough to counterpose the future ongoing retrograde processes.

The character of the “real-socialist” regime in the CEE countries belonging to the USSR represented a rigid combination of Soviet domination and internal authoritarianism with elements of totalitarian regimes; it was experienced as an imposed, repressive order and there was great animosity towards it among the masses and intellectual elites followed up by the building of a “parallel life” as the seeds of civil society’s development. In 1989, the absence of Soviet military intervention went together with the readiness of the social body and intellectual and political elite to change the communist regime; the old communist nomenclature was ready for co-operation, to accept the new situation and, if possible, for conversion into new political elites. Consequently, there was a positive space for political consensus alongside the new political ideas and transitional processes. Contrary to these countries – in which the communist regime was treated as an occupation – in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), the socialist regime was less dependent on the Soviet Union (especially from 1948 on wards), it was much more internalized thanks to the leading role of partisans and the communist party in the anti-fascist liberation movement during the Second World War, and thanks to the softer character of the political regime in which a lack of political freedom was (relatively successfully) substituted by the freedom to travel, a certain level of freedom to trade and to speech, along with a relatively high living standard and well-protected social and economic rights. As mentioned above, the internalization of socialist ideology and political order was deeper especially in Serbia and Montenegro, which resulted in the victory of the socialist party in these two entities only, even in the first multiparty elections of 1990.

A historical paradox is that the SFRY was closest to European integration in the late 1980s, yet today the ex-YU countries (except for Slovenia) are the furthest away from European integration. This paradox arises due to the war-like disintegration caused by the deep internalization of socialist ideas and practices, the militant Milošević regime in Serbia, the nationalist conversion of communist elites in all the republics, i.e. by relatively easy conversion of the communist egalitarian and authoritarian political culture and politics into nationalist egalitarian and authoritarian political culture and politics, and finally by the insufficiently developed seeds of the civic option and civil society in the common Yugoslav political, cultural and economic sphere.<sup>22</sup>

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22 “Yugoslavia was really more exposed to values of ‘open society’ owing to the character of its political order. So, the first intuition is that political culture in this country was much closer to civilized standards than in other socialist countries. What then, went wrong?

However, another not negligible factor in the bloody disintegration of the SFRY was the poorly developed European common strategy for peace-keeping in Europe. "The bloody break-up of the Former Yugoslavia was obvious proof of an absence of the common EU foreign and security policy and of an inability to implement coherently and effectively the instruments of preventing the outburst of wars in Europe. The ineffective and inadequate common EU reaction and action caused the further improvement of the NATO role in Europe and at the Balkans in the post-bipolar era."<sup>23</sup>

c) The abovementioned consideration has to be further developed from the aspect of either the *peaceful or military break-up of communist regimes in the federal states*. Such a break-up was peaceful in the case of Czechoslovakia, mostly peaceful for the USSR, and war-like in the case of the former SFRY. Consequently, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have recently become EU members, while Slovenia remains the only exception concerning ex-YU countries in this respect. The fact that the ex-YU wars were mostly conducted away from Slovenia is not the sole reason for Slovenia's successful EU accession but it is indeed one of the decisive reasons.

d) *Specific features of the ex-Yugoslav political sphere. Legacies of recent wars.* Speaking of the newly established ex-Yugoslav countries, the common history of living together in the First and Second Yugoslavia over more than

How can we explain the tragic fact that the vast majority of people in what used to be Yugoslavia so easily accepted anti-civilized, retrograde values of extreme nationalism, instead of going for those civilized values that already existed? The answer might be based on two insights. Firstly, a significant number of Yugoslav inhabitants did genuinely accept the offered version of socialism. Its social contract was therefore different from that of the Soviet type societies: the Yugoslav regime was predominantly successful in commanding unforced loyalty. Hence it asked subjects to sincerely accept its ideology, guaranteeing in exchange a wide range of privileges. Consequently, these privileges were widely perceived as products of the regime itself, not as abstract universal values. Secondly, it must be remembered that nationalism was a systemic part of Yugoslav socialist ideology, meaning that nationalist ideology was carefully prepared and structured by the Communist Party throughout its uncontested rule. This peculiar blend of socialist and nationalist ideologies was clearly formalized in the last, 1974, constitution of the socialist Yugoslavia.

Thus, the constitutional framework of nationalist socialism established the basis of the future radical ethnicizing of politics and the politicizing of ethnicity, the ultimate consequence of which was the break-up of the SFRY. Fully liberated by the break-up of Yugoslavia, the ideology of exclusionary ethnic nationalism, based on the "one nation, one culture, one state" triad (Gellner), led to the transformation of national and cultural differences into animosities. Thus, in the post-Yugoslav context, nationalism acted as an instrument for activating and mobilizing the relics of tribalism for political needs and purposes: it revived the simulacrum of the alleged eternal animosities and lent legitimacy to them. This is the background to the so-called tribal nationalism and brutality of the wars on the territory of what used to be socialist Yugoslavia. In the abovementioned context we can look for an explanation (which, of course, would demand a more detailed elaboration) as to why in the former Yugoslavia as well as during its break-up emancipatory potential of social and political life failed to develop and why anti-civilizational extreme nationalism prevailed, the destructiveness of which was expressed in the cruel wars from 1991 to 1999." (See Vujadinović, D. Introduction: Transitional Processes in Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia, in Vujadinović, D. et. al. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Institutional Framework*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2003.)

70 years did influence the development/improvement of egalitarian and authoritarian political culture within the internalization of socialist ideas and practice, and also the acceptance of Western influences in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> Still, each newly established country had its own particular transitional path according to its historical legacy, i.e. the mentioned deeper political culture memories (belonging either to the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman Empire, being more influenced by the West or Russia, having a Catholic, Orthodox Christian, or Muslim religious identity), ethnic composition, geographical and geopolitical position, and especially according to the behaviour of the previous communist political elite in particular cases (for example, the Slovenian communist nomenclature easily converted either into liberal-democratic elite or nationalist elite, Croatian communists converted into leaders of the ethno-nationalist option, Slovenian, Croatian, Macedonian political elite gave priority to the national interest and national sovereignty, Macedonian political elite did their best to peacefully resolve the heated ethnic tensions). In each of these countries the previous communist elite played decisive roles in the transition processes; all of them converted more or less into nationalist political elite. However, some were able to behave responsibly in terms of national interest (contributing to political consensus over transitional processes) and European peace, yet some others were extremely militant (in Serbia for example).

There was a proportional price for the different measures of the capability and the willingness of the political elite to seriously take historical responsibility into account. This implies that the varying capabilities of the newly established countries to assign or not give priority to ethno-nationalism(s) produced essentially different results. Consequently, Slovenia is already in the EU, Croatia and Macedonia (as well as Romania and Bulgaria) – in spite of all the obstacles – are on an open road towards a united Europe, whereas Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina are far away from that road.

As already mentioned, the scores of economic and political democratization do not differ very much between Bulgaria, Romania and the so-called Western Balkan countries. What difference there is emerges from the still open questions of statehood, territories and borders, ethnic relations in multiethnic entities, as well as the consequences of wars concerned with the destruction of society, i.e. destruction of economy, social welfare, education, quality of life, state institutions, followed by criminalization, legal insecurity, the grey econ-

24 During the 1970s and 1980s, some important social changes produced what still could be the seeds of a new “open-to-the-world” political culture, a somewhat modernized everyday life and market-oriented attitude, as well as a modest but not irrelevant human-rights-based sub-culture. Nevertheless, these cultural steps toward modernity and liberal-democratic values, being reluctant and half-hearted, failed to crystallize into a serious opposition to the regime. The bloody break-up of the socialist Yugoslavia can be read as ultimate proof of the impotence of these liberal and modernizing trends and their actors (of course, this is not to deny the decisive role of the communist regime in the break-up). A country regarded as the least undemocratic in the socialist world went to war instead of moving towards a peaceful solution of the relations between federal units and their citizens. (See Vujadinović, D. *ibid.*)



omy, etc.<sup>25</sup> Here we should reiterate the importance of the quality of political elite (elite in general), i.e. of political will to move towards and/or counter the liberal-democratic transition and European integration. Namely, controversies remain in Serbia among political and intellectual elite – in contrast to most of these countries – about the priority of European integration.

## Section II

### Serbia and Montenegro – Democratic Deficits in National Identity, Institutional Framework, and Civil Society Development

All countries of the previous “real-socialism” are more or less on the way to liberal-democratic transformation and integration with the EU despite of the enormous democratic deficits in their economies and polities. Serbia and SCG are still the least involved and the last or most distant from that road. These specific factors already mentioned will be considered more concretely below.

The analysis of the institutional framework from the perspective of constitutional democracy has demonstrated many serious obstacles to democratic consolidation in Serbia and SCG. The rule of law and the separation and balance of political powers have not yet been established in these political communities. Generally speaking, the state union does not function; executive power at the level of the member states dominates, while even now legislative power is in danger of being utilized for particular political interests. Judicial power is still far away from being either formally or actually independent. The social forces that used to support the authoritarian regimes of the recent past and which generated ethno-nationalist and expansionist policies have not been defeated yet. The social basis and political presuppositions of retrograde authoritarian development have not been eliminated. There is the somewhat disturbing prevalence of local versions of so-called “liberal nationalism”, consisting of contradictory ideals of an open society and European integration on one hand, and the preservation of outdated attitudes to the national identity and patriotism on the other. There is also the revival and rise of extreme nationalism; the so-called “liberal nationalism” and extreme nationalism have been playing complementary roles in preventing key political and economic changes. The beginnings of democratization in Serbia and Montenegro do not in themselves guarantee the positive transformation of the existing situation towards a state of “democratic normality”, i.e. successful democratic consolidation neither in these member states nor in the state union SCG.<sup>26</sup>

After the 2000 elections, Serbia started democratic reforms coupled by great support of the population, which acquired a democratic orientation through the more than decade-long resistance against the authoritarian re-

25 See Lazić, M. ed. *Society in Crisis – Yugoslavia in the Early 90s*, Belgrade: Filip Višnjić, 1995.

26 See Vujadinović, D. Introduction, in Vujadinović, D. et al. eds. *op. cit.*, 2003.

gime of Milošević and his militant, war-oriented politics. However, even during the civil protests of 1996/97 and after the democratic change of the regime in 2000, there were good reasons for suspecting the real democratic orientation of certain parties (and individuals) who took part in the victorious coalition called the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS). This is due to the fact that, in the struggle against the Milošević regime, representatives of nationalist and liberal-democratic orientations worked together. Immediately after a democratic regime was established in 2000, it was evident that there was disharmony in the behaviour of different political agents in DOS. The “Liberal nationalist” part of DOS – the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) and its leader Vojislav Koštunica – opted for solutions that led to preventing legal, institutional and general discontinuity from the previous regime. This conflict of interests and political affinities within DOS resulted in its disintegration. The parties emerging from DOS focused primarily on their mutual conflicts, instead of fighting against SRS and SPS (parties representing the previous regime and which have become anti-systemic parties while retaining their anti-reform programs).

It was fatal for democratic change that political parties with a democratic profile (before and after the disintegration of DOS) did not establish a consensus on the clear path of democratic changes from the aspect of legal/political and social/economic discontinuity with the previous regime, and – connected to this – on the optimal path for (re)integration with the EU and the international community. What was fatal for Serbian democratization and Europeanization – in contrast to all other countries of previous “real-socialism” – was that there was no real, full and basic political consensus about the need for a total break with the authoritarian legacy of communism and ethno-nationalism and, simultaneously, about the need for a very clear European orientation of the country.

In short, the lack of a basic consensus on the liberal-democratic transformation of the country divides Serbia from other ex-communist countries and indicates the historical/civilizational immaturity of Serbian political and intellectual elites. As a consequence, it is not only that transitional processes started a whole decade later in Serbia than in other countries in the region, but also that these processes have still not been clearly defined, systemic, well-rooted and guaranteed. In addition, there are open problems of statehood, national identity, territories, and the status of Kosovo (in relation to Serbia and SCG).

Also involved are the four wars in the 1990s in which Serbia mostly played the role of aggressor and lost all of them. Still, this role and consequential responsibility is not acknowledged; there is not enough readiness to face up to the individual and/or collective guilt for war crimes. Accordingly, the European future of Serbia and its prospects of it becoming a normal, well-ordered modern state cannot be guaranteed.

Particularly crucial here is the murder of Zoran Đinđić – the Prime Minister of the first democratic government. The assassination of Đinđić was obviously aimed to stop the reform process and create political destabilization.

Unfortunately, the planners and executors of this murder were able to conduct their aims.

Zoran Đinđić was politically clearly oriented to rapid economic reforms, pro-European politics and a modern Serbia, co-operation with the international community and the Hague Tribunal, and making a radical break from the previous regime. However, the deceleration of economic and political reforms already began in 2002. This happened due to: obstruction created by the departing members of DOS; the many mistakes of the democratic government during the “going forward too fast” period; growing conflicts between democratic agents; poor (or at least insufficient) financial aid of the West for economic recovery; the inefficient international instruments for solving the Kosovo problem; excessive burdens of poverty, corruption, criminalization (inherited from the previous regime); ongoing corruption and misuse of power even among some representatives of the new government; and slow institutional transformation.

To be clear, the institutional presuppositions of the change of political order have not even established yet during the Đinđić government. However, the institutional vacuum was soon relatively successfully substituted by the cohesive energy, extraordinary efforts and international dignity of the government and especially of Đinđić himself. Since his assassination, the reform course has essentially been put at stake. The struggle inside the democratic political body has become predominant and the political agents of the previous regime have acquired a wide space for their reconsolidation and restoration of power. This was followed by their renewed attraction to a greater part of the electoral body.<sup>27</sup>

The political body in Serbia has been extraordinary unstable; namely, voters have changed their political support very frequently.<sup>28</sup> The future ar-

27 After the last parliamentary elections in Serbia in December 2003, it was shown that more than 50% of the electoral body chose the civic option, and 35% chose anti-systemic parties (the extreme right-wing Serbian Radical Party – SRS, Milošević’s Socialist Party of Serbia – SPS), while in the elections in October and December 2000, in which the previous authoritarian regime was turned over democratically, the democratic block of parties had 64.4% of supporters and the undemocratic block had 27.3%. From 2000 to 2003, about 700,000 votes came back to the extreme right (from 322,333 votes to 1,008,074 votes) in the parliamentary elections. We say “came back” because SRS had, in the 1992 parliamentary elections, more than one million supporters, and also more than one million in 1997 (after the break-up of the democratic party coalition “Together” formed during the mass civil protests caused by electoral fraud at the local elections in 1996), and only in the 1995 elections 595,467 votes and the least votes in 2000 (322,333). It is important to bear in mind that SRS also had great support in the presidential elections during the last reform years: in the first unsuccessful presidential elections in 2002, Vojislav Šešelj received around 845,000 votes (Vojislav Koštunica and Miroljub Labus in the second round received respectively 1,123,000 and 995,000 votes), in the second again unsuccessful presidential elections in 2002, Šešelj received 1,063,296 votes (Koštunica – 1,670,000), and in the third (again unsuccessful) elections held in December 2003, the new “rising star” in the SRS – Tomislav Nikolić (in the meantime, the war crimes suspect Vojislav Šešelj departed for the Hague Tribunal) received 1,166,896 votes (the democratic candidate Dragoslav Mićunović received only 894,000).

28 Paradoxically and irrationally, even many voters belonging to national minorities and to the Roma minority voted for SRS in the last parliamentary elections in December 2003.

tication of political options and the better defined behaviour of voters will depend on the maturity of democratic parties and their ability to reunite and to provide positive answers to pressing economic and political problems.

The real question is why voters have returned to supporting right-wing extremists. In a wider and deeper sense, the question is why the reforms have been slowing down and the retrograde processes been ascending.<sup>29</sup>

Responses here can be found among the following factors: institutional changes have been insufficient; economic improvement is very poor; democratic parties mostly fight against each other instead of focusing on the demystification of the extreme right (the extreme right is, oppositely, well organized, disciplined, successful in using social demagogy and the authoritarian/egalitarian social mentality), the social insecurity of endangered social groups has been insufficiently minimized; the privatization process is poorly accepted because people are not prepared for free market competition and risks due to existing irregularities, corruption, the lack of social dialogue and social security for those who have lost their jobs; unrealistic and unfulfilled expectations of people anticipating they would have an immediate improvement of their living conditions and social standard (followed by the dissatisfaction and easy acceptance of social demagogy that says nothing is better than it was during the Milošević regime); the long-lasting breaking up of social institutions, erosion of value systems, spoiling of the people's habits and ways of life, criminalization of the state and society;<sup>30</sup> the tendencies of re-patriarchalization, re-traditionalization and clericalization<sup>31</sup>; people's lack of memory and, further, the forgetfulness and the suppression of memories about the Serbian role in the wars.<sup>32</sup>

29 The analogy with other countries of the previous "real-socialism" – that the reformists lost the first next elections because of unpopular economic and social measures and the socialists again came into power – could not be directly and simply applied to the case of Serbia, as the socialist parties in other transitional countries have become systemic ones, i.e. reformed themselves, and they did not tend to overturn the basic political consensus on the liberal-democratic transformation.

30 The cosmopolitan values of the Enlightenment – which were affirmed, although in a somewhat perverted manner during the SFRY – have been marginalized; in other words, during the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were – together with anti-communism – also neglected and marginalized universal human values (including antifascist ones), and they were substituted to a great extent by the values of ethno-nationalism.

31 Tendencies of re-patriarchalization, re-traditionalization and clericalization, with significant potential for the mystification and abuse of historical memory, are the chief obstacles, or basis for all obstacles, to the development of civil society in Serbia and Montenegro. (See: Vujadinović, D. et. al. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2005, pp. 93-163.

32 Public opinion surveys show that the majority of those polled start accepting the fact that Serbian military and especially para-military forces committed crimes in recent wars. This by rule comes after the public has been confronted with direct proof: for example, with media reports in 2002 on corpses of Albanians found in freezer trucks pulled out from the Danube, and especially with films of the assassination of six young men from Srebrenica presented on Serbian TV programs in June 2005. However, people still try to relativize or belittle these facts by claiming that the "other side" did the same. (See: Golubović, Z.,

Representatives of the democratic option (in party life, public space, the media, education, culture, family) have not paid enough attention to the abovementioned issues. They have also not fully supported the need to confront the mentioned memories and have not sufficiently clearly affirmed and promoted the perspective of European integration. Consequently, too wide a space for clerical and extreme right agents exists to bolster anti-reform, anti-Europe and anti-Hague notions.<sup>33</sup>

The questions of social living conditions and social security have extraordinary importance due to: the burden of long-lasting pauperization<sup>34</sup>; memory of the highly developed social policy and already gained social and economic rights<sup>35</sup> in the SFRY; the lack of attention paid to social questions

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Spasić, I. and Pavičević, Đ. *Politika i svakodnevni život [Politics and Everyday Life]*, Beograd: Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2003, pp. 141-158.)

- 33 "The limiting factors of the democratic transformation both in the legal order and in civil society are multiple: 1. the inherited destroyed and corrupt state, more or less slow reform of political institutions and their harmonization with European legislation, non-autonomous judiciary, dominance of the executive power over the parliament; democratic deficit in the conduct of all political actors reflected, among others, in the absence of political responsibility of parties in power and in the opposition towards the social community and state interests, as well as in the absence of self-awareness of each politician individually as to the significance of responsible and politically correct behaviour; undemocratic internal organization of democratic political parties, reflected in centralistic decision-making and prevalence of the leader principle, failure to establish civilian control over the army and the police, the inherited and continued use of force beyond the law in police and prison system, poor electoral legislation, etc; 2. a society that is destroyed in all vital segments – economy, social policy, culture, media, health care, education, research, university, etc; 3. insufficient distinctness of the civil option within the reform government and among social actors." Vujadinović, D. The Concept of Civil Society in a Contemporary Context, in: Vujadinović, D. et al. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Civil Society and Political Culture*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2005, p. 36.
- 34 "This can be illustrated by the simple fact that the former Yugoslavia's economic capability for association with the EU in 1991 was equal to that of Hungary – measured by criteria of GNP, by degree of privatization and the status of the market economy... Indicators for Serbia and Montenegro in 1990/1991 show that they did not stay much behind some of the EU members, such as Portugal and Spain, although these countries belong to the so-called poor South of the EU. However, closer association between the Community and former Yugoslavia did not happen, but opposite trends (cancellation of the Agreement and cooperation of 1980), due to known political reasons" (Ilić, *op. cit.*, p. 42).
- 35 It is well known that the SFRY was much more open towards the West, and had a softer authoritarian regime (mostly obvious in the fields of the right to free movement, free trade, and free travel). The communist regime in the former Yugoslavia, notwithstanding its overt suppression of political and other civil rights, enabled the vast majority of people to fulfil their economic and social rights, to have a decent standard of living comparable to medium-developed countries, to satisfy not only material needs but also many nonmaterial ones (qualitative standards of living in the field of health, housing, travelling, education, leisure time, etc.). A fairly high level of economic and social security was attained, coupled with an egalitarian ideology, and the regime made use of this as one of the pillars of its legitimacy. A large amount of the population accepted an essentially socialist ideology, more or less voluntarily renounced its individual freedom and initiative in exchange for social and economic security, which were ensured by the socialist type of the state. A state-controlled and a strictly regulated state system of social security that was adopted as the

by the democratic government; the population's lack of memory about the previous regime's role in this pauperization, and the successful social demagoguery of the extreme right as represented by SRS.

In considering the situation of social policy in modern Serbia, we must keep in mind the devastating consequences of the Milošević regime during the 1990s – wars, sanctions, the bombing, economic, social, cultural, spiritual destruction. In addition, we should keep in mind that from 2000 to 2004 the democratic government attempted to improve the devastating situation in social security but fell well short due to the economic crisis and the conflict between the need to move fast and uncompromisingly into the privatization process, to address mass poverty and to resolve the problem of unemployment deriving from privatization. Foreign donations have to some extent been propping up an extraordinary bad situation, but these cannot be a long-lasting solution, while they are in fact becoming ever more scarce.

Generally speaking, former well-equipped and well-developed social services have disappeared, the coffers for social funding are more or less empty, the social security of the people is mostly in danger, poverty has become an extraordinarily more pressing phenomenon, while unemployment has become close to being measured by social pathology. However, social funds in 2000/2002 were completed with foreign donations and the system of taxation and improved state regulation of collecting social funds has started to give initial results of improving the social security of the population. Yet all of this is not enough for avoiding the general social dissatisfaction that has underpinned the acceptance of SRS' social demagoguery.

The point is that the lack of sustainable social policy in modern Serbia might threaten the processes of democratic transition. Namely, the dissatisfaction of a lion's share of the population, mass poverty, and the lack of vision of prosperity contribute to radicalization, moving towards the extreme right, the retrograde processes of ethno-nationalism, xenophobia, self-isolation of the Serbian people, and towards new isolation and possible sanctions from the outside.<sup>36</sup>

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expression of the universal, comprehensive social rights of the "working man". Institutions of social policy and social welfare services were well-developed, well-equipped with a large number of qualified experts, and with a large number of users of social benefits. Although wages were not high, employment was assured with the pension system guaranteeing a safe and relatively comfortable old age. The only right from the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that was denied in the SFRY was the right of the employed to form or become members of trade unions that were not organized by the state. The right to strike was accordingly forbidden (though supplemented by the practice of a "work stoppage"). (See Jovanović, A. and Nedović, S. eds. *Economic and Social Rights in the FR Yugoslavia*, Belgrade: Belgrade Center for Human Rights, 1998.)

36 According to all recently done surveys concerned with sources of dissatisfaction, fears and most relevant problems in Serbia, the biggest percentage of respondents always places economic problems, fears of poverty and low standard of living first. For example, to the question: "What in your opinion are the most important problems which our country faces?", the responses were: 15% – unemployment, 14% – poverty, other economic problems – 15%; internal-political struggles – 9%, the problem of Kosovo – 2%, problems in relations



The social and economic crisis is the most important source of instability in Serbia and Montenegro, together with the question of statehood and national identity, and the lack of political will to accept the Hague Tribunal's legality and legitimacy.

As mentioned, an extremely important factor of the slowing down and preventing of democratic reforms is connected with the character of political culture. Strong elements of authoritarian political culture are inherited from both communist and ethno-nationalist backgrounds, and they have been publicly and officially supported not only during the Milošević regime but also during the first three years of the democratic government and especially after it was replaced with a new one. Elements of re-patriarchalization, re-traditionalization, and clericalization are found in the media, education, culture and family life; in public discourse of political and intellectual elite and the religious elite of the Orthodox Church. All of this, in combination with pauperization and xenophobia, pose serious obstacles to the development of democratic political culture and civil society. Together, this also explains the negative social and political trends seen in Serbia three years after the start of democratic change.

In Serbia there is value confusion and disorientation, the erosion of universal human values and individual rights, coupled with the lack of a clearly pro-modern, pro-European vision.

However, a pro-European vision and pro-reform orientation does exist in some parts of society and even gains very high support in all empirical surveys.

The struggle between pro-reform and pro-European Serbia, on one side, and anti-modern Serbia on the other, is and has been on the agenda.

### Public Opinion in Serbia and Montenegro Concerning European Integration

According to a survey conducted in December 2003<sup>37</sup> more than 80% of the population in the state union of Serbia and Montenegro (82% in Serbia, 83% in Montenegro) want the country to integrate with the European Union. Namely, 82% of respondents in Serbia said they would vote at a referendum for European integration. However, there were fewer positive responses concerning unconditional co-operation with the Hague Tribunal; some indicators show that respondents are not sufficiently aware of the obligations and consequences of the EU integration process. On the other hand, the biggest obstacles to integration are connected with the lack of political will for real

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with the international community, including relations with the Hague Tribunal – 2%. (See: "Minimizing Resistance to Reforms and Integration of Serbia", Center for the Development of Civic Society, Zrenjanin, empirical survey conducted in May 2003).

37 The Institute for Social Sciences and the Movement for European Serbia conducted this survey together in 2004.



unification of the state union SCG and the poor co-operation with the Hague Tribunal.<sup>38</sup>

Concerning statements on the EU, a December 2003 survey<sup>39</sup> shows a substantially positive approach to integration. These are the following indicative responses: EU integration would help our economy (66.7%), more member states mean a more powerful Europe (75.6%), more member states mean more peace and security in Europe (71.1%), it is natural that our country is a member state (73.5%), more member states mean a culturally richer Europe (69.8%), our country's membership would improve the quality of life (66.7%), it would bring about greater influence of our country in Europe (59.4%), our country has a lot to offer to Europe (66.2%), the government is doing what is needed for our country to become a member of the EU (39.9%).

According to a survey also recently carried out in Vojvodina under the title "Minimizing Resistance to Reforms and European Integration in Serbia"<sup>40</sup>, the key obstacles to reforms and the integration of Serbia are the

38 It could be interesting to make a comparison between the abovementioned recent surveys and those that are similar but were conducted 5 years ago (after the NATO bombing).

There was a question concerned with NATO's intervention: 59% chose the answer that the bombing could have been avoided with wiser external politics, while 29% said that it could not be avoided because the West imposed unacceptable conditions.

One question was directly linked to the inclusion of Yugoslavia in the European Union and 77% gave a positive answer, only 6% gave a negative one, while 7% said they did not know.

These results might indicate, first, that most of the population had a modern Western orientation in spite of its negative experience and common feeling of anger and disappointment with NATO's intervention, and in spite of the official propaganda (oriented against the West, insisting on integration with Russia etc.). (See Srećko Mihailović ed. *Public Opinion in Serbia between Disappointment and Hope*, Belgrade: CPA/CPS, 2000)

Another interesting investigation of public opinion was organized in autumn 1999, but this time it was in the field of social psychology or from the aspect of the mental health of the people. Questions were concerned with the way people felt, what they fear... The general conclusion is that negative sentiments dominate the citizens of Serbia. The most common feelings are fear, anxiety and disappointment. Such fear, generally speaking, has been widely distributed, for example, the fear of a civil war is found among 80%, the fear of a lack of food and starvation in no less than 70%.

Questions were also offered that included five indicators (and some additional ones) of anxious and depressive reactions (those expressing somatic, cognitive and emotional aspects). These indicators were: being chronically exhausted and tired, being nervous, feeling fed up with everything, being occupied by dark thoughts. In the results, 21% answered that they felt all of these 5 and similar symptoms frequently or even on a daily basis, and from the aspect of each indicator alone the results were even more dramatic – almost 40% of respondents gave a "positive" answer. (See Dragan Popadić, O mentalnom zdravlju ljudi [On the Mental Health of the People], *Republika* No. 233 16-31, March 2000, pp. 21-28).

The Institute for Social Science in Belgrade investigated public opinion in December 1999 with 2,007 people in the sample. One question was: "Toward whom should Serbia be oriented in its international relations". 43% chose the answer towards the West and acceptance into the European Union; 19% gave the answer: towards an alliance with Russia and Belarus; 17% did not know what to answer, and 3% chose "any integration".

39 The Institute for Social Sciences and the Movement for European Serbia conducted this survey together in 2004.

40 The Center for the Development of Civic Society, Zrenjanin, 2004.

uneducated and poorly qualified workers living in cities, suburbs and villages who feel they would lose out in the transition process. Namely, anti-Europe and anti-reform political agents have mass support among certain social groups. The leading anti-Europe and anti-reform political agents are: representatives of the previous regime's extreme right and extreme left-wing political parties (SRS and SPS), certain army officials, dominant sections in the Serbian Orthodox Church, extreme nationalist intellectual elite, and strong informal centers of economic and military power (the fusion of state and societal crime and corruption). Their mass basis is found amongst ill-educated, older, and less urbanized parts of the population. This is the uncompetitive part of the population – biologically as well as from the aspect of free market demands, and their value orientations can be qualified by calling it a xenophobic-egalitarian syndrome (the common appearance of ethno-nationalism, xenophobia, egalitarianism, and an anti-free market orientation). Important conclusions from analyzing this survey are: there was a mistaken impression that democratic political elite make decisions on reforms while in fact millions of voters have a key role in the reform process; respondents emphasized economic problems while the indicators of nationalism were in stagnation; the process of minimizing resistance to Europe and reforms can only be attained through an extensive media campaign that should be very well tailored to suit the receptive capabilities of the abovementioned target groups.

According to the survey "Serbs and Europe"<sup>41</sup>, there is a discrepancy between cognitive majority support (rational insight into the need and desirability of EU integration) and the negative emotional dimension (suspicion, hesitation, even resistance) caused by UN sanctions, NATO's bombing campaign and the EU policy of "the stick" (without a "carrot"). There is also a discrepancy in citizens' statements between the high level of acceptance and acceptability of European integration as the ultimate aim (a European level of personal and civic liberties, a well-ordered life, social benefits and especially a material standard of living are accepted by all respondents), and a much lower level of acceptance of instrumental aims (which gradually lead to the actualization of the ultimate aim, such as working discipline, readiness for the risks of a free market economy and privatization, concern for environmental problems, acknowledging the rights of minorities and especially marginal groups such as homosexuals, religious sects, etc.).

If over 80% of the population were to vote for EU integration (according to the December 2003 survey), and about 30% or 40% of the electoral body actually voted for anti-democratic and anti-European political options (as in the parliamentary elections held in December 2003), we can obviously speak of a paradoxical phenomena. These controversial indicators imply that there is neither a fixed nationalist, extreme right (anti-European) political body, nor a clear idea of what European integration really means in the sense of obligations concerned with political, economic and value orientation.

41 Bačević, Lj. "Serbs and Europe", The Center for Anti-War Action, 2001.

On the basis of the unstable and still undefined political options within the electoral body in Serbia, it may be concluded that the political body in Serbia remains immature and ill-profiled. Consequently, the greatest responsibility lies on the political, intellectual, media and religious elites to articulate one dominant option. In short, the biggest responsibility is on democratic political parties and democratic individuals in Serbia for promoting the pro-European and pro-reform option, and especially for building institutional and overall mechanisms for it to happen.

### *European Strategy on Serbia Reconsidered*

According to an official EU statement, SCG cannot go forward with European integration without the internal integration of its member states, which presupposes: the finalization of the Constitutional Charter – the coherence of Serbia and Montenegro with the Constitutional Charter of SCG, establishing all institutions of the State Union (for example, a judiciary at the level of the community of states was established a week ago instead of a year or more ago), and finishing an “action plan” for the harmonizing economic relations between the member states. A key complaint by the European Commission regarding Serbia and Montenegro concerns the lack of reform in the field of the judiciary and the police and generally the slow structural changes caused by political struggles. There is also the essential problem of genuine co-operation with the Hague Tribunal.

As mentioned, SCG is the only country in the region not to have signed an agreement with the EU. The European Union has indefinitely postponed work on a “Feasibility Study” (because of the unfinished “action plan” and the lack of co-operation with the Hague Tribunal).

In the short and long-term perspective, SCG is the only state of the Western Balkans where it is totally uncertain what will happen with the European integration project. Serbia (SCG) is running the risk of putting itself totally to one side of the ongoing processes and to be left, or better put – to leave itself, as the “black hole” of Europe with all the disastrous economic, political, social and cultural consequences that it would bring.

According to the European Commission’s third annual report, Serbia and Montenegro hardly achieved anything after its 2000 starting point of democratic reforms and European integration<sup>42</sup>, and it will have to start again to work extremely hard and with full commitment to the project. The European

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42 Chris Paten, European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs visited Serbia and Montenegro in May of 2004 and also spoke on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April in the German parliament about the Western Balkan’s prospects for European integration. His estimation was quite pessimistic for the whole region, but especially for Serbia and Montenegro, for which he explicitly mentioned “the tragic situation” and need to come back to “the spirit of October 5<sup>th</sup> 2000”. This indicates that the institutional reforms in Serbia and Montenegro and in the state union SCG did not go much further than promising democratic changes in October 2000.

community is sending very clear signals that the “way in” is in principal open but not without any real and full effort from inside Serbia and Montenegro. On the other hand, a partnership agreement is planned to be signed with SCG, that would give this country the chance to take part in particular European program in the field of science, education, technology, ecological issues etc. Still, mostly this depends on the concrete fulfillment of the demands for internal reforms, for functional development of the community of states, for regional co-operation, and for a clear commitment to European idea and practice.

The European approach to the Western Balkans, even considered asymmetrical or inefficient, demands each country including Serbia and Montenegro make an effort to do its best systematically, to work hard on the all-encompassing reform processes.

There have been complaints, especially in Montenegro but also not negligibly in Serbia, that responsibility here is not only on the side of Serbia and Montenegro but also on Europe due to its artificial and unrealistic insistence on the unsustainable union of the two states. On the other side, Europe believes the main problem lies in “the lack of political will”.

Indeed, the whole process presupposes the political will within the country to do so, which means a consensus among political elite with a majority support of SCG citizens. However, this simple and clear statement cannot be easily implemented in Serbia and Montenegro. There are many reasons for this: first, there is no consensus among the political elite in Serbia and Montenegro about the state union and, therefore, it becomes almost impossible to fulfill one of the essential demands of the EU; second, there is no full political consensus especially in Serbia on European orientation; third, there is a great value confusion among Serbian citizens with strong retrograde tendencies that mirror and stimulate the conditions of isolation, poverty, dissatisfaction with their quality of life, xenophobia, the lack of memory about the negative consequences of the Milošević regime; and fourth, there are objective problems with national identity, which by definition involve conflictual capacity and the capacity of populism.

Serbia is again at the crossroads of anti- and pro-modern developments. The historical and civilizational responsibility of the Serbian democratic political body arises in this context.

The EU is also responsible for counter-balancing right-wing undemocratic tendencies and agents.

The question is whether Europe will find balanced instruments for pushing Serbia towards real democratic changes from the inside and for giving efficient help to ensure that democratic changes be carried out: otherwise Serbia will be left out of European integration. The second solution for Serbia would see it becoming “black hole” of Europe and Europe being a “fortress” in relation to Serbia and the Western Balkans.

The policy of pressure is demonstrated in the halt of some important parts of the aid policy in February 2002 as the EU's reaction to negative developments in the Serbia-Montenegrin negotiations on the state union's functioning. The same negative reactions are more and more at stake because of the absence of real co-operation with the Hague Tribunal. Of course, this trend could intensify if extreme nationalists win in the presidential elections in June 2004.

This policy of showing "the stick" instead of "dangling the carrot" is planned to contribute to a favorable and stable situation in the state union SCG and Serbia in the absence of any other real political instruments of influence on behalf of the EU. However, it is still uncertain whether this policy can be effective enough or at all in stabilizing the internal political situation in SCG and Serbia. The option "keep them out of the club until they behave themselves" is often visible and seems like showing the face of the "Fortress of Europe" to non-EU countries. There is also an alternative to this EU option, namely: "Let them into the club where we can socialize them". This would be a more open and more generous approach (less conditioned and asymmetrical) of the EU compared to the first one, and would mean less technocratic decision-making in Brussels as a consequence of the EU's own democratic deficit.

It seems that the European reintegration of Serbia encounters not only internal limitations in terms of its internal democratic deficits but also external obstacles such as the EU's restrictive approach and implementation of its strict conditionality policy. The restrictive approach may already have contributed to the rising wave of anti-EU sentiment in the population and hampered the European integration of Serbia. Even more so, the approach of widening and deepening the distance between Europe and Serbia (SCG) could result in importing the problems of regional instability into Europe. A more "generous" and elastic approach would promote the pro-European majority mood in the population, especially if followed by an improvement of economic, social and political life conditions. This approach would mean exporting economic and general stability from the EU to the Western Balkans instead of importing regional instability from the Western Balkans to the EU.<sup>43</sup>

To reiterate, the fact is that the EU has expressed a low level of interest in South-eastern Europe (the Western Balkans) compared with the EU strategy for Central European countries. The EU positively changed its attitude to SEE countries during 2000/2001 by introducing the SA process in 1999/2000.

The Stabilization and Association process, and even "Offers of Partnership", do not by definition mean the final obligation of the EU to accept Western Balkan countries for EU membership. So far they have left most of the responsibility for the stabilization and association efforts to these countries alone (an asymmetrical strategy). Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia already

43 See Ilić, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

have status as candidates, while Turkey and Macedonia are on the way to negotiating this status. However, the rest of the Balkan countries remain in an inferior position.

The real question is: if the EU decided to give candidate status to the other Balkan countries – to those with open questions of territorial and national identity and sovereignty, of ethnic conflicts, and with extreme problems in economic transformation, institution-building, struggling against corruption and criminalization, and towards political stabilization – could the instruments for hastening the processes of stabilization and association be more efficient and receive power from “inside” as well as from “outside”.

## Conclusion

When speaking about European policy on Serbia from the aspect of accelerating Serbian stabilization and association, the security policy approach has to be much more supplemented by economic and social policy recovery, which would mean less focusing on territorial and sovereignty problems and more on the quality of life and economic prosperity as an important counter to ethnic nationalism and growing right-wing extremism.

Similarly as the founders of today's European Union envisaged economic integration as a way of preventing another war in Europe through step-by-step deepening of integration, the economic recovery of Serbia and Montenegro and the Western Balkans as a whole is of the utmost importance.

In relation to Serbia itself, it could be concluded that this country is again at a real historical crossroads: either to turn towards a future modern, normal state in Europe or to be pushed backwards and to become an ever more traditionalist, xenophobic, isolated, and prospectless entity. The first presupposition for a positive solution to this historical dilemma is a well articulated pro-European and pro-reform policy which must be actualized by a reunited democratic bloc of political parties and social agents and by the urgent focusing – well supported by EU partnership – on the solving of the country's economic and social problems.

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## BETWEEN AUTHORITARIANISM AND DEMOCRACY\*

### – Transitional Processes in Serbia, Montenegro, and Croatia –

This book, *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Institutional Framework*, presents the results of the first part of the project: “Institutional Framework, Socio-Economic Transformation, and Political Culture in Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Croatia”.

About three years ago a group of scholars from Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia, under the umbrella of three non-governmental organizations – the Center for Democratic Transition (Belgrade), the Center for Democracy and Human Rights (Podgorica), and the Center for Transition and Civil Society Research (Zagreb) – decided to work together on a comparative analysis of the political, socio-economic and cultural developments in states established after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. In terms of academic goals, value orientations, and, to an important extent, its participants, this project continues the activities of the *Research Network 10 Plus* group, led during the last decade by Professor Milan Podunavac. *Research Network 10 Plus* brought together distinguished scholars from the former Yugoslavia committed to liberal-democratic values and ready to struggle against the then prevalent logic and practice of nationalism, hate and war.<sup>1</sup>

The first part of the project, presented in this volume, aims to compare the institutional frameworks in Serbia and Montenegro (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the FRY) and Croatia. In the next phase, the project will undertake a comprehensive comparative analysis of the position and the role of civil society in these countries. This research will consist of two main parts: analysis of the legal and political framework of these civil societies’ development and analysis of their socio-economic framework. Accordingly, two more volumes will be published to complete the project. The project team also explores the possibility of further expanding the project to encompass other former Yugoslav countries.

The initial intellectual motivation for this endeavor emerged from the idea that, since the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

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\* This text was the introduction for the book: Vujadinović, D., Veljak, L., Goati, V., Pavicević, V. eds. *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy: Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia – Institutional Framework*, Belgrade: CEDET, 2003.

1 Contributions from the *Research Network 10 Plus* project were published in: Skenderović Ćuk, N. and Podunavac, M. eds. *Civil Society in the Countries of Transition*, Subotica: Open University, 1999.

(SFRY) had occurred more than ten years ago, a sufficient amount of time has passed to make a comparative analysis of both the causes of the violent breakdown of the SFRY, and the subsequent social and political developments in post-Yugoslavia. Contributions collected in this volume do not deal specifically with the processes of the breakdown; rather, they are primarily focused on the period after the disintegration. In the preparatory phase of the project, the regional project coordinators (Lino Veljak from Croatia, Vladimir Goati from Serbia, Veselin Pavićević from Montenegro and Dragica Vujadinović as the overall coordinator) worked patiently on the selection of project topics and participants, who then worked together on the articulation of the basic hypotheses of, and the methodological approach to, the project.

The project team started from the assumption that years of separate post-Yugoslav histories have created many distinctive political, social and cultural features in each state, but have also demonstrated their shared political heritage. Life in the first Yugoslavia (1918–1941) and especially the homogenizing role of the communist ideology and regime in the second Yugoslavia (1945–1991), resulted in relatively similar starting positions for the five new states that emerged in 1991–1992. Of course, various geographical entities entered the first Yugoslavia in 1918 with quite different, historically conditioned economic, social, institutional, ethnic, religious, cultural heredity. During more than seven decades of common life, all the Yugoslav nations, cultures and regions underwent processes which generated similar experiences. (The short but traumatic experience of the breakdown of the Yugoslav state during the Second World War should not be forgotten in this context). In the fifties and sixties, the communist nationalization of the means of production, the anti-democratic institutional, political innovations (with their “legal nihilism” that constantly prioritized “socialist revolutionary principles” ahead of adhering to the principle of legality) and permanent ideological mobilization, led to the formation of a specific communist authoritarian political culture, which continued – but also reshaped, strengthened and further developed – the pre-modern, authoritarian-patriarchal heredity. This new political culture was characterized by non-democratic and latent nationalist value orientations and attitudes, being simultaneously combined in a contradictory manner with modern cosmopolitan value orientations and attitudes.

What do the internal contradictions of the socialist political culture in the former Yugoslavia indicate? During the seventies and eighties, some important social changes produced what still could be the seeds of a new “open-to-the-world” political culture, an everyday life that was somewhat modernized and market-oriented attitudes, as well as a modest but not irrelevant human-rights-based sub-culture. Nevertheless, these cultural steps toward modernity and liberal-democratic values, being reluctant and half-hearted, failed to crystallize into a serious opposition to the regime. The bloody breakup of the socialist Yugoslavia can be read as the ultimate proof of the impotence of these liberal and modernizing trends and their actors (of course, this is not to deny the decisive role of the communist regime in the break-up). A

country regarded as the least undemocratic in the socialist world went to war instead of moving towards a peaceful solution for relations between federal units and their citizens.

A short comparison between Yugoslavia and other socialist countries may untie the above paradox. Starting from the preliminary question on the character and autonomous capacities of civil society in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, a fundamental difference between their “real existing socialism”, on the one hand, and Yugoslavia’s on the other, can be identified. Using the insights of some of the most prominent Central-Eastern European dissidents (e.g. Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Vaclav Havel, Janos Kis, Gyorgy Konrad), it can be argued that in Soviet-type societies, especially in the Central Europe of the seventies and eighties, there existed a tacit social contract between the regimes and their subjects. The regimes did not demand that their subjects really subscribe to the official ideology, only that their subjects pretend to have accepted this ideology. Such conditions of collective, state-controlled schizophrenia, in which appearances existed as the main pillar of life together, are possibly best characterized by Havel’s famous phrase “living in a lie.” Since most subjects were under no illusion as to the true nature of the regime, it was possible to start developing an alternative form of social life, a parallel *polis*, or simply “living in truth”. In academic terms, the re-conceptualization of the old, almost forgotten Western concept of “civil society” occurred. Consequentially, with the disappearance of the subjects’ obligation to pretend to take the official ideology seriously, there was a breach of the tacit contract when the Soviet empire suddenly broke up; a developed alternative had already been in place. The experiences of the 1989 regime changes showed that the relevance of this alternative cannot be underestimated in spite of its limited reach at the time of communism. The regimes that had originally aimed at being a complete suppression of individual autonomy fell victim not only to a particular historical context, but also to the autonomous capacity of its subjects to preserve an alternative form of social life as well.

In contrast, as already stated, Yugoslavia was really more exposed to the values of an “open society” owing to the character of its political order. Therein, the first insight is that political culture in this country was much closer to civilized standards than in other socialist countries. What then went wrong? How can we explain the tragic fact that the vast majority of people in what used to be Yugoslavia so easily accepted anti-civilized, retrograde values of extreme nationalism, instead of going for those civilized values that already existed? The answer might be based on two insights. Firstly, a significant number of Yugoslav inhabitants did genuinely accept the offered version of socialism. Its social contract was therefore different from that of Soviet type societies, as the Yugoslav regime was predominantly successful in commanding unforced loyalty. Hence it asked its subjects to sincerely accept its ideology, guaranteeing in exchange a wide range of privileges. Consequently, these privileges had been widely perceived as products of the regime itself,

not as abstract universal values. Secondly, it must be remembered that nationalism was a systemic part of Yugoslav socialist ideology, meaning that nationalist ideology was carefully prepared and structured by the Communist Party throughout its uncontested rule. This peculiar blend of socialist and nationalist ideologies was clearly formalized in the last, 1974, Constitution of the socialist Yugoslavia.

Consequently, nationalism was given free rein to permeate value orientations and political culture. So, it could provisionally be concluded that the civilized values Yugoslavs used to be exposed to, failed to take root in social and political life and did not essentially change the existing authoritarian political culture due to: 1) the appropriation of universal human values by the regime, and their presentation as socialist values; 2) the development of nationalism, which by the time of the crisis and the break-up had already imposed its de-personalizing, collectivist values (compatible with its dominant authoritarian political culture) on an important part of the population.

Thus, the constitutional framework of nationalist socialism established the basis of the future radical ethnicizing of politics and the politicizing of ethnicity, the ultimate consequence of which was the break-up of the SFRY. Fully liberated by the break-up of Yugoslavia, the ideology of exclusionary ethnic nationalism, based on the "one nation, one culture, one state" triad (Gellner), led to the transformation of national and cultural differences into animosities. Thus, in the post-Yugoslav context, nationalism acted as an instrument for activating and mobilizing the relics of tribalism for political needs and purposes: it revived the simulacrum of the alleged eternal animosities and lent legitimacy to them. This is the background of the so-called tribal nationalism and brutality of the wars in the territory of what used to be socialist Yugoslavia. In the above-mentioned context we can look for an explanation (which, of course, would demand more detailed elaboration) as to why, in the former Yugoslavia as well as during its break-up, emancipatory potentials of social and political life failed to develop and why anti-civilizational, extreme nationalism prevailed, the destructiveness of which was expressed in the cruel wars which took place from 1991 to 1999.

All of the above significantly contributed to the contradictory equalizing processes concerned with political, socio-economic and cultural heredity and to the creation of similar starting positions for all states emerging from the collapse of the SFRY. An additional feature common to all these states (except Slovenia) is ethnic and religious heterogeneity. Yet, the states emerging from the SFRY's break-up have experienced – because of the diverse developmental strategies of more than the last ten years, and of the mentioned historically conditioned differences – distinct institutional, political, socio-economic and cultural developments. In this phase of the research, we primarily considered institutional and political dimensions of developments in Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia.

More than ten years of "political history" may be considered a sufficient length of time for research aimed at analyzing the character of the regime

changes in each of the new states and the nature of their transition processes.

Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro are post-communist, “transitional” countries. The states they intend to build during the processes of transition can be identified as constitutional democratic states. Thus, the concept of constitutional democracy (the liberal-democratic order) is used as the main theoretical framework, i.e. in the function of an ideal-type model.

Democratic institutions and multi-party systems were implemented in 1990 in the federal units of the former Yugoslavia. However, political elite successfully blocked attempts to introduce democracy at the level of the federation. The first multi-party elections in each of the federal units ended with victories for nationalist-separatist parties, which marked the beginning of a violent break-up of the SFRY. In Croatia the dominant party became the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), in Serbia the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), and in Montenegro the League of Communists of Montenegro (SK CG) which in 1991 became the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS). The SPS and the DPS were really only the nominally transformed communist parties of Serbia and Montenegro. Therefore, in Serbia and Montenegro the essentially unchanged communist elite continued to rule even after the first multi-party elections, in which communist ideology was replaced with nationalist legitimation and rhetoric. In the case of Croatia, the communist elite had been replaced in 1990 by the new elite emerging from the victorious HDZ. The HDZ was ostensibly a democratic party, characterized by a renunciation of the communist tradition. As a matter of fact, the HDZ represented a conglomerate of very different orientations, strongly dominated by a synthesis between Bolshevik and anti-Communist nationalism.

Following the distinctions that Larry Diamond made between pseudo-democracy, electoral democracy, and liberal democracy<sup>2</sup>, pseudo-democracy was introduced in Serbia and Montenegro in 1990 (the FRY from 1992), and in Croatia after the 1990 elections. For Croatia, one might speak also about an initial step from pseudo-democracy towards electoral democracy with the replacement of the governing political elite after the 1990 elections. In spite of this difference, in all the aforementioned countries there was a vivid deficit of essential elements of constitutional democracy including respect for human rights, mechanisms of limited government, and the division of powers.

In Serbia, the pseudo-democratic order was significantly colored by elements of plebiscitary support for charismatic leadership and personalized state authority, ethno-nationalism and expansionist policy (towards Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Serbia carried the negative political inheritance of Serbian nationalism under the Milošević regime, which was extremely expansionist (the idea of a “Greater Serbia”) and the most responsible for the wars, “ethnic cleansing” and exodus of the people (this does not at all

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2 See Diamond, L. Is the Third Wave Over?, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 7, No 3, July 1996, pp. 20–37.

diminish the responsibility of other protagonists of “ethnic cleansing” whose victims were, for example, the Serbs from Croatia). When the regime in Serbia – especially from the time of the massive civic protests of 1996/97 – faced diminishing popularity, it increasingly resorted to violence against oppositional parties, independent media and non-governmental organizations. Pseudo-democracy degenerated into pure authoritarian order. The true starting point of Serbia’s transition was the replacement of the Milošević regime in the federal elections of September 2000, and the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of October. The October overthrow, based on the opposition’s electoral victory, established electoral democracy in Serbia and opened a historical “window of opportunity” for the further development of a liberal-democratic order.

In Montenegro, up until 1997, the political order shared the character, destiny and responsibility of the Milošević regime. In 1997, an internal division of DPS into the conservative-oriented Socialist People’s Party (SNP) and the reform-oriented Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) generated the foundation for not only the governing political elite’s distancing itself from the official politics of Serbia, but also for starting the process of leaving behind an authoritarian model of governance. Namely, the party which was later on called DPS attempted to transform itself into a modern democratic party with a European and liberal-democratic orientation. The presidential elections in Montenegro, held in 1997, could be considered the defeat of the authoritarian model. Since the presidential candidate of the reformed DPS Milo Đukanović won in these elections, we could speak about the beginning – in Montenegro ahead of Serbia – of the process of peaceful change in political order. The post-1997 governments in Montenegro managed to some extent to develop elements of electoral democracy, but they never succeeded to leave a delegative democracy (O’Donnell) and clientelism completely behind.

In regard to Croatia, there are good reasons for an assessment that – according to specific circumstances of the ethnic mobilization of the titular nation, led by the HDZ and President Tuđman, and in the name of establishing nation-state sovereignty and self-defense during the war in its territory – the pseudo-democratic political order slipped however into a certain kind of authoritarianism. Croatia carried the negative political inheritance of animosity against its ethnic Serbian citizens during the reign of Franjo Tuđman and in the context of its nationalist state policy. The ethno-nationalist and expansionist policy of the Croatian state (which antithetically fused with the ideology and practice of a “Greater Serbia”) manifested itself also in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, though after the Dayton Peace Accord the idea of a “Greater Croatia” was officially abandoned. The overturn of an extreme nationalist regime and the defeat of the HDZ and right-wing political parties in the parliamentary elections of January 2000 generated the foundation for re-establishing electoral democracy and a real transition into liberal democracy.

From the above it can be deduced that specific causes – independent of the different dynamics of transitional processes – led Serbia (the FRY) and Croatia towards similar reversions from pseudo-democracy to authoritari-



anism. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (and especially Serbia within its framework) and Croatia can be treated as post-communist states, facing similar problems of authoritarianism, ethno-nationalism and expansionist policies. Two people embodied these features: Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and Serbian/Yugoslav President Slobodan Milošević. Both presidents were undoubtedly aware of the ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity of their states (as well as of Bosnia and Herzegovina) but were nevertheless devoted to creating homogenous nation-states. Their authoritarian, nationalist and expansionist policies gave an overall advantage to the institutions of "majoritarian democracy" in the states they ruled over. This is particularly evident in their introduction of semi-presidential systems, and in their centralization of all pertinent political authority at the national level. The establishment of the institutions of "majoritarian democracy" in the ethnically diverse societies of Serbia (FRY) and Croatia supported the transformation of "majoritarian democracy" into ethno-nationalism and authoritarianism.

The political changes which Croatia underwent at the beginning of 2000, and the almost unexpected political changes which started in Serbia after the federal elections in September and the republic elections in December of 2000, offer an opportunity to compare their institutional frameworks and political processes. This comparison should also carefully explore some essential differences between the countries analyzed: firstly, the first peaceful change of political order happened in Croatia ten years earlier than in Serbia and seven years earlier than in Montenegro; secondly, Croatia had the experience of war on its own territory and was in a position to defend itself against the Yugoslav army and its aggression; thirdly, the FRY (especially Serbia) was under international economic sanctions for about eight years and experienced the NATO bombardment of 1999; and fourthly, the question of statehood in Serbia, Montenegro, and the FRY is still raw and unresolved, being one of the most serious obstacles to democratic transition and consolidation.

The analysis of institutional framework carried out from the perspective of constitutional democracy has demonstrated that there are many serious obstacles to democratic consolidation in the countries under our scrutiny. The rule of law and the separation and balance of political powers have not been established yet in any of these three political communities. Generally speaking, executive power still dominates, with legislative power even now in danger of being utilized for particular political interests. Judicial power is still far from being either formally or factually autonomous. Social forces which used to support authoritarian regimes of the recent past and which generated ethno-nationalist and expansionist policies have not been defeated yet. The social basis and political presuppositions of retrograde authoritarian development have not yet been eliminated. In addition, both in Serbia and in Croatia the somewhat disturbing prevalence of local versions of so-called "liberal nationalism" actually exists. This idea consists of the contradictory ideals of an open society and European integration, but maintains the preservation of outdated attitudes towards national identity and patriotism. The results of re-



search presented in this book lead to the conclusion that liberal-democratic transformation is still modest in its reach. The beginnings of democratization in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro do not in themselves guarantee a positive transformation of the existing situation towards the state of “democratic normality”, i.e. successful democratic consolidation. Therefore, this is additional explanation for the chosen general title – *Between Authoritarianism and Democracy* – of this book as well as of the next two books in the series.

Since this book presents empirical and normative considerations of “history in the making” that has been developing in fast, turbulent and often contradictory or unpredictable ways, all analyses have inescapably been faced with the danger of becoming “outdated” even before being published. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that articles offered in this volume were finished between January and August 2002. It should also be mentioned that some articles consider the institutional framework of the FRY, some comparatively consider Montenegro and Serbia, while others offer separate analyses of certain institutional solutions in Serbia and Montenegro. Given the extremely special situation of Kosovo, which is both legally and factually under the control of the international community, we have decided not consider this issue here.

The role of the international community in the process of the dissolution of the SFRY, as well as in peace-making during and after the wars in the region, has not perhaps been sufficiently analyzed in this book. A comprehensive exploration of these issues remains the task for our upcoming research. However, a critical exploration of the Stability Pact project is offered. The Pact – a project of the international community – aims for the reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation of the countries of the former Yugoslavia, as well as at the integration of South-Eastern Europe into the European Union.

It should also be kept in mind that in spite of the aforementioned scrupulous and consensual method of articulating basic assumptions, and in spite of assembling a team of liberal-democratic scholars, every vigilant reader will recognize differences in the evaluation of relevant events and processes, with some contributions even including elements of the “liberal national” persuasion. These differences stem from the complexity of recent history and contemporary political processes. They also reflect the different theoretical approaches of the authors. Of course, each author takes responsibility for his/her own approach and contribution to this book.

The book is being published in local languages as well as in English with the hope and belief that it offers – to the professional and general public in Serbia, Croatia, and Montenegro and beyond – a fruitful contribution for the understanding of what, why and how things have happened, and continue to happen today, what the lessons of the past are, and primarily what perspectives are. Starting from both the normative conception and functional imperative for establishing constitutional democracy, these articles also offer specific policy-making suggestions for each subject area.

The whole project represents, as far as we are aware, the first comprehensive multi-national, cross-disciplinary and comparative study of transitional processes in Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. The scholarly findings of this book and the next two books in the series will hopefully bring a better understanding of regional history and politics and will be a practical demonstration of academic cooperation in the region, where the geographical term – the Balkans – has been turned into a sad synonym for the processes that destroy the fundamental norms of civilized life.

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