

SITUATING POPULIST POLITICS: ARTS & MEDIA NEXUS

Series
CULTURE * ARTS * MEDIA
Book no. 31

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This publication is partly result of the research within the project no. 178012 *Identity and memory: trans-cultural texts of dramatic arts and media* of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts that is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia, and research within the COST Action IS1308 *Populist Political Communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics*.

SITUATING POPULIST POLITICS: ARTS & MEDIA NEXUS

Edited by

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CLIO

2019

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Ivan Grubanov: *United dead nations*, installation, acryl, hydrogen peroxide, glycerine and polyurethane on fresh concrete, letters in relief and vintage flags, 25000x800x50cm, 2015.

Photo, courtesy Loock, Berlin & Ron Mandos, Amsterdam.

The subject is condensed in the heavily charged notion of “memorial”. A visual mark, a visual entity made to commemorate and signify an event from the past, a troubling chapter of history, a site of mass atrocities, a historical guilt. But a memorial is always a product of the collective attempting to reconcile. What is then a memorial proposed by an individual, if not an act of rebellion against the existing order of the visible? Painter, an outcast from the global communicative network of images, is pleading for the need to signify memories and traumas in the times when memorials are relics and yet there’s politics of terror performed and executed all over. The painter recognizes something missing, a visibility and an inscription for the omitted. Omitted warfare, omitted victims, and omitted and invisible ways of world making that legitimized the regimes of necropolitics. The omission of violent fissures in the political system from the representative space, according to Ranciere “serves as the operator which allows us to depoliticize the social sphere, to warn against the presumptions of politicization.

Acknowledgment

The Institute for the theatre, film, radio and television of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade had joined international COST action IS 1308: *Populist Political Communication in Europe*, which includes more than 30 academic institutions from 20 countries in Europe. Participation in this project was enabled by the grant of National research project no. 178012 *Identity and memory: trans-cultural texts of dramatic arts and media*. This grant was supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, which has also endorsed financially the International Conference: Media, Democracy, Populism at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts. Our previous successful participation in different COST actions was positively evaluated by the National COST coordinator prof. Bratislav Marinković, PhD to whom we are very grateful for his long-term collaboration and continuous support.

Developing the program of our activities within this COST action, we have established collaboration with colleagues from the Faculty of Political Science in Belgrade (also participants in the COST project), as well as with colleagues from the Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade, who have been researching issues linked to populist communication and political populism for many years. Discussions and analysis of data gained by those research enriched our knowledge and widened our range of interpretations.

Knowing how important it is for researchers to go beyond the frames of academia and discussions within narrow circles, together with our permanent partners: publishing house CLIO and Cultural

Centre of Belgrade, we organized a series of talks and debates in university cities of Serbia: Belgrade, Kragujevac, Niš, Novi Sad and Novi Pazar. Each of these discussions has raised new questions and challenges for the researchers, since they were held in different contexts and in front of varied, always engaged audiences. We are enormously grateful to all partners – to Zoran Hamović and Nataša Đelošević (CLIO), Olivera Stošić Rakić (Cultural Centre of Belgrade) and to guest-participants: Zoran Paunović, Gojko Božović, Maja Vukadinović, Velibor Petković, Muharem Bazdulj, Borka Pavičević, Branislav Dimitrijević, Vladimir Paunović, Đorđe Vlajić, Zoran Lutovac, Slađana Novosel, Sead Biberović, Dubravka Valić Nedeljković, Klara Kranjc, Nevena Krivokapić and Draško Milinović. We hope that all of these discussions will soon be published as a digital research repository, and thus accessible to wider audiences.

The Office for Media of the OSCE Mission in Serbia and the Fond for an Open Society has given great financial and every other support to all programs, and we are enormously grateful for that.

As the professors of Media ethics and other relevant courses about media theory and practices, as well as cultural management and policy, we are indebted to all generations of our undergraduate and doctoral students of Cultural and Media Management, for their contribution in discussions and sharpening the reflection around paradigmatic cases of populism in media and culture. We are especially grateful to all the authors of the studies published in this book, as well as to book reviewers: Hans Vorlander, Josip Rastko Močnik and Branimir Stojković for attentive and responsive reading of the entire manuscript and for raising discussions related to each study.

We are thankful to the artists who offered their artwork unconditionally for use in this book: Zoran Naskovski, Ivan Grubanov, Uroš Đurić, Yael Bartana, Mileta Prodanović, Vokalno-kustoski sindrom, Grupa Škart, Kristina Norman, Dan Perjovschi, Branko Milisković, Saša Stojanović, Lenka Zelenović, Tanja Ostojić... And special remembrance and thanks to the early departed artist Christoph Schlingensief, who introduced critique of populism into the public realm!

Milena Dragičević Šešić and Mirjana Nikolić

Contributors

Marie Cazes is currently a doctoral candidate in the Department of Political Science and Philosophy for the University of Jyväskylä. Her PhD research focuses on the construction of identities by populist parties in Finland and their evolution from the 1960's until nowadays.

Aco Divac, sociologist, London. My educational background is social science (BA in Sociology University of Belgrade). I have worked at the Institute for Cultural Studies Development and Research in Belgrade for ten years in a range of roles. The main task was to conduct empirical research in the sociology of culture; I have published articles on urban sociology and sub culture issues. Recent publications include an article on modern art and museology generated through my participation in a King's College seminar "Towards Tomorrow's Museum". Also I have established a cooperation with Ebart Media Archive (Medijski arhiv Ebart, Beograd) on projects dealing with oral history and cultural memories.

Milena Dragičević Šešić, PhD, former President of University of Arts, Belgrade, now Head of UNESCO Chair in Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation, professor of Cultural Policy & Cultural Management. Guest lecturer at numerous world universities. Cultural Policy expert and trainer (UNESCO, British Council, Al

Mawred al Thakafy, Council of Europe, European Cultural Foundation, Association Marcel Hicter). Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques, 2002 (French Government). Member of National Council for Science and Technology (2006-2010). Research interests comprise cultural policy, cultural management (strategic management, cultural tourism); art activism, alternative art and public space; intercultural dialogue projects; media theory and activism. Published 16 books, more than 150 essays (*Vers les nouvelles politiques culturelles*, *Art management in turbulent times: adaptable quality management*; *Culture: management, animation, marketing*; *Intercultural mediation in the Balkans*; *Neo-folk culture*; *Art and alternative*; *Urban spectacle*; *Horizons of reading*, *Public cultural policies*, *Tourism and culture*, *Media ethics...*) Translated in 17 languages. Contact: msesc@gmail.com.

Aleksandra Krstić, PhD, is Assistant Professor at the Department for Journalism and Communication, the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. Her research focuses on television and journalism studies, the mediatisation of politics and the EU-media relations. She is a member of the research team in the EU-FP7 funded project "Media, Conflict and Democratisation".

Ana Milojević, PhD, is Assistant Professor at the Department for Journalism and Communication, the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. Her research interests are in communication theory, media systems, comparative media systems and populist political communication. She is a member of COST Action IS1308 Populist Political Communication in Europe. She has published in *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, *Comunicar*, *Media Research*.

Dejan Mitov, M.Arch / Graduated with Master's degree from Department of Architecture, Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad and Faculty of Forestry in Belgrade, study program Wood products design. PhD student at the Department of Architecture, where also works as an assistant at the Architectural modelling and related

courses. The area of interest is the use of wood in architecture and urban planning with implementation of modern geometric and technological principles, with particular emphasis on digital fabrication. He is also co-founder of studio Modelart Architects, in which he deals with design and presentation through architectural models.

Nikola Mladenović, PhD Candidate, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences, Media and Cultural Studies. He has an interest in mediatization of politics, critical research of political communication and ideological interpretation of media culture. In Serbia, he is an author of the monograph *Generational Conflict and New Hollywood film*, and articles that critically examine social theory, media culture and political communication. Currently, he has finished writing a dissertation on the process of mediatization in Castells' theory of the network society. Before enrollment in a doctoral programme he worked as a journalist in Serbia's newspaper "Politika".

Monika Mokre, PhD, is a political scientist and senior research associate at the Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. She teaches at various universities, e.g. the Webster University Vienna, the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, and the University of Arts in Belgrade. Her research fields include cultural politics, asylum and migration policies, democracy and the public sphere, and gender politics.

Mirjana Nikolić, PhD, is full time professor at Faculty of Dramatic Arts (FDA) in Belgrade and a vice rector of University of Arts in Belgrade. She was director of the Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television FDA and the editor in chief of the peer review journal *Anthology of Essays of FDA*. The main areas of her interest are Media studies, Management of media and Media ethics. She has published three books: *Ether over Belgrade* (1999), *Radio in Serbia – 1924 – 1941* (2006) and *Broadcasting in Serbia during the Second World War* (2009), over thirty scientific and professional articles for

national and international journals and has been a co-editor of a number of thematic monographs. Contact: nikolicmirjana66@gmail

Miikka Pyykkönen is a professor of cultural policy at the University of Jyväskylä and a docent of sociology at the University of Helsinki. He has published nearly 70 scientific publications, including 25 peer-reviewed articles and 11 monographs and co-edited volumes. His current research interests include cultural policy, creative economy and entrepreneurship, civil society and government, and histories of governance of ethnic minorities. At the moment he is translating Professor Erik Olin Wright's book *Envisioning Real Utopias* in Finnish with the research team on utopian thinking.

Neda Radulović holds a BA in the dramaturgy from University of Arts in Belgrade, as well as the Erasmus Mundus MA in International Performance Research (jointly hosted by the universities of Amsterdam, Belgrade and Warwick). For the past three years she has been working on her PhD thesis, researching the representations of non-human animals and other non-human phenomena in the arts and culture (animal, vegetal and AI performances). She has been writing and presenting papers on such topics as feminist posthumanism, critical animal studies and new materialism regionally (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia) and internationally (Germany, UK, Finland, Poland etc.). She has been working as dramaturg, on projects in Amsterdam (Rast theatre), London (Arcola theatre) and writing for film (*Trolling*, *Passage*), theatre (*Painkillers*, *60 seconds*, *Princess and the pea*), radio (*Ana Del Rey*, *Iron Cross*, *Family picture*); and translated several theatre plays (Naomi Wallace, Steve Tešić, Tim Price).

Strahinja Savić (Belgrade, 1991.) is a film and & TV director, graduated (MFA) at Faculty of Drama Arts, Belgrade. He directed a number of internationally awarded short films. He is currently preparing his first full-length picture. Strahinja is also a PhD student of theory of dramatic arts, culture and media at the same faculty.

For two consecutive years he was the winner of “Dositeja” talents scholarship. Currently he is funded through a scholarship from Serbian Ministry of education, science and technological development for doctoral studies.

Dušan Spasojević, PhD, is assistant professor at Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. He is a researcher at the Center for Democracy and also works with other research and educational institutions in Serbia and the region. His main fields of interest are political parties, populism, social cleavage theory and post communist democratization process. He is currently involved in several research projects including “Balkan Comparative Electoral Study” and “Populist Political Communication in Europe”.

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Danijela Vićentijević, PhD candidate at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts (University of Art in Belgrade), scientific studies of Management culture and the Art. Master’s degree in the field of Cultural Tourism was ended at the University UniAdiron in Bologna (Republic of Italy). Specialist area of knowledge: Organization and Management with practical work within project: “Deutsche Limes Straße” was ended at the European Institute of Tourism at the University in Trier (Republic of Germany). She was graduated at the University in Belgrade Faculty of Economic (Republic of Serbia). She has written several scientific papers in the field of cultural tourism and cultural policy. As an expert for cultural tourism, her research activities are focused on the creation and management of cultural tourism products (cultural tourist routes), culture and tourism policy, as well as, management policies and management tools of cultural heritage as a function of economic and sustainable tourism development.

Susanne Weichselbaumer, PhD. As a journalist at German Public Radio in Munich, I mainly bring science to an audio audience, be it current affairs or longer formats, containing background information. As an author, editor and director I cover all fields from

splitting atoms to explaining nanotechnology or showing the way cockroaches have sex. Next to working at different radio and TV stations in Africa, North and South America, I have been pursuing an academic career. I hold a PhD in German Literature from Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich (Radio plays in the 1950s at Bayerischer Rundfunk). Right now I am finishing my second PhD in politics at Andrásy University, Budapest on “Media Convergence in Public Service Broadcasting in Europe”. (Supported by netPOL – Internationales und Interuniversitäres Netzwerk Politische Kommunikation) As a lecturer for radio journalism I regularly work at the Universities of Passau and Eichstätt.

Artistic contributors

Yael Bartana (born 1970) is an Israeli artist living in Berlin. Her films, installations and photographs explore the imagery of identity and the politics of memory. Her starting point is the national consciousness propagated by her native country, Israel. Central to the work are ceremonies, public rituals and social diversions that are intended to reaffirm the collective identity of the nation state.

In her Israeli projects, Bartana dealt with the impact of war, military rituals and a sense of threat on every-day life. Between 2006 and 2011, she has been working in Poland, creating the trilogy 'And Europe Will Be Stunned', a project on the history of Polish-Jewish relations and its influence on the contemporary Polish identity. The trilogy represented Poland in the 54th International Art Exhibition in Venice (2011).

In recent years Bartana has been experimenting with different mediums and expanding her body of work, presenting projects such as 'Inferno' (2013), a "pre-enactment" of the destruction of the Third Temple in São Paulo, 'True Finn' (2014), that questions the national Finnish identity, 'Simone The Hermetic', a site-based sound installation which takes place in future Jerusalem, and 'Tashlikh' (cast off), a visual meditation that gathers personal objects linked to horrors of the past and the present. Her latest work, 'What If Women Ruled the World' is an experimental performance

which combines fictional settings and real life participants, setting up a particular forum for action while exploring possible alternatives to a world dominated by men. (<http://yaelbartana.com/biography>)

Uroš Đurić was born in Belgrade in 1964. He studied history of art at the Faculty of Philosophy, and painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade where he got a master's degree in 1998. With Stevan Markuš, he coauthored *The Autonomist Manifesto*. He was a co-founder of the Remont independent art association, opened the Remont Gallery and launched an art magazine of the same title. Since 1999, he has organised visits by and co-produced local events for foreign artists (Ivan Mudov, Veronika Drahotová, Kiril Prashkov, Manfred Pernice, Dorit Margreiter, Marcus Geiger, Luchezar Boyadjiev, Oleg Kulik, Nedko Solakov, Elke Krystufek, Šejla Kamerić etc.). Since 1990 he had more than 50 solo-shows and had participated in more than 200 group exhibitions (at the Palais des Communautés Européennes in Bruxelles, ImmoArt Gallery in Antwerpen, De Marco European Art Foundation in Edinburgh, Musée des Beaux-Arts in Verviers, Palau de la Vireina / Centre Cultural Tecla Sala in Barcelona, Black Black gallery in Budapest, Jeu de Paume in Paris, Zachęta Gallery in Warszawa, AAC / C.ART.A in Bratislava, Gallery Valery Cueto in Paris, Marino Cettina Gallery in Umag, Museo Civico d'Arte Contemporanea, Museo della Ceramica Manlio Trucco in Albisola, Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve & Chinese Pavilion in Tirana, MUMOK Stiftung Ludwig in Wien, Forum Stadtpark in Graz, Musée / Ariana in Genève, galerie <rotor> in Graz, Espace Auteuil in Paris, Julia Friedman gallery | Thomas Blackman Associates in Chicago, Sammlung Essl in Klosterneuburg, Kunsthalle in Wien, Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel, Musée d'art moderne de Saint-Étienne Métropole, Secession in Wien, Muzeul de Arta in Timișoara, Espace Appolonia in Strasbourg, Muzeum Narodowe in Poznań, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Art Point gallery in Wien, the Katzen Arts Center at American University in Washington D.C., Museum Moderner Kunst Kärnten in Klagenfurt, Kunstforum Ostdeutsche Galerie in Regensburg, a Criée centre d'art contemporain in Rennes, Palais Porcia in Wien, La Maison rouge

in Paris, Tschechisches Kulturzentrum in Berlin, Studio Tommaseo in Trieste, Kunsthalle Mainz, Halle 6 projektraum in München, Photon galerija in Ljubljana, etc.) and had more than 30 solo exhibitions (at the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, the ATA Centre For Contemporary Art in Sofia, the Galerie Behemot in Praha, the Kulturkontakt Studio in Wien, Art Point galerie in Wien, the Galeria 2META in București, the New Moment Gallery in Belgrade, the 18m Galerie für Zahlenwerte in Berlin, the Vetrinjski dvor in Maribor, the Mala stanica in Skopje, etc.). He has appeared in around twenty feature films, documentaries, and TV series. Between 1992 and 2010, he authored and edited a number of shows on B92 Radio. Lives and works in Belgrade.

Ivan Grubanov was born in 1976 in Belgrade. After graduation at the painting department of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, he studied for two years at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam, and spent one year at the Delfina Studios in London. He became the scholar of Casa de Velazquez, French institute in Madrid and the Hochschule für bildende kunst Braunschweig. He gained his Doctor of Arts (DA) diploma at the University of Leuven in Belgium and now teaches at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade. Some of his most important solo exhibitions are at the Serbian Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennial, the Looock Galerie in Berlin, the Laboratorio 987 at MUSAC in Leon, the Le Grand Cafe Centre d'Art Contemporain in St Nazaire, the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Athens, the Gallery of the Belgrade Cultural Center, the Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, and the Stroom Center for Contemporary Art in Den Haag. Participations in group shows include the Museum of Contemporary Art in Krakow, Witte de With in Rotterdam, Kiasma in Helsinki, the 3rd International Festival of Contemporary Art of Algiers, the 10th Istanbul Biennial, the 1st Thessaloniki Biennial, Stedelijk Museum CS, City Gallery in Prague, the 50th Belgrade October Salon, the 3rd Bucharest Biennial of Young Artists, Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana, etc.

Branko Milisković studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, continuing his bachelor studies at the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague (graduated from the Department of 3D Art in 2009). He received his Master's degree at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Hamburg at the Extended Media Department in 2012. He is dedicated to live performance, mono-opera, cabaret, photography and film, realizing his performances at prestigious international and local festivals, exhibitions and art residences (Reims Scenes d'Europe 2015; CSW / CoCA, Torun-Poland and G12HUB, Belgrade, Serbia; Kampnagel, Hamburg, Germany; Halles de Schaerbeek Cultural Centre, Brussels; Utrecht Film Festival and TENT Rotterdam; Netherlands Media Art Institute, CIRCA – Art Actuel, Montreal; Live Art Development Agency, London).

<https://brankomiliskovic.wordpress.com/appointed/>

Zoran Naskovski (b. 1960) received his MFA at the Faculty of Visual Arts, the University of Arts in Belgrade. He works in a wide range of media, including video, film, performance, installation, photography and net projects. In his critical practices and activism, he mostly deals with the subjects of political and economic violence, media manipulation, cultural memory, institutional critique and politics of global circulation of images, including recently critical writing on Serbian national cultural policy. Naskovski has exhibited widely in numerous international exhibitions in museums and institutions such as Whitney Museum in New York, Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley, Wexner Center in Ohio, Tate Britain in London, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Fridericianum Kassel in Kassel, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein in Berlin, Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, Ludwig Museum in Budapest, National Gallery in Tirana, and others. He took part at the central exhibition of the 52nd Venice Biennial in 2007 entitled “Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind. Art in the Present Tense”.

Kristina Norman (b. 1979) is a Tallinn-based artist whose interdisciplinary practice includes video installations, sculptural objects, urban interventions, as well as documentary films and

performances. Norman's work is devoted to the exploration of the political potential that contemporary art offers in dealing with the issues of human rights and the politics of memory. Norman's latest piece *Bring Back My Fire Gods* (2018) is a video based on a site-specific performance carried out at the Song Festival Grounds in Tallinn, a venerated place of a national importance, symbolic of national liberation and the secession from the Soviet Union in 1991. *After-War*, one of Norman's most renowned projects, is a case-study of memorial strife around the so-called Bronze Soldier monument, a Soviet statue which the Estonian government had eventually removed from the centre of Tallinn. With *After-War* Norman represented Estonia at the 53rd Venice Biennale of Contemporary Art in 2009. As part of her academic research on memory and human rights in contemporary art, Norman produced a triad of projects involving site-specific video installations and public interventions, focusing mainly on the use of narrative memories of the protagonists. As a result of a series of research residencies, with a group of artists from Latvia and Estonia Norman co-authored a theatrical production *The First To Leave* (2018) which is a commission from New Theatre Institute of Latvia and Kanuti Gildi Saal of Estonia. Kristina Norman's art has been exhibited at Manifesta Biennial (2014), Aichi Triennale of Japan (2013), Venice Biennial (2009), Baltic Triennial in Vilnius (2009), Berlin Biennial (2008).

Tanja Ostojić (1972) is a feminist performance artist. Her work draws inspiration from her own experience as a non-European Union citizen, a traveller and female artist. Ostojić has lived in Serbia, Slovenia, France, and Germany, but refuses to claim any particular nationality. Ostojić's grand theme is the "arrogance of the EU" with regards to the integration of south-eastern Europe into the union. For south-east Europeans, and particularly women, becoming resident in the EU is often only possible through marriage, which Ostojić depicts as a form of prostitution. From 2000 to 2003, she publicly addressed this issue in an online performance piece, *Looking for a husband with a EU passport*, in which she presented herself naked and with a shaven head, possibly reminiscent of a prisoner from socialist times. This led to an actual marriage to

an artist from Cologne, from whom she then separated in 2005, again as an online performance. At the Venice Biennale in 2001, her performance *I'll Be Your Angel* involved her following around the independent curator and art historian Harald Szeemann – who had at his disposal a significant budget – for days, all the time simply smiling fondly at him. The one-time “great subversive” Szeemann did not see the funny side of this, however, and made sure she was excluded from all his projects.

Dan Perjovschi (born in 1961 in Sibiu, Romania) graduated Art College in Iași. After college, Perjovschi married Lia, the performance artist, and moved to Oradea, where he took a job as a museum curator. There he joined Atelier 35 Oradea, a platform for young artists. “I got there with my crappy painting style and those men influenced me. They worked with photography, and they experimented. Meanwhile, my wife had gone to college in Bucharest, and she exposed me to new ideas. That was my true education.” Although his academic training was based on Impressionism and Social Realism, after decorating his entire house with drawings and cartoons in 1988 to surprise his wife, Perjovschi decided to continue to work in these genres.

Straightforward and highly critical, Dan Perjovschi paved his way in the art world exhibiting at the First Annual Exhibition of Soros Centre for Contemporary Art *Ex Oriente Lux*, Bucharest, and since 1993 participating at all editions of Zone International Performance Triennial, Timisoara. Started to be invited on important group events (Manifesta, Luxembourg; and Body and the East in Ljubljana 1998) he became internationally renowned artist displaying his works in the Romanian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (1999) and at numerous important art events. Besides exhibiting solo and in group shows, Dan Perjovschi often artistically collaborate with his wife Lia Perjovschi, performance artist that is acknowledged for her work in documenting performance art but also in her artistic reflection through archives, diagrams, and information rooms that are showing how society organizes history. In March 2013 Dan and Lia Perjovschi were awarded with the European Cultural Foundation’s Princess Margriet Award.

Mileta Prodanović, visual artist, fiction writer and art critic, professor of painting at the University of Arts in Belgrade – School of Painting, current rector of the University of Arts, a prominent artist whose career is divided between visual art and literature; he is one of the founders of *Belgrade circle* – the association of the independent intellectuals and *Writers Forum* – the association of independent authors; member of PEN Centre, International Association of Art Critics (AICA) and honorary fellow in writing of University of Iowa, USA. Since 1980 he has exhibited extensively across the Europe and the United States (Rome, Nurnberg, Linz, Budapest, Ferrara, Graz, Vienna, Salzburg, Cannes, Carcassonne, Prague, Leipzig, Thessaloniki, Regensburg, Saint-Etienne, Columbia, etc.), representing Yugoslavia at 42nd Venice Biennial. He won numerous awards for his work in the field of visual arts. As a writer he published more than fifteen volumes, mostly fiction but also essays and art criticism. His award-winning novels have been translated into more than a dozen languages.

Christoph Maria Schlingensief (1960–2010) was a German theatre director, performance artist and filmmaker. Although he had started his career as an independent filmmaker, Schlingensief has staged numerous productions for theatres and theatre festivals (*Parsifal* at the Bayreuth Festival, a version of *Hamlet – This is your Family, Nazi~Line* in Switzerland ...), finally achieving, although posthumously, to be acknowledged also as a visual artist winning the Golden Lion for Germany National pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2011. The prize was given for the stage design for his autobiographical play, “fluxus oratorio” *A Church of Fear VS. the Alien Within*, relating to cancer that killed him.

However, most of his work was provoking debates within different artistic and cultural circles, raising real public controversies. His art action at the Documenta X in Kassel (1997) carrying a placard with the words *Kill Helmut Kohl!* provoked authorities to arrest him while his exhibition *The Last Hour* was rejected by the Frieze Art Fair in London in 2006 considered as offence to the late Princess Diana. The performance at the Statue of Liberty in New York City ironically handed Germany over to globalization (1999),

while his work *Please Love Austria* again wanting to provoke politicians especially due to their irresponsible populist discourse.

Using TV shows as mockeries of well-known formats such as *Freakstars 3000* where he set up a talent cast show where all candidates were mentally handicapped, or theatre project *Quiz* where he provoked audiences with questions about Nazi concentration camps. He joined his friends and colleagues in different cultural/political gatherings such as *Passion Impossible*, *Wake Up Call for Germany 1997*, *Chance 2000*, *Vote for Yourself* (in the later he formed the Last Chance Party where anyone could become a candidate themselves in the run up to the federal election of 1998 in Germany).

It is difficult to categorize Schlingensiefel's artistic work as he crossed all art disciplines, used different media and political actions. The relevance of his projects is raising every day.

Saša Stojanović is a visual artist, performer and activist. His artwork is based on affirmation of love, communication, critical and auto-reflexive relationship towards life, reality and institutions. He explores the concept of permanent performance of politics of life against and in spite of capitalism whose art forms (such as painting and design) are segments which cannot be viewed separately. Performances are significant part of his art, which he realized during the nineties and at the beginning of 2000. These performances were part of a wider context in which alternative artists mobilized against the dominant regime and the values and norms it promoted. Thus, he belonged to cultural counterpublics and to its very small part that acted actively in Kosovo since the performance *Alas little boats – said Dada (Joj brodići – rekla je Dada)* that he performed on Priština's streets on December 12th 1996. It was followed by *Minute of joy (Minut radosti, 1997)* as a contrast to "minute of silence", *The last attempt to cure the country (Poslednji pokušaj lečenja zemlje, 1998)*, etc. In Belgrade Saša Stojanović developed important actions that questioned official policies and human rights repression, performed in front of the Serbian academy of sciences and arts (*Umazane ruke brzo se peru, 1998*) and in front

of the First municipal court in Belgrade performance *Man* (Čovek, 1999) devoted to the persecuted artist Nune Popović.

ŠKART / HORKEŠKART / HORHESTAR.

Škart artistic collective was created in 1990 at the School of Architecture of Belgrade University. Immediately they had opened their activities toward other disciplines, public space, social activism. As Škart collective, they had realized numerous performances with Women in Black, Center for Cultural Decontamination and other artists and critical intellectuals.

Working on the project *Your shit your responsibility* in the year 2000 they created HORKEŠKART, alternative music collective, that worked coordinated by ŠKART group as self-organized and self-financed collective till 2007.

From 2007 till today, the Choir performs under the name HORKESTAR, continuing on the base of the same values with its experimental, artistic and activist work.

Vocal Curatorial Syndrome (VCS) is post-curatorial formation consisted of Senka Latinović and Vladimir Bjeličić. Based on the strategy of active criticism, VCS aims to rethink curatorial practice in the sense of its class, gender, ethical and aesthetical guidelines within the local context, as well as global. The phenomenon of professional (un)sustainability or the inability to establish a symbolic and real capital in the art system of transitional society was the starting premise of VCS's work. By using performative methods of appropriation, manipulation and humour, the duo tries to represent different models of social behaviour which are constantly rotating while reflecting absurdity of everyday life.

Lenka Zelenović (UNpractical womEN) was born 64 years ago. In the year 2000, as a member of an NGO Single Mother Refugee's Association in Zemun (with a daughter with the syndrome Williams diagnosis), she joined the project of the ŠKART group that wanted to involve those women in a specific art project based on women craft, traditional "kitchen wisdoms", embroider cloths

placed above the kitchen range with humoristic messages addressing lives of house wives. Since 2000 she has created nearly 350 products based on her own verses that she has written in leisure times. Although she had spent her working life in the company “18th November” she had lost her job, but also her previous pension investments. Thus, she made her first kitchen embroidery “My hope is finished / as my pension had vanished”. Thanks to embroideries she entered Association for Applied Artists and, after five years, finally got the pension, so she created another one “All my dream came true / pension arrived to my kitchen blue”. To make one kitchen embroidery Lenka needs 60-80 meters of thread. Her art works reached audiences as far as Japan, Norway, Brazil or US as well as numerous companies and private homes in Serbia. She uses mostly Latin alphabet to make her works more communicative with the world as “kitchen wisdoms” are more appreciated abroad than in Serbia. In 2014 Lenka created, with the help of SKART, the UNpractical WomEN, craft cooperative, whose key members are, besides her, Pava Matinović and Brigita Međo from Zrenjanin. Their embroideries today are socially relevant, criticising capitalism and its effects on human lives, patriarchal relations within society, media imposed stereotypes about woman’s beauty, violence against women and children, while promoting solidarity, equity and human rights.

Part I
*FROM POPULIST
RHETORICS AND
NARRATIVES TO POPULIST
POLITICS:
INTRODUCING THE ARTS
AND MEDIA NEXUS*



Uroš Đurić: Populist project – God loves dream of Serbian artists | SK Sturm Graz, 2001

From left to right: Arnold Wetl, Andrés Fleurquin, Mariano Fernández, Ferdinand Feldhofer, Kazimierz Sidorczuk, György Korsós, Hannes Reinmayr (upper row); Günther Neukirchner, Uroš Đurić, Mario Haas, Francisco Rojas, Ivica Vastić (lower row).



Work with Sturm was conceptualized in May 2001 for the exhibition *The Real, The Desperate, The Absolute* (curator Marina Gržinič) that was held in *Forum Stadtpark* Graz within the framework of the festival of contemporary arts *Steyerischer Herbst*. Realized at the stadium *Franz Horr* in Vienna (Wednesday 25th July 2001) before the match of the Austrian Bundes league. The ORF had broadcast the match.

Populist project is a cycle of artworks that started at the end of nineties. Investigating its own position in different societal situation, the author re-questions the phenomenon of populism defining it as the “last grand ideology” of the XX century.

Since 1999, the works from Populist project have been exhibited in Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume Paris, Kunsthalle Fridericianum Kassel, Austrian Cultural Forum New York, Kunsthalle Wien, Musée d'art moderne de Saint Étienne Métropole, MUMOK Sammlung Ludwig Wien, Forum Stadtpark Graz, La Maison Rouge Paris, Nacionalna galerija Skopje, galeria 2META București, ATA Centre For Contemporary Art Sofia, Black Black gallery Budapest, Muzej savremene umetnosti Beograd, galerija Marino Cettina Umag, Museo Civico d'Arte Contemporanea Albisola, Hotel Dajti Tirana, Cankarjev Dom Ljubljana, Musée Ariana Genève, Old Town Hall gallery Praha, Espace Appolonia Strasbourg, Muzeul de Arta in Timișoara, galerija Charlama Sarajevo, Vasváry ház Pecs, Vetrinjski dvor Maribor, Städtische Galerie Leerer Beutel, Regensburg, galerie <rotor> Graz, galerija Kulturni centar Beograd, Muzej savremene umetnosti Vojvodine Novi Sad, Photon gallery Ljubljana & Wien; published in art magazines Umělec (Praha 2000), Camera Austria (Graz 2003) & Spike (Wien /Berlin 2009).

Project was presented on Art 31 (Basel 2000), Tirana Biennale (2001), Steyerischer Herbst (Graz 2001 & 2002), Cetinje Biennial (2002), The Stray Show (Chicago 2002), In / Out Festival of Digital Image (Praha 2003), Rencontres Internationales (Paris / Berlin 2003), Viennafair (2009).

The exhibitions were curated by René Block, Marina Gržinić, Gerald Matt, Lorand Hegyi, Anda Rottenberg & Victor Misiano, Romelo Pervolovici, Stevan Vuković, Edi Muka & Michele Robecchi, Jasmina Čubrilo, Iara Boubnova, Michaela Gherghescu, Gorančo Gjorgjievski, László Lantos, Ivan Mečl & Pavel Vančát, Zoran Erić, Gabriele Mackert & Thomas Mießgang, Nebojša Milenković, Tiziana Casapietra & Roberto Constantino, Branislava Anđelković, Branislav Dimitrijević & Dejan Sretenović, Adela Demetja, Iosif Kiraly, Regina Hellwig-Schmid & Miroslav Karić, Metka Zupanič & Dejan Sluga, Jelena Vesić, Igor Jović & Aleksandar Mihailović.

Milena Dragičević Šešić

Mirjana Nikolić

Researching Populist Communication in European Cultural and Media Realm

In the year 2016, the research team of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade joined colleagues from the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, within the action IS 1308 Populist Political Communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics which was a part of the COST project. That has opened an institutionally-supported research area in which we have had the opportunity to cooperate with colleagues from over twelve European universities. Our aim was to map populism as an ideology, political doctrine, rhetorical strategy and media practice in the European political and media space.

The interest of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in these topics emerged from our research on contemporary cultural and media policies in Europe. It was obvious that these policies were under the pressure of the neoliberal system and managerial demands on one side, and populist and nationalist political pressures on the other. Attacks on art institutions, performances, festivals and other events, although implemented by individuals and groups of “concerned citizens”, often have not received adequate response from the government, as politicians did not want to confront their “electoral body” that had moved to the right of the political spectrum. Accusations and even the criminalisation of artists (based on blasphemy laws and several UN resolutions condemning “defamation of religion”), although mostly happening outside of Europe

(Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan), led to the self-censorship of cultural programmers and cultural institutions which started avoiding so-called controversial and provocative artists. In Serbia there were several examples of such self-censorship: removing the work of Danijela Tasić in Novi Sad Cultural Center; removing the works of the group Kamarades in Belgrade Cultural Center; the closing of an exhibition of visual artists from Kosovo in Context Gallery, etc. (Marinkov Pavlović 2018).

It was even more present in a media system that turned toward commercialisation and spectacle, limiting its artistic program to standard, conventional elements and cultural formats situated outside of prime time.

Thus, the spaces for a plurality of expressions and alternative forms of art were rapidly narrowing in spite of the official policy support for the diversity of creative expression (UNESCO Convention 2005). Even within official cultural and media policies the populist and nationalist narratives began to take more space. For these reasons researchers at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts wanted to join the European research space investigating this subject.

Within the COST project, a special place was given to the joint research, which included representatives of all national teams. They focused on selected media texts which were analysed according to a unique codex¹ aiming to show the presence and describe populist elements of the texts published in major newspapers in each country. The research results were presented in the form of a coordinate system with two dominant directions which attempted to evaluate the content of selected texts: mutual relations between pluralist and populist titles, liberal statements vs. authoritarian tendencies and trends. Preliminary results of the research have shown, in accordance with the expectations, that in countries with developed democracies, such as Norway and Switzerland, populist trends in media discourse as well as in political dialogue are identified in a much lesser degree. The greatest level of populism is found in Bulgaria, Poland, and Italy, while Serbia is in the middle of the

1 The texts were selected from the following newspapers: *Politika*, *Večernje novosti* and *Blic*.

scale, closer to developed democracies. Given the fact that these findings are based on a unique methodology, the results should not be doubted, but they are surely surprising, because we are often witnessing the high level of populism in political practices as well as in media texts.

However, we wanted to deepen our insights and focus on cultural and media policies. That was the reason to initiate, together with the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade, the international conference *Media, Democracy, Populism* held in November 2017 at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. The keynote speakers were Daniele Albertazzi, professor from the University of Birmingham, and Hans Vorländer from the Centre for the Study of Constitutionalism and Democracy in Dresden. More than fifty papers were presented by researchers from Europe and Canada focusing on three main domains: democracy and populist political communication; media and populism; arts and cultural policies in the populist realm. Besides papers, the conference program was complemented by several panels gathering artists and curators and with several artistic projects separately presented.

Satisfied with the conference results, we decided to publish two books that would cover two different areas. The book in English would mostly deal with arts and media within cultural and other public policies pressed with populist and nationalist demands. The book in Serbian would focus on changes in political, cultural and media realms in the era of populist politics. For both books we invited colleagues who did not participate in the conference as well as artists to contribute texts and art works.

Thus, this book does not represent conference proceedings although it does include several texts that were initially presented at the conference. It is an edited, thematic volume covering a wide range of issues linked to changes in the sphere of the arts and cultural policies.

As contributors to the book belong to different disciplines (political scientists, sociologists of culture, architects, cultural policy scholars, film and media scholars, etc), the co-editors wanted to present the theoretical background that was inspirational for us to base our research on, to conceptualise the conference and, finally, to

offer a framework to read and discuss those eleven selected articles. In our research policy we always intended to use scholarly work coming from different disciplines and different cultural realms, from numerous European “schools”, such as French political theory or German cultural memory research, not avoiding, of course, the dominant Anglo-American body of research. We will not introduce the theoretical framework that represents the starting point for each of the contributors to this book, instead leaving readers the opportunity to discover this as they encounter these essays that paint a picture of the variety of populism research. For example, the text by Monika Mokre uses Laclau’s and Mouffe’s theories as a basis; Dušan Spasojević and Danijela Vićentijević start from Mudde, Akkerman, Canovan and Krause; Marie Cazes and Miikka Pyykkönen refer to Müller; while Susanne Weichselbaumer and András Gyula refer to Betz, Jagers, Walgrave, Plattner, and so on. On the other hand, scholars from the theory of arts and sociology of culture also quote Mudde and Rovira but refer to Panizza as well as to the important texts of Aleida Assmann dealing with the culture of memory, and the seminal work of McGuigan that was the first to discuss populism and cultural policy. They mostly discuss art theories that directly address questions of taste (Bourdieu and Grayson Perry).

Although most of the theoreticians insist on the fact that the phenomenon of populism is difficult to grasp and to understand in its complexity (Dorna, 1999), nearly all of them underline that populism is defined as doctrine “in the name of the people” articulating social emotions in political programs and even in political battles. The “call to the people” has to be dynamic, offering policy actions in the name of the needs of the people. Thus, the era of “geopolitics of emotion” (Moisi, 2010) that divides not only continents but also social elites from the people is favourable for the development of populism. Recent conflicts, wars and the war against terror were fueled by populist discourse that was used as a *patriotic task* (Dragičević Šešić, 1994), raising the readiness of people to participate in a war defending “the just cause”. The most pertinent definition of populism comes from Daniele Albertazzi and Duncan McDonnell stating that populism is an ideology that

“pits a virtuous and homogeneous people against a set of elites and dangerous ‘others’ who are together depicted as depriving (or attempting to deprive) the sovereign people of their rights, values, prosperity, identity, and voice” (Albertazzi & McDonell, 2008: 5).

Thus, populism is studied as an ideology which deeply pervades modern societies and reflects itself on nearly all segments of social and public policies and practices, considerably shaping the spheres of politics, culture, media, even arts.

When we speak about some of the most prominent research on populism, its causes and consequences, attention should also be given to the American theorist Pippa Norris who, during the last few decades, is systematically dealing with this phenomenon, introducing a generational aspect relatively neglected in European research on populism. Primarily in relation to American society, she structures population in the four dominant (prevailing) generations: the oldest one (born between two world wars), baby boomers, generation X and millennials. Each of these generations defines its values, which not only determine their social position but is also how they build their relations towards key social issues, including elections and voting. Age, education, level of urbanization and cultural values are some of the most important elements which are affecting political choice, the relation towards political leaders and candidates on elections, as well as voting. According to her findings, those who are voting for authoritarian regimes of populist orientation are very often older voters, people with a lower level of education, and those from rural areas. In accordance with these findings in her research, Norris has come to the conclusion and confirmation of the hypothesis that the members of the oldest generation are most easily persuaded to agree with populist political leaders, and they vote accordingly, while the greatest extent of resistance to populism can be found among the youngest voters – millennials, which can be understood and ascribed to their progressiveness and, very often, their high level of left-wing orientation and ideas typical for the young.

However, as the situation in Greece and Spain, but above all in Latin America, is showing, populism can have a left-wing orientation. The most radical, extremely leftist populism has been executed

by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. They evicted the complete populations of cities and villages into collective camps and murdered all persons with professions (not only teachers and physicians but photographers and also musicians who played in orchestras for weddings and funerals). They were aiming to create a country of complete equals (with the exception of the army, which was in total part of the only permissible political party). Today leftist populism does not attack the other anymore – kulaks, capitalists, and members of other parties. It is directed to a critique of capitalism in itself and the whole system of relations which it implies. The economic failure of some of the populist states in Latin America does not speak so much to the absence of an economic response (or alternative) but rather points to systemic corruption (always following both right-wing and left-wing populisms).

Populism is expressed, above all, in its political style. It does not have its own content, and because of that left-wing and right-wing populism can resemble each other. The difference between right-wing and left-wing populism is, first of all, titular and emotional,² which evoke one or the other. Right-wing populism is initiated by fear of the other, by xenophobia and conservative values, and its titular claim is the nation – a nation which has gained certain rights to some territory and which does not want to disown those rights even when it comes to only a few hundred „threatening“ asylum-seekers (in the case of Hungary). The titular claim of left-wing populism is the people and the basic, leading emotion is hope for a better tomorrow, progress and gaining new rights. Of course, both populisms quickly turn into totalitarianism, because all misfits are seen as a threat to a community.

Populism today is developed in accordance with the democratic electoral system. There are a lot of similarities between populism and democracy – the word populism comes from *populis* (lat.), meaning of people; *δημος* (gr.) – people; and *κρατειν* (gr.)

2 Therefore, in their public appearances, right-wing populists are frequently using the emotions of sorrow, solitude, and anxiety, as well as tears. Crying in public (in the political and mass media realms) became the new phenomenon of populist communication (Mijušković, 2017).

– governing, thus governance of the people. More precisely, democracy and populism are using similar means, strategies and to a certain extent even rhetoric to influence voters. But populist means and rhetoric are formed to fascinate and seduce voters, often using unethical means (Nikolić, 2005). The populist always plays the card of irrationality in the human mind. Irrationality in populism is its very methodology and its whole “content” is focused to achieve a single-minded community that opens a space for totalitarianism (Milovanović, 2017). In spite of that leaders are usually building a myth about themselves as advocates of democratic principles, representatives of people and their tribunes who defend them from alienated elites and affirm the concept of direct democracy, which raises, develops and strengthens optimism and the hopes of people. Thus, the basic values of representative democracy are lessened due to the manipulation of public opinion and institutions.

On a global scale, and changing the geopolitical map of the world, where the long-lasting confrontation between East (Soviet Union) and West (United States) ceased to exist, and in the time of the political and economic affirmation of China and BRICS countries as big forces, the former socialist countries are becoming countries with capitalist economies with booming populist parties whose politics slowly lead to the erosion of fragile democratic principles. When it comes to countries with a long democratic tradition – mainly the founders of the European Union – the situation is also difficult because, due to times of crisis, populism is dragging into the cracks of their democratic procedures. In the European countries which are not members of the EU, like Serbia, the situation is even more difficult. Populist trends are gaining strength and becoming stronger than the institutional system (the voluntarism of leaders and the governing party are dictating norms and rules of conduct). Legal authorities, police, army, and other institutions, according to the will of leaders, drastically repress civil initiatives, freedom of speech and media freedom, continuously dragging these countries into retrograde processes and representing a threat to their future democratic development. It can be said that what politics is for populists, a „direct, uncritical execution of people’s will” (Hamilton, 2017), is in reality the will of political leaders. Thus,

populism rejects the counterbalances of the political system, the rule of law and the division of power (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007).

Media populism, also called “neo-populism” or “new populism” (Immerfal 1998; Taggart 2000), which stimulates media organisations to produce content in accordance to the desires of the people, is reinforced with new technological opportunities which enable political leaders to directly address audience, people and, with populist rhetoric, to clearly articulate and execute the people’s will. With such and similar content, self-produced, produced by politicians themselves and produced by the people, media outlets are becoming massively attractive because all three “producers” are creating content according to the most widespread taste and needed emotions. Without traditional or digital media broad-scale manipulation, populism would not be possible (Stepanović, 2017) in the extent that exists today. The multiplication of media and technologies which has led to “mass self-communication” (Castels, 2007: 246) is enabling the mass appearance of populism in public discourse, its transfer in media and multiplication in the new media environment. That is how in the modern times of post-truth the path to manipulation (for different reasons) is being consciously opened, and truth becomes what is massively mediated by politicians and other leaders of public opinion.

What connects political and media populism are citizens, the receivers of political leaders’ media messages – on one side they are voters and, on the other, an audience exposed to populist influences and ideas, but also an audience that demands such content. Contrary to traditional media which were somehow sluggish, formalized and subdued to editors, new media platforms, among which the internet dominates as a media and communications tool, are erasing boundaries and shortening the connection between politicians and voters, between media and audiences. It seems that politicians are in an immediate relationship with voters who are, at the same time, the audience of new media channels such as Twitter, which gives politicians the possibility to portray an emotional appearance and quickly achieve desired results. That satisfies both audiences and voters, and that is why Twitter is increasingly used by politicians and leaders for communication. The appeal of new

media and its forms is growing in order to fascinate the young. That proximity is maybe a good way towards better communication with audiences but also, at the same time, towards the fast and efficient manipulation and achievement of one's aims, no matter what they are – a successful campaign, the placement of an idea (agenda setting), receiving unreserved support as well as the feeling of being loved by the masses (which populists want and expect).

A separate form of media populism is “populism of the media themselves which is independent from any (relations with) populist movements” (Krämer, 2014: 42). This derivation of populism uses entertaining content, offers relaxation, carefreeness, and content charged with emotions, which is often melodramatic. Frequent forms are soap operas, now produced in many local contexts, reality shows as well as diverse meaningless shows and quizzes. Besides their service to political elites (by “anesthetizing” audiences in offering evasive programs), populist media content serves to raise, at least temporarily, citizens' self-confidence. Contrary to that, by presenting patronizing and often pathetic stories about people and families from underprivileged communities, people with a hard life with minimum or no income, media outlets are convincing audiences that they should be pleased with their conditions of living.³ Populist content is typical for quiz shows, which started as an educational genre with the intention to be knowledge-based but only became typical examples of banal programming which, by posing trivial questions, convinces a spectator with an average or below average education that he or she is uncommonly intelligent. A similar trend presents politicians as music stars (singers), actor-performers, or chefs, making them look like celebrities but, at the same time, showing their alter ego, which now has the face of a showman, an entertainer,⁴ a common man, a

3 Some of such shows are *Eksplodiv / Explosive* (TV Prva), *S Tamarom u akciji / In Action with Tamara* (RTS), etc.

4 Some examples are Ivica Dačić, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who very often presents himself to the public and foreign diplomats as a singer; Vojislav Šešelj who makes different performances, from TV studios to parliament; Nenad Čanak as a participant in one of the reality shows;

parent. The populist character of commercial media is overwhelming and indisputable.

Political pressure, instrumentalisation of independent regulatory bodies, difficult economic positions, small media markets, strong control of investment, demand for transparent subventions (with great suspicion toward those coming from abroad), great expectations from new, digital media, and banal production are only some of the characteristics of (not only) media systems in new democracies. That creates the preconditions for a media production which will promote populist ideas and the statements of political elites (thus enabling its own survival).

In spite of the fact that public service television has a special status at the European policy-making level as a vital element of democracy and part of European culture (Dragičević Šešić, 2008), different pressures of the neoliberal system and New Public Management impose a market-based managerial approach to their governance. Thus, in Serbia, the public service media (RTS and RTV), due to insufficient income from subscriptions, must be concerned with their ratings so that they can attract advertisers and private productions (for joint investments). Thus their programing in many respects has the characteristics of populist programing (especially related to serial programs, reality shows, etc.). Spectacles, the personalisation of news, the use of celebrities, and the uncritical transmission of political leaders' messages are a few of those characteristics.

Learning From Las Vegas! was the slogan of the postmodern movement in the 1980s (Venturi, 1977). It indicated the attempt of public policies, from urban to cultural, to seduce, infatuate and buy citizens who, in an age of spectacle, megalomania, technology (lasers, neon, etc.) and the noise of celebrations, can only live as consumers buying both goods and experiences. In accordance with

Dragan Marković Palma as well as former MPs Raka Radović from Trstenik and Dobrivoje Budimirović Bidža from Svilajnac (famous for their singing enthusiastic praise to Slobodan Milošević in the parliament in July 1997: „Slobodane, Slobodane, you are a communist / We love you, love you like Jesus Christ“).

that, Las Vegas – a city which the mafia built in the middle of the desert by using iconography and symbols of the biggest urban centres in the world (the Eiffel Tower, King Arthur’s Castle, the Empire State Building, pyramids, the Sphinx, etc.) – is a true paradigm of populist urban and cultural policies of the modern society of the spectacle (Debord, 1967).

Populism and populist policies demand new educational and cultural policies. Sometimes it might be conflictual as left and right-wing populism might have contradictory requirements. That is the case today in Greece where both sides are “weaponising the classics” (Scott 2018), from different standpoints. The left-wing politicians see in classics inappropriate messages for contemporary multicultural society, while the right-wing political party Golden Dawn see in them the pillar of national identity. Thus, the Syriza government asked that the book *History of the Peloponnesian War*, written in the 5th century BC, should be expelled from curricula⁵ (without success). That demand made *Lessons of War*, a theatrical adaptation of Thucydides’ history of the war between Athens and Sparta, a huge success as audiences wanted to see why those classic texts are “unsuitable” today. The anti-classics agenda continued. Now it seems that the Latin language would be replaced by sociology in high schools. Similar but opposite demands are happening in Serbia where the right-wing government is suggesting controversial changes. In concordance with its promotion of dual education (advertised as close to common people and offering easy employment), philosophy as a course of study has been removed from secondary technical schools.

New populist policies, based on emotions or rhetoric, are influencing cultural policies more than any research. Their rhetoric, although not yet prevailing in cultural policy discourse, is influencing and changing many concepts: “audiences” as “consumers”, citizens as people, public good as the people’s good. The pressure

5 Syriza tried to “downplay the classics by replacing them with more inclusive subjects in schools” (Scott 2018: 2), on the pretext that those texts promote the idea of empire and exclude immigrant children in schools.

on policy-makers and cultural workers is to provide projects for a public realm that requires the enthusiasm of “the people” (i.e. Skopje 2014,⁶ countless “national investments” that mimic the “Bilbao effect”,⁷ etc.).

Contrary to the usual political rhetoric, the spectacle of populist cultural policies looks for its fortitude in objects of elite culture, museums before all. Although museums represent an embodiment of elitist culture, the “Bilbao effect” became a paragon of populist cultural policies all over the world by confirming (selected) facts, representing a city as *richer* and *eventful* (Palmer & Richards, 2010), offering a powerful picture of national *progress* and the happiness of the city’s inhabitants (the majority of which will never enter a museum). The Louvre in Abu Dhabi as well as the Museum of Contemporary Art and the National Museum in Belgrade serve to confirm the strength and power of politicians. As objects, these museums’ messages can be different, even dissonant with the politics of their display, but they are anyway not built or renovated because of those politics but rather because of the symbolic power that they are carrying in their names – national institutions of culture. What is expected from big public projects in culture is to make an atmosphere of happiness and joy, to brand a city, to canonise tradition and spectacularly display national greatness: an amount of money that can buy anything, or content showing that “we” are the first, biggest, or best-looking.

Anti-liberal cultural policy programs are characterized by intervention and redistributive action combined with clientelism and

6 The project aimed to recreate Macedonian identity in a situation of „threatened identity“ (Georgievska-Jakovleva 2014: 43), as is often the case with populist urban and cultural projects.

7 The term „Bilbao effect“ describes a phenomenon whereby cultural investment plus ambitious architecture would equal economic uplift for those (creative) cities. Numerous economic analyses have tried to prove that after building the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao as a glamorous project of the star architect Frank O’Ghery, the city of Bilbao became an attraction point for both tourists and investors. Those analyses have usually neglected other influential factors (such as the Basque nationalist uprising), as neoliberalism wants such examples of success.

a partisan use of the state (Zamorano, Bonet, 2018). An anti-elitist approach is applied to most representational activities (celebrations, memory practices, cultural diplomacy, etc.) as it has to have appeal for the “common man”. Sometimes the statement openly declares that expertise is not important: “Everyone can lead a cultural institution” (SNS deputy in the Municipality of Subotica, 2017).

In spite of the celebration of the Europe of diversities within EU cultural policies, national cultural policies of Poland and Hungary, but also of Baltic countries, are mostly using the concept of the one and only community and culture (ethno-nationalism based on language and ethnic belonging). Thus, culture again became culture in the singular – contributing to the rejection of cultural diversities, of minority rights.

In times of populism, the notions of *public good* and *public interest* are replaced with the notion of *people’s good*. Populist politics that way says that only those things in culture which are confirmed by consensus are ethno-national, people’s goods, thus of *interest for the majority*. This is contrary to public interest that often denotes phenomena, especially in the fields of education and culture, which are important but not seen as such by the majority of people (investment in Roma education, for example; or media programs in minority languages such as sign language). Such values are waved aside by populist cultural policies. Even in France, such voices can be heard to question authors like Erik Satie, named “hypocrite”, “lâche”, “mediocre”, “alcoolique” by Denis Truffaut, deputy of FN in Arcueil.⁸

Even European cultural policy has its populist elements, although in its entirety it can hardly be called by that (populist) name. The program European Capitals of Culture, with its specific type of investment spectacle, fits more into the populist and consumerist neoliberal culture than to the proclaimed aims of European cultural development. The offerings of the European Capitals

8 Accusing Satie of being communist, he fiercely attacked the idea of a Mayor financing Satie’s 150-year anniversary; <http://www.leparisien.fr/arcueil-94110/le-compositeur-d-arcueil-erik-satie-est-un-alcoolique-du-pcf-selon-le-fn-01-04-2016-5678767.php> (15.9.2018.)

of Culture must seduce both guests and hosts and bring tourists from all over the world, because that is the only way to make the investments into bulky infrastructure (which maintenance cities usually cannot afford) payable.

Populism is stimulating resentment toward contemporary arts and artists. Thus, a special kind of attention should be given to attacks on artists and art institutions all over Europe as a direct consequence of growing populism and nationalism – from the well-known case of Behzti in Birmingham (Balta & Dragičević, 2017), to the writer Mark Halter who had a literary award revoked by the newly-appointed National Front government of Toulon because of his Jewish origins,⁹ to the attacks on Oliver Frljić in Poland, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and Serbia. It is obvious that cultural policies have failed in finding adequate mechanisms which would enable professionals to freely decide on repertoires and awards, and to prevent politicians from disrupting street protests (like in the case of the interrupted exhibition of the Kosovo artists in Belgrade in 2007).

However, some analyses show that populism and populist rhetoric have had certain positive effects on cultural practices (though that might seem sarcastic). Alex Shephard claims that the American publishing industry has profited from books about Trump (both those critical from the left and those glorifying from the right), Trump's own book (*The Art of the Deal*) which is selling well in new editions, and books of dystopian fiction which became very popular (Orwell's *1984* sold well after Trump's inauguration, while Huxley's *Brave New World*, Sinclair's *It Can't Happen Here* and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* arrived on bestsellers lists).¹⁰

To fight against populism in public policies, many artistic projects have been developed since the Komar and Melamid project *The*

9 <http://archives.varmatin.com/toulon/fn-a-toulon-vingt-ans-apres-cinq-points-qui-ont-marque-le-mandat.2188562.html> (15.9.2018.)

10 Ultimate Salesman / How Trump is Helping to Revive the Publishing Industry, by Alex Shephard, New Republic, July 20, 2017 <https://newrepublic.com/article/143599/ultimate-salesman-how-trump-helps-revive-publishing> (10.9.2018.)

Most Wanted Paintings (1995) attempted to discover what a true “people’s” art would look like. One of the most important is the work of the deceased artist Christoph Schlingensief who conceptualised the project “Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container” in 2000.¹¹ The project was alternately named “Wien-Aktion”, “Please Love Austria—First European Coalition Week”, and “Foreigners Out—Artists against Human Rights”. This art project and television show, which took place during the annual Wiener Festwochen, was styled as a mockery of the popular TV program *Big Brother*. It was critically aimed both at the most popular form of television entertainment and at the latent xenophobia of the Viennese people. As Schlingensief was a film and theatre director, it was not difficult for him to envision the whole performative action in which citizens would vote for an asylum seeker who should be expelled not only from the show (like in *Big Brother*) but from the country as well. In time only one participant would stay, receive asylum and be accepted by the citizens. In this artistic reality show participants were real asylum seekers from Africa to Kosovo, and the audiences could affect and govern their lives. As such this project was a warning and an action directed towards citizens and public policy-makers who have easily, under the excuse of democracy, allowed the TV format to ruin privacy and all values which can be considered part of the public good, from social justice to solidarity. It raised a lot of debates regarding the ethics of the performance as such (Schmidt Th. 2011).

This book covers a wide range of topics that show different ways that populist political communication is entering the public realm, but even more to what extent arts, culture and media are influenced by political populism. At the same time, the art works presented in this book offer a wide spectrum of initiatives and projects questioning populism in the public realm and especially in public cultural policies. From the projects of artists such as Yael Bartana and Kristina Norman that deal with ethno-nationalism, through works that question the seductive power of populist media (Naskovski, Đurić, Prodanović, Schlingensief), to the direct

11 <http://www.realfictionfilme.de/filme/auslaender-raus/index.php>

political works of Perjovski and Vocal Curatorial Syndrome that relate to a very concrete political context, and works treating global policies and experiences (Grubanov, Milisković), the art works are in direct dialogue with theoretical texts. We hope that readers will follow the thread of understanding the values that those projects discuss, as artists are often not that descriptive in their presentations.

Besides these projects, in Belgrade cultural practices there are many others that are not questioning populism, but can be considered part of leftist populist art projects. They challenge cultural policy and the art system as such (Karkatag, Ostavinska galerija, Goran Stojčević, Trša Stojanović). Although they were debated during the conference, we felt that they deserve another context to be presented and interpreted within.

The **first chapter** of the book *Populist rhetoric* deals with different forms of political populism present in contemporary Europe and the world, from left-wing populism in Spain to right-wing ethno-national populism of the Srpska Republic.

In the opening article *Populists' influence on the state of democracy in transitional post-communist countries*, Dušan Spasojević analyzes populism as a determinant of the European continent from the perspective of political theory. Considering the thesis that the beginning of the 21st century has been characterized as the golden age of populism, the author makes a comparison between the way that populist discourse is being developed by political parties and leaders in countries with advanced democracy, opposing the countries that were once a part of the Eastern Bloc (Hungary, Poland, etc.), including Serbia. The main argument is that “Eastern” leaders are promoting a rule of the majority by marginalizing checks and balances in mechanisms such as constitutional courts, free media and by suppressing civil societies. Also, populist parties and leaders in many Western countries present themselves as the representatives of the people and protectors of democratic regimes endangered by alienated elites. Spasojević ascertains that populism as the main course of political parties in Europe is one of the most important threats for the future of democracy in transitional countries.

The text by Monika Mokre, *Left-wing populism: the case of Podemos*, based on Laclau's theory of populism, emphasises the way that populism unites "differing claims in chains of equivalences organised by an *empty signifier*". Mokre claims that Podemos has been explicitly founded on the basis of Laclau's theory and that Mouffe's application of it to left-wing politics offers an excellent framework for understanding the successes and failures of Podemos. For populist parties, when they become part of an institutionalised system, it is very difficult to uphold these chains of equivalences and thus the author suggests that elements of class struggle should prevail over nationalist elements that led to Podemos. It is a very important and very accurate case study in Europe where most of populist policies, both left and right, are misusing nationalism as a key force.

Susanne Weichselbaumer's and András Gyulas's research focuses on the Republic of Srpska, a new political entity created during the Yugoslav Wars and the dissolution of the country. As nationalism was a prevailing force in those processes, it was expected that populist nationalist narratives were dominating the official discourse. The paper is based on the case study of the Statehood Day celebrated in 2017 that was organised around the dichotomies "we vs. them", "people vs. elites", "territory of Republic of Srpska vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina", etc. The stress on the use of Statehood Day was even bigger, as numerous foreign politicians, especially from the EU states, questioned the date – the 9th of January, as the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not permit state celebrations on dates linked to ethnic or religious festivities (the 9th of January is St. Stephen Day, but also the day when the first Assembly of the Republic of Srpska was created). The main hypothesis of the text states that the Republic of Srpska uses the populist narrative of "emancipation" while in reality it is an entity in stagnation, in many respects retrograde (ethno-nationalist and retroactive). The authors analyse the political situation from the perspective of the Dayton Agreement, the population, internal politics, and foreign political links, but the main focus is on a rhetoric of celebration as "the development of an epic ethnic culture", with selective explanations about ethno-national battles, wars, victims and heroes stressing their own ethnicity "as better, stronger, more

resilient and more superior". The case, as usually happens with national celebrations, represented the essence of populist narratives used in daily politics throughout the years. The authors analyse both iconography and verbal narratives, starting with flags and guests of honour to the wording and expressions confirming the main thesis about the use of populist political narratives.

The **second chapter** *Populist narrative in media* offers three different texts that deal with media rhetorical strategies, using Trump as an example of the most prominent right-wing political figure in the world to local political party communication strategies in the 2014 elections in Serbia.

The article composed by Danijela Vićentijević, *Rhetorical media strategies: encouraging political populism*, concretizes her survey of populism on Serbian premises. She points out that populism is contemporary in Serbia since the 1990s as both a political and media phenomenon. Back then, populism was not just identified as a communication strategy for leading Serbia's socialist party, run by Slobodan Milosevic, but it was also used as the opposition's instrumentality through "the voice of the people" against Milosevic's government. In her paper, the author analyses the contents of daily and weekly newspapers in Serbia regarding the transmission of political events. She also researches what rhetorical strategies the media uses to influence the audience, and whether media professionals respect ethical codes when they report on political issues. To conclude, this paper indicates the tight bond between political populism and the media that uses it, in the manner of either promoting it or practically implementing it.

By examining the quantity and quality of populism manifested in the mainstream political discourse in Serbia, authors Ana Milojević and Aleksandra Krstić try to make a contextualization from the theoretical approach of Peter Učeň who uses the term "centrist populism" to represent populism in Central and Eastern Europe. A dimensional approach to populism, for example, is party communication during the 2014 elections in Serbia. Although populism is a polyvalent concept, the authors identified a significant consistency around dimensions of populism. Therefore, based on the literature review, the most common dimensions of populism

were abstracted and integrated in this research and contain markers such as: 1) centering people 2) anti-elitism 3) language style 4) crisis discourse and 5) exclusionism.

Considering this theory, the authors research the mean, form and shapes of communication of political parties during the 2014 elections in Serbia. The research subject was the TV debate "Reč na reč", aired between February 21st and March 13th on the public broadcasting service (Radio Television Serbia – RTS). The findings presented are that the actors of the electoral process, in their presentations and political media communication, insisted on: anti-elitism, crisis, and social problems, with this discourse being the most dominant among the representatives of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), the political epigone and heirs of the Serbian Radical Party. Therefore centrist populism has a specific impetus: new-old political actors can almost continuously use a populist repertoire thanks to fake-news.

This research demonstrates that opposition parties (NDS, URS, LDP, DS and DSS)¹² accuse the actual government, political leaders and some ministers of secrecy and lack of transparency, for not listening to the will of the people, enormous expenditures, protecting tycoons, instrumentalizing the media, and the abuse of their positions for personal gain and accumulating wealth. However, besides opposition parties which have the moral and political ground to claim that they will fight against a corrupt regime and the political establishment, parties in power also nurture the same style of communication. They mobilize the electorate by stigmatizing previous governments, blaming them for an irreparable socio-economic crisis.

The last article in this chapter is focused on both the theory and practice of populist rhetoric. The title of the article is *Trump's parallax: populist configuration and the media*, written by Nikola Mladenović. From Gramsci's and Laclau's theoretical work, this paper analyses the way that media communication was exploited

12 NDS – New democratic party; URS – United Regions of Serbia; LDP – Liberal Democratic Party; DS – Democratic Party and DSS – Democratic Party of Serbia.

by American president Donald Trump during the elections, in order not just to win the majority of votes but even to win over ones from formerly traditional democrats. The author ascertains that through his statements, appearance and representations Trump succeeded to build an aggressive, forceful and partly artificial campaign, with results relying mostly on Trump himself, but also on the activity or moreover the weakness of the opponent. However, Trump's approach, which can be evaluated as one-dimensional and narcissistic, sadistic, malignantly aggressive, and necrophiliac (Kellner), in a Machiavellian manner achieved good results. Therefore, it can be seen as very successful and emboldening for other political leaders.

The **third chapter** of the book, *Arts and cultural policy in times of populism and nationalism*, contains five texts that deal with populist art and cultural policies in different areas of the world: Serbia, Finland, the UK, and in different historical moments. The texts deal with popularity and populism, national narratives, misogyny and different strategies and tactics of seducing the masses.

Marie Cazes and Miikka Pyykkonen offer an interesting insight about the Finns party cultural policy that, since 2015, is part of the governmental coalition. The importance of this text is in the fact that this party, although a minor element in the government, has received the portfolio of the Ministry of Culture and thus have the key voice in policy-making. The authors undertook two empirical approaches to investigate Finns party cultural policy: a historical analysis (going back to 1995) of their discourse, using rhetorical analysis as the main method; and the participation of that party in different governing bodies (the Education and Culture Committee of the Parliament, Finnish Public Broadcasting Company, etc.). At the core of their policies are relations to migrants (the Immigration Policy Programme) and efforts to view and represent the Finnish people as homogeneous and unanimous, underlying the importance of „cultural norms“ and that everyone should adapt to those Finnish norms (policies of integration). The major findings of this research are that there are no big differences among right-wing political parties and that there is continuity in nationalist cultural speeches in modern Finnish populist parties. They idealize Finnish

cultural heritage (language, Christianity, industrious people, close relationship to nature) while aesthetic dimensions foster romantic visual arts, patriotic hymns and chants, folk music, singing, dance and stories. Their difference lies mostly in the relation toward migrants: from the direct antipathy of the Finns party towards “alien cultural features” to the more open and welcoming discourse of the Finnish rural party, which even supports minority rights.

Dejan Mitov has selected an interesting issue related to the use of (architectural) scale models by politicians in different periods of populist politics. Although their primary use was to communicate expert knowledge to wide audiences, in populist political communication their role was more of representation and confirmation of the power of the political leader through his appropriation of big urban projects. The author analyses the cases of Hitler, Merkel, Putin, Obama, Tito and Vučić, all seen enjoying themselves in front of (architectural) scale models representing major projects during their governance period. The focus of the paper is on the use of the Belgrade Waterfront (architectural) scale model within contemporary populist political communication. The key question of the author is: are (architectural) scale models used to enable understanding or they are used to turn the attention of the audiences from key problematic issues of urban development to the spectacle of the project?

The text by Neda Radulović, *Populism, nationalism, androcentrism: intersections of populism and nationalism in appropriating the female body*, analyzes narratives of hatred toward the “dangerous other” – migrants and women refusing to give birth. The first are described as dangerous rapists, the second as enemies of the people. Based on Laclau’s definition of ethno-populism, Radulović’s text analyses how official voices and the tabloid media further develop those narratives constructed around enemy figures. These intersections of populism, nationalism, patriarchy and misogyny, presented in two case studies, have shown the extent to which institutional support might enhance narratives of appropriation of the female body and the extent to which ethnic, gender, race and class divisions have to be considered in understanding the construction of populist communication discourses.

In the fourth text in this group, *How to be popular in populist times*, the sociologist of culture Aco Divac faces an important dilemma of contemporary visual artists. Having to succeed on the art market in order to survive, visual artists of today have to become famous and to make their exhibitions popular. Thus, they have to engage with numerous stakeholders, and Divac identifies them as state agencies, corporate capital, experts, museums, media, and social media, among others. He starts with different theories (Bourdieu, Bauman, Jencks, Jameson) and offers an overview of various surveys to discuss popular preferences – surveys done by researchers but also a survey done by the artists Komar and Melamid that has both scientific (quantification of data regarding taste) and artistic perspectives (the piece of art created by Komar and Melamid as a direct response to the expressed taste). Using three case studies, choosing three prominent contemporary British artists (Grayson Perry, Antony Gormly and Damien Hirst), he shows how their work itself is combining social commentary with provocation and challenging complex relationships between artist, gallery, critic and audience.

The text by Strahinja Savić deals with the important issue of the instrumentalisation of memory narratives focusing on the recent medievalisation of national identity narratives in Serbia. Considering those attempts as one form of populist rhetoric Savić offers an important insight in how Serbian identity is reconstructed using the narrative of the Nemanjić dynasty (1166–1371) as *mythomoteur*. At the heart of this attention is the celebration of eight hundred years of the crowning of the first king through the production of a TV serial (RTS, 2018). This myth, kept aside during the time of both the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Socialist Yugoslavia, has its rationale today due to the necessity of the Serbian state to reconceptualise its identity. This necessity was provoked not only by the fact that Belgrade and Serbia were key in defining Yugoslav identity but also by the fact that the so-called modern Serbian state (1804–1918), due to dynastic battles, was choosing heroes from the first Serbian resurrection (Karadorđe) or the second Serbian resurrection (Miloš Obrenović) as *mythomoteurs* neglecting Serbian medieval history. Strahinja Savić analyses the

building of contemporary collective memory and its relationship to present political demands and aspirations. He concludes that populist rhetoric prevails in contemporary cultural memory and memory politics.

* * *

Situating populist politics at the intersection of cultural politics, memory narratives, media representations of nationhood and artistic endeavours that critically assess the public realm, this book offers texts that, mostly through case studies, challenge populist rhetoric and the instrumentalisation of culture. The contemporary culture of fear (Moisi, 2010) is producing different phenomena in the political realm that are easily visible and impactful in artistic production and communication. The art works presented in this book are not comprehensive, but mostly illustrative, raising different questions from those that the academic world is investigating. Artistic, practice-based research is an important part of the explorations in the contemporary world and should always be part of an academic dialogue. A transdisciplinary approach demands more close collaboration between two worlds, which rarely happens due to institutional divisions, different ways of funding and different ways of assessment and evaluation.

The key questions that remain for further debates are: what can be done in the field of arts and culture in order to raise barriers to hostile and assaultive populism; and are networks of experts one of the answers? What works and actions can and should artists themselves offer? Should festivals and manifestations enter in direct dialogue with global and local daily politics? How can arts be celebrated while wars and terrorism are destroying heritage? Can the sector stay silent regarding numerous pressures toward freedom of expression under the pretext of defamation of religion or endangering state security?

It seems that advocating for the professional autonomy of culture, at least as much as it exists in higher education (university autonomy), might be one possibility to prevent attempts at censorship and self-censorship. The task of raising awareness about the means and strategies of populist communication that endanger

democracy and human rights as fundamentals of contemporary societies should be the responsibility of the academic community, cultural programmers and artists. This book is one small step on this path.

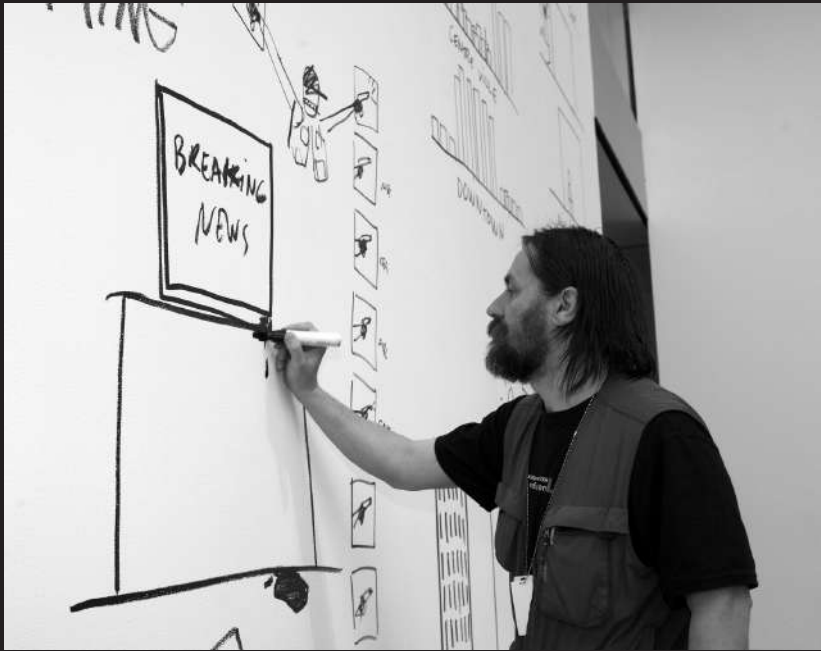
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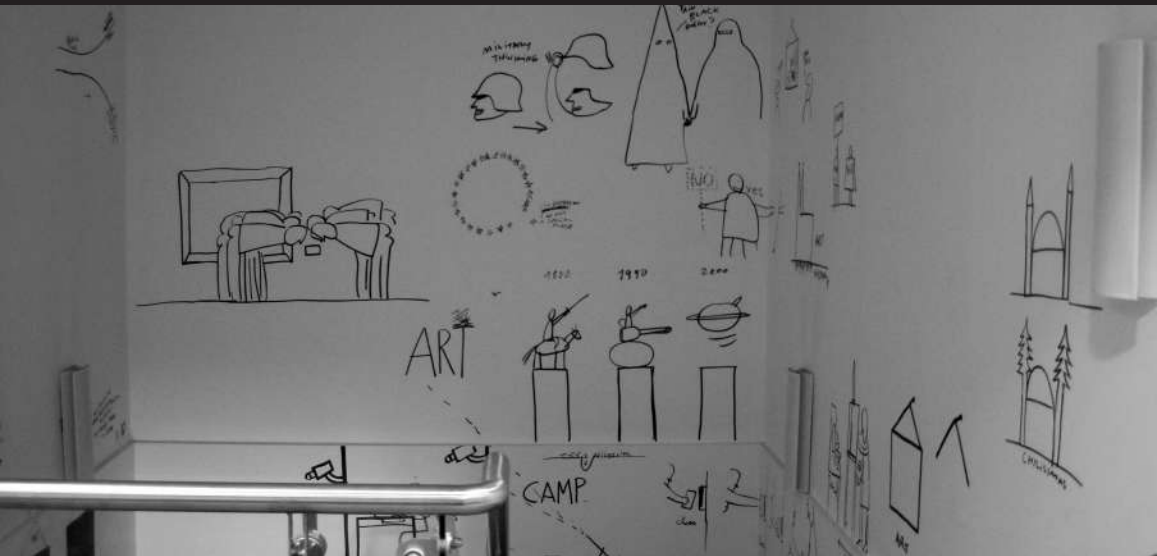
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Part II
POPULIST RHETORICS





Dan Perjovschi: Drawings at the hall of the Milburn house,
Warwick University, October 2007.

Photo: Milena Dragičević Šešić

Romanian artist, writer and cartoonist Dan Perjovschi, follows politics and cultural policy practices since the beginning of the 90s, drawing regularly as a social commentator and a political satirist for the Romanian Magazine 22 under the name Perjo. During several last decades Perjovschi has created numerous body of work including books of drawings that commented current cultural and political situation in the contemporary social context, drawings on journals and newspapers as direct reactions on their populist content or drawings in public spaces such as museums, cultural and university buildings done for temporary exhibitions (like in Romanian pavilion in Venice) or for permanent displays in public buildings (Warwick University). Those drawings in Milburn house at Warwick University, where the Cultural policy department is situated, present political statements in response to different issues that are affecting status of the artist, cultural processes, and different European or global issues that are provoked by raising populism in political communication and in cultural policy practice.

Capitalism, economy, surveillance, geopolitical situation, West – East relations, artistic precariat in contemporary neoliberal society and his subordinated position in the global art world, spectacularity and glamour of art events, militarization of society, raising borders, exclusions of the other, are just few of numerous themes that he is elaborating in his works. The drawing of hanged artist is a red line in his opus.

Dušan Spasojević

*Populists' Influence on the
State of Democracy in Transitional
Post-Communist Countries*

Abstract

The beginning of 21st century has been characterized as the golden age of populism. Populist parties and leaders are taking the lead in many western countries by presenting themselves as the representatives of the people and protectors of democratic regimes endangered by alienated elites. In Eastern Europe, populist parties are challenging the established institutions of liberal democracy and causing the decline and erosion of democratic systems. Strong leaders and parties in Hungary, Poland and Serbia are promoting rule of majority by marginalizing checks and balances mechanisms such as constitutional courts, free media and by suppressing civil societies. Those practices are deepening the crisis of EU and emphasizing the differences between the old and new democracies across the continent. Populism is perceived as the cause and as the amplifier of those processes and as one the most important threats for the future of democracy in transitional countries.

Key words populism, democracy, transition, political parties, ideology

*Populists' influence on the state of democracy in
transitional post-communist countries*

Populism has become a new hot topic – whether it is the new specter or frightful hobgoblin that stalks throughout the world or just

a more efficient alternation of the old phenomenon, populism is omnipresent in political debates, analysts' and scholars' interpretations of politics, (self)identification of political actors and their followers. Therefore, even if recent wave of populism actually did not bring anything new, it has to be perceived and deconstructed with significant scrutiny and attention.

In this paper we are focusing on one specific breed of populism and its effect on one specific breed of democracy. Namely, we are analyzing populist actors in post communist societies and their influence on the performance of transitional democracies. This focus has been chosen because Eastern Europe has become the test ground for the emerging trend – populist parties in power. In contrast to consolidated democracies, where populist parties cannot form government as the primary actors (and still in many cases are not acceptable as part of ruling coalition), in several post communist countries populist parties rule not only as the “senior partners” in government, but also as predominant parties. Also, due to weak institutional design of transitional democracies, populist parties are in position to gain more political, social and economic power because of the low level of checks and balances mechanisms. Therefore, the populist specter in Eastern Europe is stronger and much more frightening!

A troubling definition

Omnipresence of populism produces troubles when it comes to the understanding of the concept. In theory, populism is, among others, perceived as a style of political communication, or more general, as an overall style of conducting politics, as a way of governing or as an ideology. In political and journalistic practices, populism is perceived as a mix of all of the above (and more), as pejorative term used to describe politicians that we do not like or as a trend of simplification, personalization and/or radicalization of politics. Finally, the confusion is emphasized by numerous and various meanings of the word in different languages and by absence of the

word is some languages spoken in countries with strong populist tradition and tendencies (e.g. Italy).

In this paper we are following ideational approach that is defining populism as an ideology. Although this approach can be rooted in classic literature on populism, recent studies are mostly shaped by Cas Mudde (Mudde 2004) argumentation that populism should be understood as thin-centered ideology that is based in the notion that society is divided into two homogenous groups – true, honest people and corrupted elite. Thin centered ideology refers to ideologies that do not have fully developed argumentation compared to the old ones such as liberalism, conservatism or socialism, but still represents a specific and coherent point of view. In the case of populism, thin centre also means that it can be (or it has to be) combined with other ideologies allowing populism to be very adaptable and ideologically heterogeneous including right wing anti-immigrant populist like SVP in Switzerland and leftist anti-party movements like Podemos in Spain. Differences between SVP and Podemos (and variations between many populist parties standing between those two) are warning us that we need to be very careful when classifying such a colorful phenomenon under one concept. The basis for the classification of an actor as a populist has to be the second element of Mudde's definition – understanding that society is divided into two homogenous groups – the people and elite. If we deconstruct this element, we could argue that it contains binary understanding of politics, consequential simplification and polarization, and anti-elitism strengthened with the notion that the people has positive connotation and that populist parties argue to represent people's general will. So, only when there are claims that society is divided between people and elite (which can be supported by different ideological constructs), and when those claims are in the core and the foundation of ideological profile of the party, we can argue that it is a populist party/actor.

However, even with precise and narrow concept, analysis can become complicated – as Deegan Krause (Deegan Krause 2007) writes, parties and political actors should not be grouped between populist and non-populist in binary manner but on continuous scale – as he proposes, populism (as ideology, but this intervention

can also be applied in many alternative understanding of populism) is not solely reserved for populist parties. In contrast, in political practice populism “rubs off” and becomes the part of ideological profile of many parties which, as a consequence, should be classified as more or less populist along the scale connecting non populist with populist end (in the similar manner that would be employed when classifying any other ideology). This becomes more important in the post 2008 crisis world, after the new wave of populist parties and their involvement in governments and parliaments in many European countries, because they have provided evidence of populist success and marked the end of *cordon sanitaire* against the populist parties (and their ideologies) in many societies.

Ideational explanation in the case of populism is superior because of several key arguments: (a) ideology defines the manner of party communication (van Dijk 1997) and party organization (Scarrow 2015) and not vice versa; (b) focus on ideologies enables analysis of parties with opposite ways of governing under one concept (e.g. illiberal tendencies in Poland case and participatory tendencies of Syriza in Greece) and also because (c) ideational approach leads to decreasing of pejorative meaning of populism in Serbian (and similar) languages (Spasojević 2017).

Populism in Eastern Europe – An unexpected outcome of the transition?

Ideational definition of populism is very inclusive and it enables research with a large scope that will include all sides of political spectrum. However, with some recent minor exceptions, relevant Eastern European populist parties can be located in much reduced political space ranging from far right to centre right options. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves – what are the specific ideological foundations of Eastern European populism and how are they connected to the right wing of the political spectrum? The main reasons for this could be located in the structure of political competition in transitional countries that is additionally shaped by

some dominant processes (democratization and Europeanization/globalization) and by legacies inherited from the communist period. Certainly, there are more contributing factors that could be added to this list but the ones mentioned are the key factors behind populist success.

In many transitional democracies, initial basic consensus regarding the outcome of transition has been formulated easily – EU and NATO integrations were the symbols of successful transition for many countries, with just a few minor exceptions (e.g. Serbia can be an example, but only regarding the pace of consensus building, and not regarding the consensus itself). However, after the initial success, political division regarding the interpretation of consequences of EU/NATO membership was established in all countries. This division has often been termed as “mittel Europa’s” division between “return to ourselves” (re-traditionalization of society, searching for inspiration in pre WW2 period) and “return to Europe” (return to European family of nations, formalized through EU membership) or as “great war of values” (Agh 1994) that reflects deep social and political divisions in the society between modernist (occidental, liberal, pro-western forces) and traditionalist (conservative, sovereignistic, authoritarian) forces (Spasojević 2016).

Those divisions did not have structural foundations resembling the old democracies (e.g. as in cleavage theory proposed by Lipset and Rokkan 1967), and party competition in transitional societies was initially “not based on programmatic party competition, but on highly volatile charismatic and clientelistic parties” (Kitschelt 1995: 451) leading to unstable democracies and unstable party systems. Or as Elster, Offe and Preuss argue “social conflicts that typically occur within post-communist societies are of nature other than class conflicts,” and they are initially formed around identity-based issues (Elster, Offe and Preuss 1998). However, it does not mean that the foundation behind the structure of party systems in those countries were completely provisional. In contrast, as Kitschelt (1995: 458) argues, there were three main lines of oppositions: (1) the political struggle concerning the boundaries of citizenship (the key alternatives were between a universalist

conception of citizenship and a particularistic definition of ethnic or cultural status attributed to a collectivity), (2) about the choice of collective political governance structures (political and social liberals endorse participatory collective choice and a broad sphere of individual lifestyle choices beyond the reach of collective political determination, while social and political authoritarians dislike participatory politics and call for the authoritative governance of personal moral conduct) and (3) distributive questions related to economic policies. Those three lines of political competition delivered several models of party systems, depending on social and political character of society, but provided us with similarities between party systems that enable formulation of common patterns and trends of conducting politics.

These initial divisions have been reformulated to some extent within the new European Union framework under the process of “Europeanization”. Bartolini (2005:402-405) finds four different scenarios that depict possible impact of Europeanization on national party systems: 1. Transformation of national lines of division on EU level, 2. European and national level are independent in such a way that EU level divisions do not affect internal cleavages; 3. Transformation of EU issues into national party system which can lead to partition of parties (e.g. in right wing blocks) and 4. Externalization – formation of completely new European cleavage that is independent from previously existing divisions. The impact of Europeanization on party system can be stronger in the case of candidate states when compared to previous cases of member states or successful transitions (Fink Hafner and Krašovec 2006). Following this logic and being focused on Bartolini’s 3rd and 4th scenarios, Europeanization is primarily understood in terms of European pressure on potential candidate states to fulfill the EU’s expectations” (Fink Hafner and Krašovec 2006). As Orlović (Orlović 2007:125) concludes, Europeanization can be observed on 4 levels: on the level of political system, party system, individual party level and internal party relations”.

In a simplified version, political parties operating under transitional framework proposed by Kitschelt found themselves under the pressure of Europeanization and, even more, the specific

version of Europeanization that was dominant during the 90ties and the first decade of 21st century. This period is important because of predominance of value-based politics in the Western Europe in contrast to interest based politics (or, in different words, dominance of issues dealing with values, symbols and ideas instead of the economic issues) and focus of EU on liberal values, human rights, minority rights and many other issues that were less acceptable for many parties in the post-communist Europe.

Already polarized societies of Eastern Europe entered highly ideologized European Union which led to specific merging of predominantly conservative societies of post-communist Europe with more liberal EU societies during value-based phase of politics. This confluence produced fertile soil for the growth of conservative social and political movements that combine nationalism, church-friendly positions and traditionalist ideology with the old grievances regarding shared sovereignty with an outside power. This combination also led to production of narrative on imposed values and alienated local elites that are following outside power-centers more than their citizens' opinions and to general questioning of democratization of newly founded systems. Since this issue was already present in the (old) European Union (regarding the weak influence of the parliament and distance between citizens and decision makers), entrance of new members states with such grievances strengthened this debate and added a new twist.

Furthermore, some of the most important legacies of the communism provided even more incentives for populist ideologies to develop. The core of populism – belief that society is divided into two groups – has been one of the driving forces of the communist breakdown. Perceptions of the communist elites as imposed from the outside (in the cases of states under the Soviet influence) and against the people's will might had been oversimplified (in some cases) but created legacies of distrust regarding the state, institutions and politicians. This distrust has been developed during the communism on two main levels – by the methods of decision making and rule of law (independent administration ruling in non-bias manner that limits corruption and discretionality vs. administration that is based on personal connections, nepotism

and informality) and by allowed levels of political and economical pluralism during communism (repression against vs. cooptation of opposition) (Kitschelt *et al* 1999).

Therefore, the structure of political competition provided circumstances that were favorable for the development of the populism. Predominance of ideological cleavages and focus on political leaders in contrast to programmatic competition between parties, as well as strong pressure from the outside created incentives for the emergence of strong leaders with focus shifted from citizens towards the Brussels' centers of power. Communist legacy of distrust in state and politicians was just reinforced within the new framework. In the following part we will discuss how this can affect the democratic performances.

State of democracy in post-communist world

Specific social and political development of the new democracies in Eastern Europe produces similar outcomes when it comes to democratic performances. Of course, there are significant differences as well, but if we keep our sample limited to the Central European, Baltic and Balkan states trends and patterns are quite common and consistent.

In contrast to the usual binary model that divides countries between democratic and authoritarian, Schedler adopts more nuanced four stages model that includes "authoritarianism, electoral democracy, liberal democracy and advanced democracy" (Schedler 2007: 151). This contextual and perspective-dependent approach is further developed by possible processes depending on whether certain level of democracy is in progress (being "deepened" in Schedler's words) or in decline (process of erosion or even breakdown of democracy). Of course, democratic system can develop and change without being transformed from one level to another, which would be the process of consolidation at the current level. For example, consolidation of electoral democracy (as this is the current status of most post communist countries) would include

free and fair elections and high probability that there are no relevant challengers to the democratic order.

Schedler's approach is important because it stresses the fears and hopes of transitional democracies, providing us with the insight into issues and problems specific for these societies, especially when comparing them with old democracies. Namely, if an old democracy experiences crisis and decline, it can be degraded down toward the electoral democracy in the worst (foreseeable) case. Also, a lack of progress is not necessarily perceived as a crisis but as stagnation on the already developed level of democracy (also because "advanced democracies" represent the highest standards, similar to Dahl's (Dahl 1997) understanding of "democracy" as imagined/desired but unlikely political system). However, in new democracies starting point is lower (closer to the authoritarian end) and any decline of democracy can end up in a non-democratic or hybrid regime; on the other side, a lack of progress of electoral democracy toward liberal democracies (which is presumed process for the new EU member states) is perceived as a failure and deviation from the expected path of political development.

Without getting into detailed comparison between quality of democratic performances in new and old democracies, it would be possible to say that the main difference is related to the institutional design and effectiveness of political institutions. Institutional design refers to political system and the main institutions – are they well founded, are they able to provide balance of powers (check and balances), to ensure accountability and rule of law and to provide citizens with tools for advocacy and organizing (Sartori 2003). Of course, institutional design is not just limited to the formal presence of the institutions, but also to their ability to perform well and to have political effect. Also, democracy is not only about the political system, because it needs support from legal, economical and media system, to name just a few.

So, how is this relevant for ruling populist parties in Eastern Europe? To begin with, populist initial argument is that political elite is alienated and in cahoots with other elites, ignoring the true values and desires of the people. Since populist claim to represent the people and their 'general will' they are engaged in a conflict with

contemporary liberal democracies on several levels. One of them is related to pluralism, because if elite and people are homogenous, the outcome is not pluralistic but the binary one. Also, if the people represent homogeneous group, it can be argued that the outsiders (or the others) represent the threat to the purity and the interests of the people. This becomes even more obvious within the globalized world and European framework where countries share their sovereignty and create common public policies in many fields.

Furthermore, ruling populist parties are facing constraints imposed from the institutional design of liberal democracies. There are many institutions invented to limit majority rule, to perform (or to enhance) oversight functions and to protect rights of political and other minorities, as well as the established constitutional design. Those institutions are created to be independent from the legislative majority in order to perform their duties, but populist claim that they are alienated powers that are not accountable to the people (and therefore they must work for the elite). Populist are also very critical regarding different forms of delegated governance or public-private partnership performing public functions because they are not responsible to the will of the people expressed through elections and majority in the parliament. Studies showed that populist parties in power “keep putting forward proposals and championing initiatives that repeatedly, consistently and purposely clashed with the fundamental tenets of liberal democracy” (Alber-tazzi and Mueller 2013:346).

Therefore, we can argue that populists are in conflict with liberal democracies as such. If populists operate within the political system of liberal democracies they are aware of constraints and of low probability that they will be able to change the overall framework in the foreseeable future. On the other side, populists in Eastern Europe are facing an underdeveloped institutional constraints and weak civil society. As Blokker writes “Democracy can only thrive if the members of democratic community are effectively engaging with the primary rules and values of common existence” (Blokker 2014:xii). In many Eastern European countries, institutions of liberal democracy are introduced just recently and as part of the EU accession process. Therefore, they are not the result of

grass-root demand from citizens, but of top-down decision of the elites and international pressure. Their ability to perform different functions is much weaker and probability of erosion of democracy is quite high.

Populism as the cause of erosions and potential breakdown of democracy

In order to analyze our case we will focus on three Eastern European countries – Hungary Poland and Serbia. These three countries have the most visible examples of ruling populist parties and those parties are the strongest parties in the respective party systems. Hungarian case of Fidesz already fulfills the criteria of Sartori's systems with predominant party (Sartori 2002), while Polish Law and Justice (PiS – Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) and Serbian SNS (Serbian Progressive Party) represent by far the strongest parties, but still lack continuity in power to be classified as predominant. Also, three parties are representative of the right wing populism which is dominant model in transitional countries.

However, those three parties are not examples of the same type of populism. For example, Fidesz and PiS can be classified as classic new right wing populist party – they rely heavily on the national issues, anti-immigrant sentiments, and skeptic positions on the EU. The origins of support of two parties are not the same – Fidesz is driven more by nationalism and PiS gets an enormous support from the Catholic Church. On the other side, SNS formally has pro-EU attitude and avoids nationalism as the main driving force (in an attempt to show that the party is a reformed version of their predecessor Serbian Radical Party), it has no concerns regarding immigrants but still shows significant populist elements – anti-elitism and fight against corruption were the key ideas behind SNS success (Stojiljković 2012).

Fidesz, PiS and SNS are not the only relevant populist parties for this discussion. Interestingly, in all three countries there are additional populist and right wing parties – Jobbik in Hungary,

Dveri in Serbia (they are even closer to populist role model than SNS) or Self-defense (*Samoobrona*) in Poland, but their relevance for the state of democracy is minimal. Also, there are other important parties and actors throughout Eastern Europe but they are not equally influential at this point in time. However, actors like Czech president Zeman or Slovakian party Smer certainly contribute to the populist *zeitgeist* (Mudde 2004) or “Golden Age of Populism” (Agh 2013) in Eastern Europe.

Recent studies are showing the decline of democracy in the countries under our scrutiny (Agh 2013; Blokker 2013). For example, Freedom House yearly report for 2017 (conveniently titled “The False Promise of Populism”) stresses the following facts: Hungary has the lowest ranking in the Central European region and Poland’s score reached its lowest point in the survey since 1990-ties; Serbia is also in decline of 0.24 points since the last stable period in 2010 (Freedom House 2017). This erosion of democracy is part of the larger trend in the region: “more than half of the 29 countries in the report had declines in their Democracy Scores”; also, “for the first time since 1995, there are now more consolidated authoritarian regimes than consolidated democracies” (Freedom House 2017).

If we focus on Hungary and Poland for the beginning, both countries show similar pattern of decline of democratic standards. Immediately after gaining power Fidesz (2010) and PiS (in 2005 and 2015) launched strong pressure on the independence of judiciary system. Both governments were aiming at constitutional court with intention to violate the checks and balances system (Agh 2013). During the first government, PiS tried to put pressure on constitutional court and to limit the independence of judiciary system by strengthening of the prosecution linked to the ministry in order to fight ‘liberal laws’ and corporations of ‘lawyers and judges’ (Albertazzi and Mueller 2013). In both cases EU Commission criticized the reforms and in both cases government responded by arguing the majority rule and sovereignty of two nations. Media system was tackled immediately after the legal one. In Polish case, since 2015, public broadcaster has been turned into “party mouthpiece”, producing antagonistic public discourse against other political actors (Freedom House 2017), similar to previous reform

that gave significant benefits to PiS friendly Catholic station Radio Maria (Albertazzi and Mueller 2013).

After reshaping the political system to their benefit, both governments tried to define the other, or the enemy. In the recent years Fidesz has launched strong campaign against civil society and Soros' Open Society Institute, while PiS has created political division between them and other social and political actors "reserving the harshest words for its political enemies—a category that encompasses independent judges, civil society activists, critical media outlets, and anyone else who disagrees with the ruling party and its leader, Jarosław Kaczyński" (Schenkkan 2017:10).

In the Serbian case, SNS realized that it does not have to influence political system as such (and that it would be dangerous because of the 'old regime legacy' of the party leadership), and that similar outcome can be achieved through the appointments of loyal individuals (similar strategy has been adopted by Fidesz in some cases). During the first years of SNS government, the party initiated conflicts with almost all regulatory and oversight bodies. In almost all cases SNS waited for the expiry of the mandate to appoint acceptable individuals on leading positions in those institutions and thus avoided (or at least weakened) the accusation for the removal of political opponents and endangering the democratic order. In rare cases SNS leadership was challenged about those decisions but they used the majority rule argument and even invited civil society representatives to compete in elections if they want to influence public policies and appointment process.

It is interesting to note the differences regarding the international affairs. PiS and Fidesz have strong anti-immigrant policies and they rejected quota approach introduced by the Brussels. This was also a part of the wider political front between the Visegrad group and EU mostly regarding dominant values promoted by the EU and the expectation that new member states should protect and embrace various standards regarding human, minority rights and rule of law. Serbian government adopted friendly approach during the 2015/16 migrant crisis (also because refugees does not want to stay in Serbia) and organized transfer for the refugees in coordination with the EU. As stated, SNS tries to remain on the

EU friendly path, in contrast with PiS and Fidesz who run anti-EU politics. However, SNS's pro-EU standpoint is followed by implementation of clear pro-EU policies but with many concerns, gradual and mixed messages. In somewhat simplifying manner, it could be argued that SNS is pro-EU because of economical and practical reasons, and not because it shares EU values. Similar position is also visible regarding the regional issues where SNS usually has a general positive frame (e.g. Serbian government is devoted to the Brussels talks with Pristina) followed by many statements that produce ethnic distance between Serbs and Albanians or other ethnic groups.

In the wider framework, the mentioned developments show the EU “inability to take disciplinary action when leaders in current and aspiring member states violate the rules—is no less threatening to democracy’s future. From Hungary and Poland to accession candidate Serbia, there are still no consequences for politicians and parties that undermine their countries’ independent institutions” (Schenkkan 2017:4). This is even more obvious in the Serbian case when “attacks on civil society and the press, hollowing out independent institutions happen even as they moved ahead with EU accession” (Schenkkan 2017:2).

So, what are the roots of this decline and can we make connections with the populism as ideology? In our opinion, almost all dimensions of the decline can be traced back to the populist elements in ideologies of the three ruling parties. All of them have been devoted to majoritarian rule and against the independence of regulatory and oversight institutions – SNS, Fidesz and PiS have issues with pluralism and they engage in harsh conflicts with political opponents, civil society representatives and media representatives. Although there are some significant differences regarding EU policies (different levels of cooperation and opposition), all parties also have *the others* in the core of their communication strategies and use fears and hopes of the population to increase their support. This, however, does not mean that populism is the only root of the decline – in many cases populism is intertwined with authoritarian tendencies, strong leadership and general lack of participatory politics in respective parties and societies. Populism is the layer

that provides additional strength, causes enthusiasm among voters and supporters and creates international legitimacy and synergy between populist actors.

Conclusion

Consolidation of democracy in Eastern Europe has been perceived as continued progress which should eventually end at the stage of developed liberal democracies. In contrast, almost all countries are showing troubles with sustaining basic liberal democratic standards, and some countries are even sliding back toward the illiberal and hybrid regimes. Erosion of democracy can be related to the 'golden age of populism', although it does not have to be the only reason for the crisis. Populists are using structural opportunities and overall crisis of democracy to gain extensive public support and to promote themselves as the defenders and rescuers of the democracy. Those patterns are not limited to post-communist societies and populist successes in the Western world are visible as well, and they are even providing legitimacy to the Eastern counterparts. However, the effect of populist rule in transitional societies is much stronger due to weaker constitutional design and lack of support to democratic values and practices that would come from institutions, legal system and civil society.

Therefore, we can observe the process of divergence between the EU states based on different understanding of democracy and some of the fundamental values (e.g. human rights, minority rights, etc), differences which are being both caused by and used by populist actors. This divergence can be translated to the EU institutions and cause additional political issues between member states, influencing further the development of democracy of member states and EU as such, as well as the process of the EU enlargement and democratization of candidate states like Serbia. This process can be even more impactful in the case of great crisis similar to 2008 economic crisis or in the case of continuity of migrant crises.

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Tanja Ostojić: “Misplaced Women? and The Tourist Suitcase”, 60 min performance; a violent attack on Tanja Ostojić by a local church activist, at the Goldenes Dahl, Altstadt, Innsbruck, 2018. Photo: Daniel Jarosch. Copyright: Tanja Ostojić



Tanja Ostojić: “Misplaced Women? and The Tourist Suitcase”, 30 min performance. The member of radical right wing party dressed in a local folk costume made an aggressive act toward Tanja Ostojić, at the Goldenes Dahl, Altstadt, Innsbruck, 2018.

Photo: Daniel Jarosch. Copyright: Tanja Ostojić



Tanja Ostojić: “Misplaced Women? and The Tourist Suitcase”, 60 min performance; a violent attack on Tanja Ostojić by a local church activist, at the Goldenes Dahl, Altstadt, Innsbruck, 2018.

Photo: Daniel Jarosch. Copyright: Tanja Ostojić

Tanja Ostojić: “Misplaced Women?” (2009–2019)

Misplaced Women? is an ongoing art project by Tanja Ostojić, Berlin based internationally renowned performance and interdisciplinary artist of Serbian origin. The project consists of performances, performance series, workshops, delegated performances and stories, ongoing since 2009, including contributions by international artists and people from diverse backgrounds. Within this project we embody and enact some of everyday life activity that signifies a displacement as common to transients, migrants, war and disaster refugees, as it is to the itinerant artists travelling the world to earn their living. Those performances and writings are continuing themes of migration, desired mobility, and relations of power and vulnerability in regards to the mobile and in the first line female body as in numerous previous works of mine.

Participants are invited to perform “Misplaced Women?” and to share their experiences in the project frame: Archive on the web blog, in Exhibition rooms and during public discussions. Locations for performances suggested include migration specific places: train stations, airports, borders, underground, police stations, refugee camps, specific parks, prisons, etc. Contributions are posted in the form of images, notes, stories, drawings or videos to the projects blog:

<https://misplacedwomen.wordpress.com/>

There are over 90 blog entries published since 2009 already.

Monika Mokre

Left Wing Populism: The Case of Podemos

Abstract

The chapter analyzes the successes and crises of the Spanish Party “Podemos” on the base of the theory of populism by Ernesto Laclau. For Laclau, populism is not based on a specific community or linked to specific political aims but it forms a social logic which can be understood as the logic of the political par excellence. Populism unites differing claims in chains of equivalences organized by an “empty signifier”, a particular content claiming universality. “The people” can be such an empty signifier as well as a political leader. By its claim for universality, the empty signifier constructs a people instead of representing it. In this vein, populism is challenging existing hegemonies. “Podemos” has been explicitly founded on the base of Laclau’s theory as well as of Mouffe’s application of it to left wing politics and has been extraordinarily successful over several years. However, in 2017, “Podemos” faced two crises – a power fight of its leaders with regard to political coalitions and differing positions on the independence of Catalonia. The successes as well as the crises of “Podemos” can be explained on the base of Laclau’s theory: The success of “Podemos” has been based on the ability of the party to create long chains of equivalences. The internal power fight shows the difficulties of populist parties to uphold these chains of equivalences once they become part of an institutionalized system. And the question of Catalonia can be understood as heterogenous to the chain of equivalences of “Podemos” and, therefore, led to a displacement of this chain.

Against this background, the paper asks towards its end for the conditions of a successful left wing populism and suggests to

emphasize the elements of class struggle in populism while being critical against its national(ist) elements.

Key words Ernesto Laclau, Podemos, left wing populism, class struggle, nationalism

Introduction

In an essay from 1980, Stuart Hall (1980: 157) mentions that the populist appeal – hitherto a quality of the left – has been usurped by the right. Less than 40 years later, the leftist claim to be the representative of “the people” and, thus, to be populist has mostly been abandoned; populism is associated with the “new right”.

However, out of a Marxist perspective, it was clear until the 1970’s that popular support is something leftists should and could count on. After all, the left represented the proletariat and, thus, the masses of the people. Even then, however, it remained an open question if the proletariat felt, in fact, also represented by the left. And over the decades we could perceive an increasing mutual disenchantment between the left and the proletariat. On the one hand, the proletariat of the times of Marx lost a lot of its importance and quantitative weight due to the automatization of industrial production, the shift of work places to services, digitalization etc. Thus, leftists also shifted their interest, from economic exploitation by the owners of the means of production to rather liberal demands, e.g. for sexual liberation, gender equality, anti-racism etc. Thus, according to Žižek (2000: 322-323), we nowadays face a new form of class struggle:

On the one hand, we have the so-called ‘symbolic class’ [...] all those whose domain of work is the virtual symbolic universe. On the other, there are the excluded in all their variations [...]. In between, there is the notorious ‘middle class’, passionately attached to the traditional modes of production and ideology [...] and attacking both extremes, big business and academics as well as the excluded, as ‘un-patriotic’, ‘rootless’ deviations.

In this formation, leftists frequently form part of the ‘politically correct’ symbolic class defending the rights of the excluded against the ‘fundamentalist’ middle class who forms the base of right wing populism.

For Žižek, we can see here a new form of (globalized) capitalism undermining its own roots as predicted by Karl Marx. We shall come back to this argument, its presuppositions and consequences, towards the end of this paper. In contemporary societies, however, we can perceive steady and broad successes of populist parties and movements on the base of not only the middle classes but also the elites and the excluded. As well as the maybe more interesting fact forming the focus of this paper that populism cannot only be found on the right but also on the left, most prominently in the cases of Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece. Thus, the question arises if populism can really be directly linked to a specific societal class.

Populism as a Social Logic

This is fiercely denied by Ernesto Laclau (2005) who understands populism as a social logic not based on a specific community (or people) but constructing this people. In this understanding, the starting point of a populist movement is not the unity of a group; populism is based on sets of demands (Laclau 2005: ix). This concept is derived from the specific version of post-structuralist theory that Laclau developed together with Chantal Mouffe in their eminent book “Hegemony and Socialist Strategy” (Laclau/Mouffe 1985). Here, they criticized the essentialist parts of Marxist thought and rejected the concept of the proletariat, the working class, as the necessary and only revolutionary force able to overthrow capitalism. Instead, they maintained that there is no objective foundation for political struggle and political success. The political as well as our general understanding of the world are based on discourse as we can only perceive of this world through discourse. This concept goes back to structuralism, above all Ferdinand de Saussure who said that signifiers (i.e. parts of discourse)

are only defined by their relationship to other signifiers, not by their relationship to a signified (cf. Laclau 2005: 25).

Post-structuralism in the version of Laclau and Mouffe differs from structuralism in two ways: First, de Saussure understands a discourse as a closed system whereas Laclau and Mouffe maintain that discourses can never be really closed and stable but are only temporary stabilizations and prone to displacement and change. And, secondly, for Laclau and Mouffe, a discourse does not only encompass lingual expressions but includes practices and institutions (Laclau/Mouffe 1985: 147).

A discourse consists of chains of equivalences bound together by an empty signifier (Laclau/Mouffe 1985: 150). Such an empty signifier can be “the people”. “[T]he people’ is [...] one way of constituting the unity of the group.” (Laclau 2005: 73) “We, the people” does not really say a lot about who we are – but, precisely by this blurredness of the concept, different claims can be united, e.g. for better housing, better jobs, higher wages, affordable education. These claims become equivalent with regard to the empty signifier “the people”.

At the same time, populism creates a “frontier of exclusion [which] divides society into two camps. The ‘people’, in that case, is something less than the totality of the members of the community: it is a partial component which nevertheless aspires to be conceived as the only legitimate totality.” (Laclau 2005: 81). This aspiration to be a totality is always and necessarily threatened by the outside of the construction of the “people” and this outside can break up the chain of equivalences – as equivalences are not identical but equivalent only with regard to a specific empty signifier. They can be re-arranged into another discourse due to other equivalences (Laclau 2005: 70).

Thus, all moments of a discourse are, at the same time, different and equivalent. Two logics are at work – the logic of difference and the logic of equivalence (Laclau 2005: 78). The predominance of one or the other logic forms for Laclau the difference between a populist discourse (based on equivalence) and a democratic or institutionalist discourse (based on differentiality). “[A]n

institutionalist discourse is one that attempts to make the limits of the discursive formation coincide with the limits of the community. So the universal principle of ‘differentiality’ would become the dominant equivalence within that homogenous communitarian space” (Laclau 2005: 81) whereas, in populism, a part of the community, the “*plebs* [...] claims to be the only legitimate *populus* – that is, a partiality [wants] to function as the totality of the community.” (Laclau 2005: 81) Out of this understanding, he asserts that “populism is the royal road to understanding something about the ontological constitution of the political as such” (Laclau 2005: 67) as “the political operation *par excellence* is always going to be the construction of a ‘people’.” (Laclau 2005: 153) This definition of the political is based on the difference between the social and the political: While the social is the field of sedimented articulatory practices understood as “objectivity”, the political is the reactivation of the contingent nature of this objectivity (Laclau/Mouffe 1985: 19). The political constitutes itself by the possibility of transforming discourses by articulation. The discourse understood as totality at one point of time is the hegemonic discourse of this time, successfully maintaining its own universality. The political is, thus, the struggle for hegemony. Insofar as a populist discourse (as opposed to an institutionalist one) aims at dislocating an existing discourse, i.e. at reaching hegemony, it is the political discourse proper.

This logic and function qualifies populism, according to Laclau, and, thus, populism can adopt different contents – it is not specifically tied “to a class, ideology, or a kind of society.” (Judis 2016) “That is why, between left-wing and right-wing populism, there is a nebulous no-man’s-land which can be crossed – and has been crossed – in many directions.” (Laclau 2005: 87)

However, there are some general features of populist claims acknowledged by Laclau, especially the reactivation of the Lincoln formula for democracy, “government of the people, for the people, and by the people:

[T]he ‘people’ is the sovereign of the political regime and the only legitimate referent to interpret social, economic and cultural dynamics, (2) power elites, especially political ones, have betrayed the

‘people’ by no longer fulfilling the functions for which they have been appointed; (3) it is necessary to restore the ‘primacy’ of the people [...]. (Surel, quoted after Laclau 2005: 176)

Furthermore, Laclau agrees with many other theorists that the figure of a strong leader is part and symptom of populism. This is due to the fact that populism arises when the institutional/differential order becomes increasingly precarious. In this situation, a chain of equivalences of hitherto heterogeneous moments has to be constructed by one singularity. “But the extreme form of singularity is an individuality. In this way, almost imperceptibly, the equivalential logic leads to singularity, and singularity to identification of the unity of the group with the name of the leader.” (Laclau 2005: 100).

The Practice: Podemos and Populism

Laclau mainly aims at an analytical understanding of populism on the base of post-structuralist theory. However, as he as a leftist thinker understands populism as the political *par excellence* it is obvious – although not made explicit – that he claims for a populism of the left. Chantal Mouffe is here more outspoken:

My position [...] is that a contemporary project for the radicalization of democracy requires the development of a ‘left-wing populism.’ That requires the construction of a new political identity. [...] The left has to ‘construct a people’ not simply to represent a pre-existing historical formation such as the working class or a single cause like feminism or ecology. (Mouffe/ Errejón, quoted after Judis 2016) The choice today is between rightwing or leftwing populism. (Mouffe, quoted after Tremlett 2015).

The first quotation comes out of the book “Construir pueblo” (Constructing a people), published by Mouffe and Iñigo Errejón Galván (Mouffe/ Errejón 2015), the second one out of an interview Mouffe gave to Errejón. And Errejón is one of the leading figures of Podemos (“We can”), the Spanish party which has become completely unexpectedly successful during the last years. From the

beginning, Podemos was constructed on the base of Laclau's theory of populism and Mouffe's more concrete political application of this theory.

Podemos was founded in March 2014. The party had developed out of the movement 15 M (or Indignados) and, since its foundation, it had successes in seven important elections. From the beginning, Podemos has maintained that it did not define itself as the representative of the left but represented the frustrated masses who had taken to the streets in 2011 and mainly consisted of middle-class people. Podemos has directed its actions against the corrupted government, *la casta*, the caste (Tremlett 2015).

The populist strategy of Podemos is based on two elements which stand in a certain tension, if not contradiction to each other.

The first element consists of basic democracy and transparency. The election manifesto for the first election in which Podemos took part, the elections to the European Parliament in 2014, was written in a participatory way. The party members (respectively those who were interested in participating; official membership was not required) were organized in so-called circles and developed ideas which then were voted on online. As was to be expected, the result was original but also uneven, combining very radical demands with rather modest ones. Some of the more radical ones, such as a basic state salary for all citizens and non-payment of "illegitimate" parts of the public debt, have not really played a decisive role in Podemos' politics since then. Still, arguably, Podemos is far advanced in terms of transparency and possibilities of participation in comparison to other parties. In this vein, the party's website makes transparent all spending, including salaries, and provides voting tools and possibilities for online debate (Tremlett 2015).

The other element of Podemos' strategy, however, and, arguably, the more important one is the charisma of its second leading figure besides Errejón, Pablo Iglesias. Before he became a politician, Iglesias was already a media person. "Doing politics for real is doing politics inside TV sets and in the newspapers. They're much more important than parliaments," says Iglesias in a film about Podemos, "Política, Manual de Instrucciones" (Politics, a Handbook) (Torres 2016). From 2010 onwards, Iglesias organized

round-table-discussions under the header “La Tuerka” for a small TV station which became a cult show online. From 2013 onwards, he presented a show in the Spanish-language-television service of Iran, called “Fort Apache”. And, also in 2013, he appeared in a right wing debate show and was able to leave such an impression that, from this time onwards, he was continuously invited to talk shows and debates (Tremlett 2015).

Podemos is staging all publicity with great care. This is even mirrored in the name of the party. “Podemos” reminds of a common Spanish protest slogan “Sí se puede!” (Yes it can be done!) as well as of Obama’s campaign slogan “Yes, we can!” and 15-M Acampada Sol’s humourous take on it, “Yes, we camp”. And, still, the name does not imitate one of these models but is something new (Flesher Fominaya 2014).

Public events by “Podemos” also follow a meticulous staging concept as can be seen on the example of a rally before the EP-elections:

Loudspeakers pumped out Patti Smith’s “People Have the Power” to 8,000 people packed into the basketball stadium (...) as Iglesias and Errejón appeared to raucous applause. (...) Iglesias read out a letter from Nerea, a girl who was there on her ninth birthday. “We like you because you help people,” it said. “Thank you for giving my parents hope again.” (...) “They [the establishment] aren’t afraid of me, Nerea. They are afraid of you and families who have said, ‘That’s enough!’,” said Iglesias, before segueing into a series of slogans: “The smiles have changed sides”; “Of course we can!” (Tremlett 2015)

Podemos appeals to the emotions of people. Their campaign slogan for the EP elections was: “When was the last time you voted with excitement?” (Flesher Fominaya 2014) Podemos also uses well the dichotomy, “we, the people” versus “la casta” in its campaigns: The campaign letters by Iglesias were not mailed but hand delivered to mailboxes, and in the letter he wrote:

This letter did not reach you by post, because mailing a letter like this all over the country costs over 2 million Euros. Ask the parties

who sent you an election letter by post where they got the money to do so and in exchange for what. (...) If you are reading this it is because someone who lives near you wants to change things for real. (Flesher Fominaya 2014).

And, in fact, the campaigns of “Podemos” rely to a very high degree on the support of volunteers. But also these volunteers are meticulously educated in media tactics. Again, we can see that in the film “Politica. Manual de Instrucciones” where Errejón instructs new party members:

You need to clean up your Twitter and your Facebook feeds, and you need to think about everything that you’ve ever said, done, sung or shouted, assuming that it’s all going to come out. And don’t think in legal terms. You are surely not guilty of anything, but that doesn’t matter at all because there’s only something worse than being guilty: it’s looking guilty,’he says. Errejón himself spoke of Podemos’ campaign as an “electoral war machine. (Torres 2016).

The Tensions: Coalition Debates and the Catalan Independence

The success of Podemos since 2014 has been unprecedented in Spanish politics – but, still, it fell behind the expectations of the party. Iglesias and Errejón wanted to establish Podemos as the leading opposition party in Spain but in the national elections of 2015 and 2016¹ Podemos remained on the third position after the conservative PP and the social-democratic PSOE. This led to a struggle for policy direction which was, at the same time, a power struggle between the two leading figures Iglesias and Errejón: While Errejón wanted to form a government coalition with the social-democrats,

1 After the elections of 2015, negotiations between the conservative party Partido Popular and the social-democratic party Partido Socialista Obrero Español were unsuccessful; thus, there were fresh elections in 2016.

Iglesias wanted to continue to cooperate with the leftist parties with whom Podemos had an electoral alliance in 2016. Iglesias remained the victor of this struggle; however, Podemos came out weakened of this conflict.

The power struggle between Iglesias and Errejón can be interpreted according to the concept of Laclau (2005) as a disruption of the chain of equivalences created by Podemos. Up to this point, the respective positions of the two leading figures seemed to be clearly defined and harmonious – Iglesias as the charismatic front figure, Errejón as the theoretician in the background (Martínez-Bascuñán 2017). Politically, the party always emphasized its roots in the movement 15 M and adopted from this movement the concept of “transversalism”, of being neither left nor right but on the side of the majority of the population deceived by the minority of the “casta”. This concept is very clearly based on the thought of Laclau and Mouffe and represented within Podemos by Errejón. Iglesias, on the other hand, rather comes out of a classical Marxist position (Polo 2017). At the same time, he is the one personalizing the politics of Podemos (Polo 2017).

The contradictory strategy of broad participation, on the one hand, and a leading figure, on the other one, can be ascribed to the two party leaders. While Iglesias is the charismatic leader, Errejón stands for horizontal structures, direct democracy, and work at grassroot level (Polo 2017). Thus, in the case of Podemos, the rupture of the chain of equivalences can be associated with its two leading figures.

Still, the chain did not break down – probably due to two facts: First, Errejón tried hard to avoid a break; according to some observers he reacted in a calm and considerate way to a very harsh campaign against him by Iglesias and, also, he always maintained that he did not want to compete for party leadership with Iglesias (Polo 2017). Secondly, a considerable part of the party base did not want to understand the power fight between Iglesias and Errejón as a deep split of the party itself but fiercely voted for upholding unity (Polo 2015).

The whole situation leading to the conflict furthermore shows a fundamental problem of populist movements once they get into

power positions, i.e. become part of the institutionalist order. The chain of equivalences created by the dichotomy of “us, the people” and “them, the power holders” necessarily breaks down up to some degree. As part of the institutional order, a party can probably fulfill certain demands while it has to reject, ignore, or postpone other ones. Formulated in a more conceptual way, in order to remain in power (or to enlarge its power position), it has to split up the equivalences of resistance, it has to transform – as far as possible – populist demands to democratic demands which can be dealt with individually (cf. Laclau 2005: 81-82). In the concrete case of Podemos this led to the necessity to differentiate between the claim to represent the majority (which would make it plausible to form a coalition with the largest party, the social-democratic PSOE) and the claim to fight against the caste (of which the PSOE is clearly a part), and, thus, to form coalitions with left-wing parties clearly not representing the majority.

It is unavoidable that, in such a situation, a party is losing support, that the chain of equivalences is reduced and new chains of equivalences are created out of those demands which no longer part form part of the former. In this vein, other protest movements in Spain profited from the power fight of Podemos. These movements are still rather grassroot organizations without institutional links to the government, such as the “Ayuntamientos del Cambio” (Communities of change), the “Plataforma de Afectados por las Hipotecas” (Platform of those affected by mortgages), the “Compromís en la Comunidad Valenciana (Commitment to the community of Valencia), as well as the still existing movement 15M (Polo 2017). Here again, it becomes clear that populism is a social logic which can be (or has to be) given up by some parties or movements at a certain point in time and taken up by other ones.

The second breaking test for Podemos was the Catalanian claim for independence. Catalonia held a referendum on its independence in October 2017; this referendum was deemed illegal by the Spanish government and it was accompanied by massive police violence of the Spanish central state. The voter turnout was 43% of which more than 90% voted for independence (Sharman et. al. 2017). Arguably, most opponents of independence boycotted the

referendum as they saw it as illegitimate. Catalonia declared unilaterally its independence, the central government withdrew the autonomy of Catalonia and since then, Catalonia has been directly governed by Madrid. The head of the Catalonian government, Carlos Puigdemont, was accused of treason and left the country, several other Catalonian politicians were imprisoned (Minder 2017). In the regional elections of December 2017, the independence parties again won the majority of votes (Hartigan 2018). The parliament wanted to re-elect Puigdemont but the Spanish Constitutional Court ruled that Puigdemont could only be inaugurated when present in person. However, his re-entry on Spanish territory would lead to his imprisonment (Strange 2018). At the time, this text is written further developments remain unclear.

Podemos changed its position on the independence of Catalonia several times, the question led to a split between the Catalonian branch Podem and the national party, and the leading role of Iglesias became, at the same time, more pronounced and more contested in this conflict. In early summer 2017, Iglesias opposed the referendum, during the time of the referendum, he showed some sympathy and also maintained that his position on this issue were of minor importance as he were not Catalan. When one of the co-founders of Podemos, Carolina Bescansa, criticized Podemos for being pro-independence she was replaced in the constitutional commission of the Spanish Senate by another Podemos member (Mármol 2017). On the other hand, the leadership of Spanish Podemos took over party leadership in Catalonia as the party leader there, Albano Dante Fachin, did not inform national headquarters how he intended to vote on independence in the regional chamber (Solé Altimira 2017). For the Catalonian elections in December 2017, Podem formed an alliance with “Catalunya en Comú” (Catalonia in common), the party of the mayor of Barcelona, Ada Calau. The alliance took over the position of “Catalunya en Comú” opposing unilateral independence as well as direct rule by the Spanish government. It got 8% of the votes which has been seen as a defeat by Podemos members and has led to increased critique of Iglesias’ position on this question, especially from those Podemos politicians in favor of Spanish unity (Noguer 2017).

Thus, the chain of equivalences forming Podemos was split up due to a conflict not foreseen in the structure and claims of the party. In Laclau's wording (2005: 139-140), the claim for independence formed a heterogenous claim, it was not antagonistic to the chain of equivalences – which would mean that it were “fully represented as the negative reverse of a popular identity” (Laclau 2005:139) – it was exterior “not just to something within a space of representation, but to the space of representation as such (Laclau 2005: 140). There was no possibility for this claim to enter the chain of equivalences of claims represented by Podemos; thus, when it entered the discourse, it dislocated it.

Conclusions

The example of Podemos can be seen as a case in point par excellence for the theory of Laclau and, especially, his assessment that populism is a social logic, a way of constructing the political as opposed to the sedimented social order. It also shows how a movement based on this social logic (1) can lose momentum due heterogenous claims displacing its chain of equivalences and (2) is apt to organize opposition and resistance but not governance and institutionalization. Both problems can be clearly foreseen out of Laclau's conceptualization of populism, respectively the political; however, they lead to some doubt with regard to the question if populism is, in fact, a form of activism and organization the left should strive for.

The problem here seems to be that Laclau resolutely upholds that populism cannot and should not be linked to a specific group or to specific claims as (1) a group is only constructed by a chain of equivalences, and (2) populist chains of equivalences can include all kinds of claims. Out of this position, Laclau and Mouffe criticize Gramsci on whose considerations on hegemony their theory is based to a large degree: “[F]or Gramsci, the final core of the articulating instance – or the collective will – is always what he calls a fundamental class of society [...] This is what Chantal Mouffe and

I, in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* called the last remainder of essentialism in Gramsci.” (Laclau 2005: 127). Laclau is even harsher in his critique of Žižek who holds a similar position to Gramsci in this regard:

[M]y point of contention with Laclau here is that I do not accept that all elements which enter into hegemonic struggle are in principle equal: in the series of struggles (economic, political, feminist, ecological, ethnic, etc.) there is always one [class struggle] which, while it is part of the chain, secretly overdetermines its very horizon. [...] [I]t structures in advance the very terrain on which the multitude of particular contents fight for hegemony. (Žižek, quoted after Laclau 2005: 233-234).

To this, Laclau answers: “Either overdetermination is universal in its effects [...] or it is a regional category surrounded by an area of full determination, which becomes the field of a fundamental ontology, while legislating the limits within which overdetermination is able to operate.” (Laclau 2005: 237) Now, on the one hand, it seems that Laclau exaggerates the consequences of Žižek’s argument by claiming that it leads to “full determination” and a “fundamental ontology”. On the other hand, he is certainly right that Žižek uses class struggle as a regional – or partial category – adequate to political struggles in capitalism, i.e. to all political struggles which can be observed nowadays. Thus, certainly, Žižek’s focus on class struggle is more limited than Laclau’s attempt to explain all kinds of political struggles – but precisely due to this limitation it might also be more useful for concrete political thought and acts. In a way, Laclau himself concedes a similar point in his discussion of Žižek when he writes: “The truth is that the economy is, like anything else in society, the locus of an overdetermination of social logics, and its centrality is the result of the obvious fact that the material reproduction of society has more repercussion for social processes than do other instances.” (Laclau 2005: 237) If we thus agree (as Laclau certainly would) that we live in a capitalist economic system, the centrality of this fact seems obvious. Obviously, this is not to say that a contemporary analysis of class struggle should not be

different from the analysis Karl Marx developed for his time – including a precise understanding of the difference between “class by itself” and “class for itself” which could explain the specific claims and disenchantments of the so-called middle class figuring prominently in right wing and left wing populism.

It is worth mentioning here that the examples Laclau frequently uses for populist claims – better housing, better jobs, higher wages, affordable education (cf. Laclau 2005:73) – are clearly class related claims. It might be even more important to point out that the term “people” used by Laclau as well as by the populist movements he is analyzing is also not an ahistorical one but positioned on a mapped terrain – whereas “mapping” can be understood literally here as “the people” is usually understood as the national people. This can be seen in Laclau’s examples, e.g. when he approvingly describes the political strategy of the Italian communist party, PCI, as “resolutely ‘national’”. (Laclau 2005: 186). Thus, reading Laclau a bit against his own presuppositions, it seems plausible to assume that the success of populist claims is – partly – based on the ability of populism to include existing understandings of society and its antagonisms in its chains of equivalences. And that the most effective understandings of society are based on the antagonism of classes and the antagonism between the “national people” and foreigners. These two understandings can overlap, e.g. in resistance against foreign investors taking “our” capital or migrants taking “our” jobs and increasing possibilities for national wage dumping. Also, Catalonia is a case in point as it is certainly not by chance that the richest part of Spain claims independence in a situation of an ongoing economic crisis of the central state. Still, fundamentally, national(ist) populism and populism based on class struggle are heterogenous to each other.

Thus, finally, the question arises if and under which circumstances left wing populism should be seen as desirable. This is, obviously, a normative and not an analytical question. Equally obvious is the answer to it: Left wing populism is desirable (or, to put in another way: Populism can only be classified as left wing populism) when and if it is based on some form of class struggle, on the claim for just and equal distribution of resources. Such an

understanding of left wing populism would also make it easier to decide which claims should be part of a left wing populist chain of equivalences and how a left wing populist party should act when it changes its role from opposition to power holder.

As analysts of populist movements, we can ask the question, how populism works – and Laclau is certainly a good source to answer this question. As politically interested and engaged persons, we also have to ask why and to which ends we want left wing populism to work. The answer to this question still needs some further investigation.

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UNpractical womEN – Lenka Zelenović: *Unpractical embroidery (Nepraktični vez)*; Belgrade 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/nepracticnezene/>

UNpractical womEN, craft cooperative had been created in 2016, after more than 15 years of left-wing activism led by group ŠKART. This process as a form of leftist populist action wanting to give voice to all those previously unheard started in year 2000 with Single Mother's Association. As most of them were refugees from (as in that time seemed) endless ex-Yugoslav wars, SKART group encouraged them to start to make embroideries like traditional "kitchen wisdoms" placed above the kitchen range that were speaking in the name of house-wives about their position in the family and society. The best-known one says: Speak less, cook – you need to learn, so your lunch doesn't burn. But, ŠKART encouraged them to critically assess political statements of "easy-promised future" that led toward wars and dissolution of Yugoslavia. Step by step, when prejudice-wall was already broken, they began to bravely speak and express themselves in the folk-traditional form which is part of their (forgotten/erased) cultural identity. Words-rhymed statements were illustrated with drawings and embroidered on canvas.

As the group ŠKART is saying: "Easy done. Handmade. Home-made. Self-made." Slowly, text changed and became more and more critical and political: Dear cook, speak up more, or your life will be a bore! If i say it's darkness, darkness will eat me away. Thus i'm making pretty flowers, forever safe i will stay. Or illustrated lost homelands which marked them for all their life time: Please tell me to whom war will bring new spring bloom? Today the text of these embroideries say: Who wants to live like this? Hey, don't give up so easy! (picture above); Tell me to whom the war will bring a spring? You don't need newspapers or TV, in my embroideries you will get it all! (Ne trebaju novine ni TV, u mojim kuvaricama saznaš sve!) Hand to hand old comrade, both of us became jobless. (Ruka ruci družu stari, bez posla smo mi ostali.) As a comet the director will fall, when worker's hand! (Ko kometa direktor pada, radnička ga ruka svlada!).

Lenka Zelenović is one of the women among many, whose works got attention and popularity. Her most famous statement was the question that she asks herself: Where I have been till now, hiding my verses, why so late poem became my expression? (Gde sam do sad bila i stihove krila, kad sam se tek sad pesmom oglasila?)

Susanne Weichselbaumer
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Republika Srpska – Populist-Narrated Emancipation of an Entity in Stagnation

Abstract

The terminology of “populism” covers a wide range of angles. Social and political science consider the phenomenon a political style, a type of political communication, a certain form of strategy, ideology – or a mixture of all aspects mentioned. However, in its diversity certain prototypes or versions may manifest, that make “populism” valid and fruitful for discussion as an academic subject. This paper concentrates on the mostly ethnonationalistic based display of populist narratives in the leading politics of the Republika Srpska. This case study on the “Statehood Day” of Republika Srpska and especially the celebrations 2017 looks into discourses of “Anti-Elite”, “We versus Them”, “Territory” etc. and recognizes the special condition as an entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Media effective display of political – populist – positions will built the nucleus of the coming analysis.

Key words Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethnonationalism, Statehood Day of Republika Srpska, Entity.

“This is a special day for our unity and for Republika Srpska. For our lifestyle and what we want to be” (Rettman 2017), announced the president of Republika Srpska (RS), Milorad Dodik, on 9 January 2017. Despite sub-zero temperatures, thousands went to Banja Luka on Monday to watch the military parade, cheer the police and

fire brigade units marching past and look at the athlete and folklore groups, while flags waved in time to the marching band. They were not holding the golden triangle with a blue background, bordered by a line of white stars, representing Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). Many had brought along flags in blue, white and red, and waved them to the “March to the Drina”, a former war song sung by ultra-nationalist brigades. Dodik greeted high-profile guests such as patriarchs of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Serbian president Tomislav Nikolić, Serbian Crown Prince Alexander Karadžević II, and numerous ministers from the Serbian government. To that effect, certain desires were articulated by the RS leader: “*There is a wonderful idea... and that is to separate RS (from Bosnia) and to form a union with Serbia and that is together with four municipalities of Kosovo*” (Rettman 2017).

Several domestic as well as international addresses class such proposals as less rapturous. They criticise the event that Dodik called “RS Statehood Day”. “*Bosnian Serb separatists have taken a second step toward secession, with a martial parade attended also by far-right MEPs*” (Rettman 2017), wrote the western press, emphasising that due to separatist tendencies, the president was not just violating fundamental principles. The constitutional court in Sarajevo had prohibited the “Statehood Day” beforehand, in order to prevent discrimination against other members of the population regarding the choice of date. (Wölfl 2017) The European Commission (EC) labelled the festivities “*unlawful*” (Rettman 2017) in a part of a country that seems to be collectively striving to enter the EU: “*What is important for us is that there is a proper functioning of democratic institutions. That obviously includes implementation of constitutional court decisions*” (Rettman 2017). The US embassy in Sarajevo stressed that it takes “*any threat to the security and stability (of Bosnia)*” (Rettman 2017) seriously, and asked the B&H government to deal harshly with those who broke the law in such a way.

So where does RS stand on 9 January 2017? Outside of the joint Bosnian-Herzegovinian constitution? With one foot well inside Serbia, to which some deem a connection inevitable, which in turn could lead to a closer connection to Russia than the West? At the least visionary, and already solitary, next to other aspiring

EU states in the immediate vicinity in the Balkans? Or reformed, strengthened, steady, somehow continuing cooperation with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FB&H) and the town of Brčko as a condominium within a nation state structure?

The predictability of plausible answers to such questions is low on all sides. Kaleidoscopic conflict situations sweepingly or incorrectly located in diffused areas of expertise, the political and public discourse – not least that which is conveyed by the media – is resting on a highly fragile foundation. It is the narratives that are generally and academically termed “populist”, or narratives that are charged in such a manner (Pauwels 2014: 21; Decker 2004: 33), and that are ideologically debated by the leading RS protagonists, that are mostly ethno-nationalistically retroactive. Adding possible nationalist subject imprints from social science and politological perspectives to the research field of “populism” in this case brings about benefits in terms of theory of knowledge, which shine light on the question of future subtraction or deadlocks, and help to examine the following hypotheses: “Republika Srpska – populist-narrated emancipation of an entity in stagnation”. In the first and foremost sociologically established triad of an understanding of populism as (thin) ideology, strategy and style – or a mixture of all those elements – (van Kessel 2015:5ff.), this avenue into the political and PR based portrayal and narrative of the past, status quo and future is taking off.

The Dayton Agreement as a substantiating counterpart

Not all controversies within RS, B&H or in polyilateral respects feed on the circumstances of the Dayton Agreement. Ethno-national conflict potential, deeply interwoven with party policy and religion, sometimes date back a significantly long time, and are handed down or modified. Nevertheless, in the populist-coloured syntax and dramaturgy of the RS government, Dayton serves as a basis and, ultimately, an agent. “*The peace agreement for Bosnia is the most*

ambitious document of its kind in modern history, perhaps in history as a whole. A traditional peace treaty aims at ending a war between nations and coalitions of nations, while here it is a question of setting up a state on the basis of little more than the ruins and rivalries of a bitter war", assesses the first High Representative (HR) for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Carl Bildt, who states the following in particular: "There are often calls for a revision of the peace agreement, either to break up Bosnia further or to pave the way for a more unitary state. Neither is realistic, and both are irresponsible in view of the fears that would be unleashed by any attempt to remake the peace, in effect opening all the questions of the war" (Bildt 1997:392).

This assessment was made by Bildt in 1997 regarding a "peace journey", a "struggle for peace in Bosnia", as captioned in his monograph. He used it to mark aspects, which are still relevant to this day, of an academic analysis of the phenomenon of B&H that have been controlling politics, law, economic and social sciences, and theology since the mid-90s. Later, authors often opted to address this avenue in a transdisciplinary manner, and traded static aerial views for dynamic methods of transition-based knowledge gain. (Mehler 2016: 14) "*Transformationen der bosnischen Staatlichkeit unter dem Einfluss des Ethnonationalismus*" (Džihčić 2009: 35),¹ for example, looks inwards. Externally, comparative approaches are looking in practice for "*technologies for managing divided societies*" (Bose 2007: 205). Nevertheless, a general proposal concerning B&H is to examine and thoroughly weigh the construction and management of the process, and the noticeable effects of the Dayton Agreement. In this respect, many seek to clarify whether the 1992 to 1995 conflict was a "*civil war*" or whether it should be described as "*external aggression*" (Bose, 2007: 19; see also Džihčić 2009: 150).

"*On paper, Dayton was a good agreement; it ended the war and established a single, multi-ethnic country. But countless peace agreements have survived only in history books as case studies in failed expectations*", says Richard Holbrooke (1998: 335), who sat at the negotiating table as a delegate from the US government. Consecutively,

1 Džihčić (2009: 62), from the point of view of "ethnicity research", offers a robust analysis of "ethno-politics", "ethno-statehood" etc.

many researchers tread the safe path of not perceiving B&H as a sovereign structure, but examining the country multidimensionally as an “international project”. “*Dayton Bosnia*”, writes Sumantra Bose, “*has been the site of internationally sponsored political engineering on a remarkable scale. This endeavour seeks to utterly transform a society that was at war with itself for forty-three months, which emerged from the fighting with its territory effectively partitioned into three national(ist) statelets, and whose population continues to be deeply divided on fundamental issues of identity and allegiance*” (2007: 3). Global political, and legal and economic, points of view in the contexts of the EU, the OSCE, the UN, NATO, the World Bank and the IMF are mentioned a great deal in various pieces of secondary literature. The location between the former Bloc structures of the Cold War, and the links with constantly significant players, the USA and Russia, attracts a high level of attention. (Bose 2007: 3) Prosecution for war crimes (Jurić 2013: 241) Truth and reconciliation commissions as the “*soft forms of dealing with the past*” (Mehler 2016: 15) and entities of symbolic politics form the nucleus of retrospective and prognostic examinations. The legitimacy and constitutional commitment of the Dayton Agreement are being scrutinised, and the territorial demarcations historically brushed off. Therefore, texts are generally limited to a classification of the overall plan for B&H. (Bose 2007: 65) The weight is seldom placed on one of the three governmental entities. (Priester 2012)

Dayton, the EU and all the others

Representative of that which is theorised above, lot of aspects are generated: an administration throughout all of B&H that does not work. Entities that are sometimes organised centrally, sometimes federally, and nevertheless mostly unable to act themselves, let alone with one another. (Jurić 2013: 247) The political and social secondary literature has addressed the topic of the Dayton Agreement and its consequences thoroughly. However, the focus of these studies is mainly on what the USA and the west wanted

and intended, with the best of intentions, and where or why the implementation of their wishes has still not been successful.

This conglomerate of dilemmas, inadequacies and stalemates creates a rich projection area. According to sociologist Karin Priester, populism has nothing to do with substance, but rather relations, and it cannot develop from within itself – only in proportion to or distinctly from the opponent: the other party. (Priester 2012) For RS, this backing sheet is the Dayton Agreement. The elite – “the West under the leadership of the USA” – that has forced each peace agreement and consecutive conditions, is turning into the perpetrator on whom the current tensions are blamed, whether that be in the lack of cooperation between ethnicities, in the desolate economic issues, the legal references characterised as vague, or incalculably organised state and regional responsibilities. (Jurić 2013: 244) In addition, such finger pointing – publicly carried out by RS leaders – also affects EU bodies that, in their desire to make a European member state par excellence out of B&H in accordance with the Dayton Agreement, do not shy away from maintaining future commitments. Regarding a status quo, readjustments do not take place. Many observers now see this multipolar and contradictory attitude as a farce. Boldly talking about B&H as an aspiring EU member state while it has been clear for years that the requirements set by the community of states are not even roughly, if at all, fulfilled, is an action that is criticised even by a number of unbiased expert points of view (Fagan 2010: 78; Juncos 2005: 92). The reason why no prosperous multicultural mixture of ethnicities has emerged does not attract enough interest for those concerned and the public inside and outside the country for the EU to be declared as a sensitive political partner. Therefore, a new elitist protagonist is installed, allowing itself to be included in populist narratives.

Such an inclusion or continuation of writing and thought generally takes place, in terms of populism, strictly in black and white, describing and illuminating the antagonists very vividly, along with their mistakes, shortcomings and resulting problems. One’s own stance, or the core of one’s own point of view, remains vague. Political theorist Paul Taggart also describes populist topos he sees as nothing more than an “*empty heart*” (2000: 4) as inherently

incomplete. Ergo, the outer shells of populism can be filled with different content-related goals and values, which are justified by an emitted anti. For Taggart, populism is consecutively becoming a chameleon that adjusts its ideological colour to suit the values of the population in the respective core area. (2000: 2) These are, in turn, unilaterally and universally signposted in line with “*common sense*” (Priester 2012). Any operationalisation of a democracy classed as majority-orientated, as is generally pursued by populism, is anchored by political theorist Marc F. Plattner on both sides of liberalism and constitutionalism. “*Populists want what they take to be the will of the majority – often as channelled through a charismatic populist leader*” (2010: 88).

In effect, the lament of a charismatic leading figure such as Dodik against the established elite figureheads, declared dysfunctional – against the West, the EU and B&H as a purely state construction (Rettman 2017) – that was brought to the surface during the illegitimate festivities for the RS “Statehood Day” is in line with arguments that have been discussed. In a comparable contextualisation, media expert Thomas Meyer mentions “*politics of appearance*”, “*media-friendly theatrics*”, “*event politics*” and “*image politics*”. (2006: 83)

Populist upgrade

In this apostrophised context of Dayton, or Dayton and the EU, other remote or maybe even previous conflict areas could now also pick up and become charged by populist sentiment. Jan Jagers and Stefaan Walgrave understand populism to be a distinct method of communication that political players use to address the people. Formed in “*sound-bite solutions*” (2015: 7), narratives seem to have less content and form, and become a more concise causality that, in turn, invokes an “us versus them” situation. Differences between different ethnic groups within B&H, religious disagreements, economic imbalance between the current entities, and historic controversies that have never been completely settled,

form a deep reservoir that can be used to substantially equip shortened paradigms of populist narrative with passed-down and known topos and loci. (Mehler 2016: 255; Gromes 2012; 2007; Wiesner 2007; König/Kohlstruck/Wöll 1998: 7) In this respect, Hans-Georg Betz protests against populist rhetoric as an instrument “*aimed at stoking, mobilising and emotionally stirring latent or abundant resentment in the population, and using it to gain political capital*” (1998: 34). Betz mentions “*opportunistic strategy*” (1998: 34).

Opportunistic strategy of a national holiday

The scene mentioned at the start, the “largest-scale festivities so far since the foundation of Republika Srpska on 9 January 1992” (Wölfel 2017) – exactly 25 years later – may seem evidently compelling against the backdrop elaborated on above. Nevertheless, the upcoming case study also, or especially, intends to reveal break-points in the political presentation, ethnic charge, territorial order etc. I intend to follow Vedran Džihčić, who warns against an adoption of the mindset and self-characterisation of the closed groups in Bosnian society, and champions the critically dissected, intellectually analytical “*enhanced way of thinking*” (Džihčić 2009: 62) according to Hannah Arendt.

Territory

From a wide range of territory options, the RS leadership selected the obvious, and probably the clearest in its message. The “national holiday” takes place in the political centre of RS, in Banja Luka. Holding the event in Sarajevo as a multi-ethnic setting, either as a provocation or an invitation to multi-ethnic convergence, was out of the question. There was no vote, e.g. for a demonstration march or a federal plan to split the locations of the festivities across RS territory.

The corresponding key elements are as follows: a central march of societally and politically relevant groups on large roads, with

joyful crowds of people to the left and the right. The further stages in the centre of Banja Luka consisted of memorials for soldiers who died during the Bosnian War, a Serbian Orthodox church and significant government buildings. (Rettman 2017) The observer feels reminded of national days of remembrance, as they may similarly take place in many places. National holidays simply do not exist in B&H. A “national holiday” on an entity basis seems remarkable, not least for this reason².

There is little about this date to suggest that RS belongs to B&H and is therefore only part of a whole. The geography embedded in the RS constitution is emphasised: “*The territory of the Republic shall be unique, indivisible and unalienable*” (Bose 2007: 68). The swaying flags are in the red-blue-white colours of RS or Serbia. They dominate the colour scheme of the parade. Folklore groups, student bodies and veterans’ associations descended from the region. The public order and security forces that took part in the parade are clearly those of RS; this is a clear insinuation of the obstinate disregard for the EU-initiated police and army reform in B&H that the entity has been showing for a long time. Dodik presented “his army” and, as Džihic (2009:257) aptly outlined, continued to play the “*strong man*”³. The motto of the RS head, repeated many times on this date, was “*we will not give up our identity, our state or our Republika Srpska*” (Weiland 2017).

Population

Despite the rain and the cold, thousands of spectators gathered this Monday lunchtime in Banja Luka. Many have travelled from the far corners of RS. They are addressed by Dodik, but not as a regional or local representative. The president addresses the

2 “Statehood Day” has been taking place since 1943 on 25 November, and independence festivities are held in relation to 1 March 1992, albeit only in the territory of FB&H. “Dayton Agreement Day” on 21 November (1992) is only a public holiday in RS (see CIA World Factbook 2017).

3 For details about Dodik’s ascent and political career, see *ibid*, p. 257.

residents of RS as a community in abstraction from FB&H – in turn thought of as a uniform crowd. His political message is to renounce the federal statehood of B&H: “*The Serb Republic will not stay inside Bosnia unless it gets enough autonomy to ‘live its life as a state’*” (Rettman 2017).

Neither counter-events nor demonstrations are able to visibly hinder the festivities. No flash mobs, no advocates of multiculturalism, no “champions of a shared vision of B&H” can compete against those celebrating the national holiday. There was by no means a lack of upwind. Instead of on the street, discussions were held within the established political fabric. The complexity of the matter may evoke some varying voices on polyphonic levels, but it prevents a clear positioning of the B&H leadership over that of RS.

Internal political standpoints

The internal political debates did not become inflamed due to the specific events at the start of 2017, but date back to before then. In November 2015, the B&H constitutional court prohibited RS from declaring 9 January a “national holiday”. On the one hand, the selection of the date on which the independence of Yugoslavia was proclaimed, 9 January 1992 to be precise, discriminates against other members of the population, and elevates the significance of RS as an entity over FB&H. Furthermore, the involvement of the Serbian Orthodox Church in a major holiday highlights the ethnic, separatist backdrop of the event. (Rettman 2017; Wölf 2017) For the people around Dodik, however, religion and nationalist policy-making in no way exclude each other. On the contrary, the cohesion that is inherent in the government undertaking and the identity formation of B&H holds steady. Interpretively, the president is focusing on authority from the constitutional courts of B&H and RS. The constitutional statutes of the nation state and its individual parts do not coincide exactly in all areas. (Jurić 2013: 247) These gaps and coverage disparities are a source of constant dispute that frequently becomes a subject of protracted interpretation. Unlike the constitution of FB&H,

that of RS essentially uses another language. “*Here the style is pedantic and repetitive, full of didactic statements and vacuous clauses, the trademark signature of intellectuals socialized by and under state-socialist regimes,*” states Bose (2007:68). These are indications of the intention of the authors to give RS a constitution that is as close as possible to that of a sovereign state – a state “*of the Serb and all of its citizens*” (Bose 2007: 68), as differentiated in article 1. In this regard, the abundance of constitutional statements that are barely taken into consideration in reality is worth noting. Bose knows about this phenomenon in many constitutively anchored entities, but stresses the following for RS: “*The credibility gap is particularly breathtaking*” (2007: 70).

Likely accustomed to a malleable handling of constitutional realities (Džihić 2009: 292), Dodik by no means sees “his national holiday” as unconstitutional, and on 9 January 2016 – half a year after the negative decision of the judicial authorities – announced an invitation to the parade and festivities in Banja Luka. One guest of honour was Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić. Dodik was faced with ensuing national and international criticism in September 2016, when a referendum was held to hold such a national holiday, of which 99.8% of the votes were in favour. Bosniak politicians opposed the vote, in vain, with a veto, and tried to trigger a fundamental debate on the legitimacy of RS, which in their opinion is founded on genocide and war crimes. Bosnian Croats shared the criticism of the plans to hold a national holiday, but as usual they wanted to distance themselves from their “partners” in FB&H, and as a result Serbo-Croatian support and rejection ultimately cancelled each other out.⁴ The constitutional court of RS – not that of B&H – ultimately raised a point in which it made clear that no threat to the interests of minorities could be seen in a referendum on a “national holiday”. Dodik skilfully set the voting date for 25 September 2016 – one week before the local elections in RS. He interpretively linked the very obvious result with the potential independence of RS. In this respect, he continuously mentions poll

4 For the ongoing condemnations between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats within FB&H, see Bose, 2007: 242ff.

numbers that apparently prove that 99% of Bosnian Serbs are in favour of a disentanglement of B&H.⁵

Foreign political links

International actors have been alienated. In their leading role, the USA and the EU see their objective of strengthening and uniting B&H as being hampered by Dodik's exclusive governance of RS. (Rettman 2017) Bose has already pointed out that the influencing variables outside of Bosnia are aimed at levelling existing (ethnic) differences; the intention is to motivate the constitutive groups to cooperate: *"The challenge [...] is to overcome the false dichotomy between form and content, and build a system that can simultaneously accommodate national identities and liberal-democratic values"* (Bose 2007: 252). Nevertheless, the author acknowledges that external aid cannot precipitate an abrupt identity transformation or tolerance revival; it could take further generations to grind down highly charged ethnic and religious contraindications. (Bose 2007: 278)⁶ This valuation can be found in the case example. Dodik paid tribute to the son of Ratko Mladić, who was charged with war crimes in The Hague, with a place of honour at the parade in 2017. Setting this clear tone, the RS president is updating the still outstanding reappraisal of the past in relation to a general Bosnian-Herzegovinian interpretation. Džihic speaks of the *"development of an epic ethnic culture, [...] with continuous (sic) – selective – explanations about ethno-national battles, wars, victims and heroes"*, in the core of which its own ethnicity *"as better, stronger, more resilient and more superior"* (2009: 64) faces a threat in an "us versus them" scenario. Accordingly, a committed statement and therefore a usurpation

5 A line that Falan (2010: 81) has already seen as consistent in RS politics since the days after Dayton is the call for possible independence, with varying degrees of intensity, that Dodik has taken up throughout his career and the acceleration in his political alignment with increasing intensity; see also Rettman 2017.

6 For regional as well as time and contingent specific developments, see Džihic 2009:63.

of history, which could in turn prove that RS sees itself in its self-image and its external image as a “republic” in the definition of a form of government, does not take place in that one entity.

Summary and outlook

In the case example, it is certainly plausible that RS is turning into a “state within a state” (Bose, 2007: 23) and identifying potential “*hindrances and delays*” (Plattner 2010: 88) as something that needs to be overcome quickly. The declaration of the national holiday as unconstitutional by the constitutional court of B&H is being ignored. A referendum on RS territory granted illegitimate pseudo-authority, albeit regarded completely as the “will of the people”. Plattner describes comparable approaches that are typical of populism as follows: “*They have little patience with liberalism’s emphasis on procedural niceties and protections for individual rights*” (2010: 88). However, the author equally points out that such movements could be an indicator of imbalances that, if not caused by the elite, have at least not been acknowledged by them. In their political positioning, these elites have disassociated their own privileges too far from the public’s majority opinion. Therefore, there are no re-negotiations of the Dayton Agreement taking place, and the EU continues to maintain that it can make B&H a member state, as intended, in the ultra-long run. (Western Balkans Summit 2016) Even if it is widely debatable whether the required acceptance criteria will ever be fulfilled, a manoeuvrable populist object – as debated from a scientifically methodical and system-tested perspective – such as the one in our example of the RS leadership may require a stable anti on which it can work with contra positioning and criticism without having to involve its own content and subject its possible effects to examination. In the face of this elite position, it is turning into a victim, but therefore hampering all progressive movement – in an intentional or unintentional manner. For social and political sciences, it is consequently difficult to predict the direction in which it could move – if at all. What remains is the assumption raised at

the start: “Republika Srpska – populist-narrated emancipation of an entity in stagnation”.

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Part III
**POPULIST MEDIA
NARRATIVES**







Mileta Prodanović: *Brandopolis – White Angel*, photo, Gallery of Student Cultural Centre, Belgrade, March 2006.

The White angel is the famous fresco painting from the monastery Mileševa (13th century) that was used and misused in different political and commercial projects throughout the nineties. The author exhibited a series of photographs that investigated the presence of the “White angel” as a brand in Serbian society in the actual urban landscape. This image was established as an informal national emblem of the Serbian nation. Photos document different, mostly inadequate, contexts, where this iconic representation can be found today (postcards, beer stickers, pencils, credit cards, etc.). The author developed also other photo series with similar issues showing to what extent populist media communication influenced everyday life of citizens imposing kitsch artifacts in their living environments such as figures of lions in front of their houses and in city public spaces.

Danijela Vićentijević

Media Rhetorical Strategies: Encouraging Political Populism

Abstract

Globalization has caused major changes in all segments of society in the last few decades – economic and political crises, war conflicts, and migrations have shifted. All forms of the media have followed these processes as observers and participants, and often influenced the strengthening of their effects. At the same time, political populism which is defined as a specific political style, has been strengthened on the world scene. During the reign of Milosevic, in the nineties of the last century, political populism in Serbia was a topic that was written and spoken about publicly, although it has been present much earlier. It was connected with the strong nationalist tendencies of some opposition parties, which were supposed to represent, in their manifest forms, “the voice of the people” against Milosevic’s government. Nowadays, populism in Serbia gets a new dimension, with the same goal, trying to “flatter the people” through political action. The media, which are often in the service of the ruling parties, follow these changes without respecting the ethical code of the profession, although most of Serbian media agencies have defined them in written form. The subject of this research is an analysis of the contents of daily and weekly newspapers in Serbia regarding the transmission of political events. Having in mind the importance of media ethics and the application of ethical codes in journalism, for the purposes of this paper, interviews were conducted with journalists from various domestic and foreign news agencies who spoke on the basis of experience of respecting and /or disregarding media ethical codes

and political populism, recalling to examples from the world, as well as from Serbia. This paper is answering the research question: Does political populism lead to a new style of political governance and media expression, how and in what way? The aim of researching is to determine if professionals in media respect ethical codes when they report about political issues. The specific objective is to explain what rhetorical strategies they use to influence the audience.

Key words populism, political populism, ethics, media, rhetorical strategy

Introduction

Despite the moral and ethical codices deeply rooted in the teachings of ancient philosophers, we are encountering new forms of unethical behaviors across all occupations, including the media. Media influences are primarily perceived through the audience behavior, and are reflected through knowledge and education, regardless of whether they are positive or negative, short-termed or long-termed. The purpose of ethics is to place the boundary between good and bad, being most efficiently achieved through behavior codex, which implies obligatory, recommended, tolerated and categorically forbidden actions. Part of media ethics is comprised of the matters that are reported on and written about, but also of those that are not written about or published in the media contents. Political populism has been growing stronger on the world order's stage in the last few decades. One of the theoretical founders of this concept, Cas Mudde, defines political populism as a political style. Populism had previously been primarily associated with rural development, but afterwards become inherent in extreme right-winged and radical political leaders and parties in the world.

Political populism in Serbia has been the subject of public writings and discussions since the nineties of the previous century. Today, populism in Serbia is gaining a new dimension, with the same objective – the attempt to ‘flatter the people’ through political actions. Being usually in service of governing parties, the media

are disregarding professional ethical codices, although most of the media agencies have defined them in writing. Seldom are the cases of media employees who spend their careers working in accordance with professional ethics, regarding it the single right thing to do. For the purposes of this paper, the analysis of texts from daily and weekly newspapers in Serbia has been conducted in the context of current events, with regard to the placement of the cornerstone for the government project 'Belgrade Waterfront'. The event had occurred on 27 September, 2015 despite the citizens' of Belgrade huge disapproval. In the aforementioned case, the context of the observation was the event in question that initiated and influenced a number of other occurrences (peaceful protests of citizens and clashes with the police), that were publicly reported on only by some of the media. The aforementioned research was supplemented with the results of conducted interviews¹ with journalists from different news agencies on the subject of ethical codices and political populism. The journalists were asked questions regarding their employer media agencies' ethical codices and standards, written rhetoric and political populism in the world and in Serbia. In accordance with their own choice, they were comparing media workers' labor during the reign of Slobodan Milosevic and bombing of Serbia, reflecting upon the assassination of the Prime Minister Djindjic and the present state of affairs in the media. The proposed hypothesis of this paper is that political populism is encouraging censorship and self-censorship of media workers. The research question of this working paper deals with the relationship between rhetoric text and his context. How does this relation fit into ethical codices of journalism as a profession? The purpose of the research is to determine whether media workers are complying with ethical codices while reporting on political events. The paper explains which rhetorical strategies the media are using to influence public behavior.

1 The conduct of the interview for the purposes of this paper was enabled by the virtue of journalist Mr. Zoran Kusovac's assistance, former journalist of 'Sky news' and war correspondent for Serbia. The author avails this opportunity to express his profound *gratitude* to Mr. Kusovac for his goodwill and support. Mr. Kusovac is renowned beyond the borders of Serbia owing to his professionalism and strong work ethics.

Theoretical background

The theoretical ground of this work is based on the definition of political populism provided by politician Cas Mudde, according to which populism is characterized by the image of 'people' as a harmonious and homogenous entity (Mudde 2004: 534), whilst 'populist' voters are those that desire a leader who can be trusted, who listens to the 'voice of the people' and gives them hope doing everything in order to grant their wishes (*ibid*, p. 558). Populism is otherwise treated as political discourse or political style which is inherent in different social and political parties. It is most commonly used by the party that is opposed to prevailing intellectual climate in a certain society. Political leaders possess the most important role in political populism. According to Akkerman, populist style should be differentiated from populism as a politics model, whereby political style refers to political parties and their leaders. A typical example is the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who often referred to the people and people's interests in an attempt to equate them with the interests of the Labor Party, wishing to gain the greatest support of the citizens for the elections (Akkerman 2003). Margaret Canovan discriminates between two types of populism: agrarian populism (farmer radicalism, peasant movement and agrarian socialism of intellectuals – nationalism) and political populism (dictatorial, democratic, reactionary and political). This author deems that populism is a 'historical category' consisted of mutual relations of actors and events (Popov 1993). Theorists of populism Canovan and Mudde consider populism as a type of ideology that divides the society into two antagonistic groups, ordinary people and corrupt elite, whereby politics should represent the expression of 'people's will' (Canovan 2004 and Mudde 2004).

Monitoring political events that according to mentioned theoretical standpoints may be characterized as populist politics of the ruling party and its leader is the task of certain media agencies. Journalist ethics interprets and approaches the phenomenon of political populism in a particular manner. Interpreting a certain phenomenon, journalists have the right to their own opinion,

which should be based on real facts, and journalist rhetoric should be grounded on ethical codices of the profession. More often than not these rules are violated and the culprits remain unsanctioned.

The analysis of the newspaper articles regarding the event – The placement of the cornerstone for the project ‘Belgrade Waterfront’

For the purposes of this paper a comparative analysis on the basis segments of newspaper texts regarding the reporting of political event has been made – The placement of the cornerstone for the project ‘Belgrade Waterfront’. The analysis of texts portrays the sophisticated manner by which the ruling party is ‘flattering’ the people by contemplating their better tomorrow, providing capital for an immense investment project which people do not need, nor does it fit into the ambient urban entity of the city of Belgrade, as we shall witness later. Mentioned news agencies have utilized rhetorical strategy of insinuation during their reporting on the stated event. In the course of that occasion ‘great efforts’ of the governing political party were portrayed with the aim of ‘providing a better future’ for the citizens. Some of the journalists within the focus group who worked or are still working at news agencies were interviewed, and their published texts served for content analysis in this paper. Along with them, senior journalists from Serbia participated in the interview, responding to questions regarding the subject of political populism, professional ethical codices, censorship and self-censorship, as well as the degree of compliance with ethical standards and codices in journalism.

Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has declared that by placing the cornerstone for the project “Belgrade Waterfront”, Serbia is writing new pages of history, emphasizing that the capital has changed for the better through history, sometimes even against the will of the “narrow-minded majority.”[...]”Was the idea for this to be a garbage and litter disposal, as it was for the past 70 years. That is not my

idea, my idea is progress, construction and labor and that is what we are doing here. (Telegraph, 27. 09. 2015).

Analyzing this newspaper text we are encountering the rhetorical strategy of insinuation and intentional influence of the message on the audience. The conclusion is imposed that the capital is created by the will of people, and that political leader is creating a better future for the citizens of Belgrade. As stated in the text, 'a place that was neglected for seven decades' shall finally come into use, since the people who had chosen this party are not the "narrow-minded majority", but are the ones who were knowledgeable to elect the real leader.

The initiative "Let's not drown Belgrade", but also the Democratic Party and the New Party, have announced protest gatherings, since among other things they deem the project construction a "fraud of the century" and against the interests of the citizens of Belgrade and Serbia. (Telegraph 27. 09. 2015.)

A parallel event that had been occurring with the placement of the cornerstone for Belgrade Waterfront, the daily newspaper Telegraph reports with a sole sentence, without going into details about the exact number of the citizens who displayed their dissent with the 'Belgrade Waterfront' project and the act of placing the cornerstone. In this case the journalist had been aware of a great number of citizens who are opposing this event, but didn't include further details or description of it. That indicates a violation of ethical codes of the journalist profession regarding truthful reporting and censorship or self-censorship.

A GREAT DAY FOR SERBIA: Vucic had placed the cornerstone for Belgrade Waterfront!

It is no longer a dream or promise, today it is already becoming a reality', said Vucic and added that the field upon which Belgrade Waterfront is going to be built was of no interest to anyone for the past seventy years, on the contrary, many have averted their gaze from the unsightly barracks and dumps. (Kurir, 27. 09. 2015)

The headline of the daily newspaper *Kurir* (27. 09. 2015.) contains an intentional impact of the message on the readers 'A great day for Serbia' which is significantly constructing the reality. In the presented quote we encounter a 'set of rhetorical actions through symbolic use of certain social notions by which a political leader tends to gather different symbolic materials and to lodge himself firmly into several ideological areas assuming their political shape' (Taguieff, 2002: 80). It indicates that political management 'fulfills the dreams of the people' with the aim of creating a better future, and thus secures their better tomorrow. Journalist rhetoric modestly leads the reader to conclusion of what is efficient, and what is inefficient.

Several hundred citizens standing on the Old Sava Bridge observed Vucic placing the cornerstone and shouted 'Vucic, you are the man!' while the Prime Minister was soaking from the rain in his stroll towards the construction site. When he said to the assembled citizens that he is getting soaked in the rain just as they are, one of them responded 'Perfect to make you grow a bit taller.' (*Blic*, 28. 09. 2015)

Daily newspaper *Blic* has reported the news utilizing insinuation rhetoric. The text denotes the significance of this project for the people; it does not disregard those against the mentioned project, nevertheless, it doesn't quite thoroughly convey their messages either. The stated indicates the disrespect of ethical standards of professional journalists' conduct contained in the first passage of the Codex – The Truthfulness in reporting, where it is stated: 'The political or ideological background of the information may not influence the decision of its reporting, even if that political or ideological background opposes political convictions of the reporter, editor or media owner' (*Codex of the Journalists of Serbia*).

"There are no media today without political populism. Not because someone wishes to be a lickspittle, but because the battle for the market is highly conspicuous, how to feed the employees and have a circulation without it? In the times when Blic had the biggest circulation, I had the opportunity to declare at the collegium "it's not going to happen" (I am referring to the glorification of political populism).

Today it is different, there are no ethical codes and no one adheres to them. Never had it been worse in the media!” (Anica Dobrić, a journalist who had worked 18 years for daily newspaper Blic, nowadays, freelancer)

According to the statements of the former journalist of *Blic*, the adherence to the codex and standards of professional ethics acquires adapting to market trends and in Serbia the market is unfortunately commanded by political decisions. It follows that the media depend on politics, so the question is asked how free they actually are? As cited by the authors Bataljevic, “in our country there is no readiness of the government to apply professional and democratic standards in the field of media, such as those applied in the entire Europe and world, nor to dethrone the ruling circles in the media domain, i.e. Radio-Diffusion” (Bataveljić & Bataveljić 2012: 180).

Stating that as of today, there is a new city sprouting in Belgrade, Vucic declared that the apartments, towers and hotels are going to be built by Serbian companies and workers, so that the project worth 3,5 billion Euros will hire tens of thousands of people. Vucic said that through history large-scale projects often commenced with what might have been called by many self-will of an individual, reminding that the main projects –the initiators of Belgrade’s development had first been characterized as such. (Novi Sad’s newspaper Dnevnik, 27. 09. 2015)

In this text a classical element of political populism is discernable, an image of harmonious and homogenous entity for “the people” (Mudde 2004: 534). As it is stated, Serbian companies and ‘tens of thousands of people’ will be hired on the project. Here we are also encountering the insinuation rhetoric in the part of the text that conveys the Premier’s observations. Including political context and social climate an ethical decision has been made (Dej 2004: 23) that had been in the domain of tolerated action, thus there was no reporting on the gathering of citizens who had opposed to the construction of Belgrade Waterfront on the same day.

The entire city block had been surrounded by police cordons that rainy Sunday. The police had let only the comrades of the current regime, announced journalists and people had on themselves a membership card of the political party SPP pass through the cordons. Around noon on 27 September the police had pushed away dozens of activists of the initiative Let's not drown Belgrade". They explained nothing, but only pulled, pushed and gazed grimly. It was difficult to estimate how many of the assembled were at the protest. (Vreme, 01. 10. 2015)

Although least represented, rhetorical strategy of informing has been typical of the news agency *Vreme* since its inception to this day. In order to gain the public's trust, it is necessary for the media to commit to the highest ethical standards (Bataveljić & Bataveljić 2012). The journalists of the newspaper *Vreme* do so while reporting from the event of the placing the cornerstone for 'Belgrade Waterfront'. This is the single newspaper that states the facts regarding what happened on 27 September 2015, how the placement of the cornerstone passed, how many people observed the event, and how many there were on the protest assembly. In compliance with ethical codes and professional standards, 'the journalist is resisting all the pressures to his free exercise of his profession, as all forms of censorship' (*Codex of the Journalists of Serbia*, paragraph II).

In response to the questions regarding political populism and survival of the newspaper *Vreme*, journalist Dejan Anastasijevic says:

The journal Vreme has been founded by a group of journalists during Milosevic's reign. They wanted to work without censorship. In Milosevic's time and during the bombing something existed that might be called censorship or avoidance of censorship [...] When the war began there was a threat of terminating with newspaper publishing. According to the Law regarding the state of war, the state has the right to take over any media, not to discontinue them, but to appropriate it and continue to publish with another editorial board [...] Trust me that even that was better than what we have today! (Dejan Anastasijevic, senior journalist at Vreme journal, eyewitness journalist at the former president Slobodan Milosevic's trial process in Hague)

The existence of political populism in Serbia is brought up in this case as well, not only during the reign of the existing political party and its current leader who is 'fighting' for a better life of the people, but it existed up until now (since the supporters of Ljotic, through the Government of Cvetkovic Macek, Dinkic until Vucic). Simply in a different form and in a different manner. Populism is inherent of all political parties. The practice of media ethics through professional codes and standards is directly dependent on the survival of news agencies on the market.

I remember that during the period of the years 1992-1993 I carried 'Vreme' from Belgrade to Sarajevo. I was smuggling it. Back then this journal had been transported more than cigarettes! Vreme was a symbol of a normal Serbia both in Zagreb and in Sarajevo, regardless of the degree to which it existed or not [...]

During Milosevic's time the editorial cadre was destroyed that no longer exists today. Ethics in the media doesn't exist today. (Zoran Kusovac, former journalist for 'Sky news', war correspondent)

As it is stated in the interviews with the journalists from the focus group, ethics and politics are going in opposite directions, and professional journalist ethic is retreating at the sight of cruel market conditions dictated by the governing party. Political populism is serving it as a means of sophisticated governing of the people fighting for their 'better tomorrow' and fulfillment of 'their dreams' of a better life. And where are the rest of public intellectuals who had been purchasing smuggled journal *Vreme* through the course of breakup of ex YU? The price of the rhetorical strategy of informing, truthful and real, was equivalent to a monetary value of a box of cigarettes. Both products were deficient, so the price was not questioned. Had the intellectual elite been eaten up by a hunger for democracy or had they too succumb to the conditions of filthy liberal capitalism, which has brought along a disloyal competition on the market supported by the governing party in all the states in the region, including Serbia?

Censorship and self-censorship have not been in such a shape so far as they are today in Serbia. Every person possesses a self-censorship. That was also in the case of the assassination of the Prime Minister Djindjic, when the journalists had a self-censorship. They knew an hour ahead of the news announcement that the Premier had been murdered, but gave no statements until it was officially confirmed [...]

Censorship comes from the editor, and self-censorship from the pressure. We live today in a time when the pressure is present on a daily basis. (Jasmina Stojanov, former journalist of Beta and Head of Press Service in the cabinet of ex-president of the Republic of Serbia, Boris Tadic in the period 2004-2012).

The Public Information Law was adopted in the year of 2011. According to the second article of the Public Information Law, 'public information is free, in public interest and does not succumb to censorship. No one has the right to limit the freedom of public information or the free flow of ideas, pieces of information and opinion in any manner, nor to exert physical or other pressure on the public bulletin and its staff members with the aim of obstructing their work'. On the basis of senior reporter's statement, we conclude that even in the presence of normative acts the professional ethic is breached and the legal norms determined by the Law are violated.

Since the year of 1993, I have been working for foreigners, eight years in Sky, and afterwards, up until now, in "Reuters. In both of the agencies there are ethical codes and standards and they are respected. We who work for foreigners are in a totally different position from the people who work in Serbia for the local media. The working conditions are better, so is the salary [...] Political populism is omnipresent today. What's with Donald Trump?! Text about Brexit? Half of the data concerning the exit of England from the European Union are populist. (Jaksa Scekcic, producer at Reuter`s television, senior journalist who worked for Sky News, RTS and Vecernje novosti).

Every newspaper may support a particular political attitude, and the people are opting on whether to purchase them as such or not. Nowadays when we have "on line" television, we are gaining more control over the contents we are viewing, without it being imposed

on us. The audience is following what suits its political taste. The audience as a receiver of messages has to alter its consciousness firstly, in order to make correct choices between media agencies that are more or less resorting to political populism, or become its own editor by deciding what to read and watch.

Changes in all the levels of the society have reflected on economical, sociological and cultural processes, while others have significantly disturbed the balance of social relations and cultural values. Together with the mentioned changes, moral norms are altering as well, and along with them professional ethical codes. Practically since the inception of human society, the social ideology has been also the ideology of the media. On the other hand, there are things that are not essentially changing.

A popular anecdote tells of a scorpion that stood on the bank of a river and asked a frog to carry him to the opposite shore. "I'm afraid you'll sting me," answered the frog. "If I do," countered the scorpion, "we'll both drown." Persuaded by this argument, the frog allowed the scorpion to mount his back and began swimming across the river. Suddenly, he felt the sting of death. "Why did you do it?" asked the shocked frog. "It's immoral! You promised you wouldn't hurt me." "It's not a matter of morals," said the scorpion. "It's just my nature." (Yehiel & Gabel 2002: 136).

The tale portrays media contents, where the journalists are ready to publish every spicy story without considering the fundamental moral principles such as a right to privacy (*Ibidem*), that is incorporated in the standards and professional ethic codes of the journalists.

Conclusion

Some of the elements that, according to Peter Wiles, comprise a 'populist syndrome' are: moralism, mystical bond between the leader and the people, isolationism, anti-individualism, anti-elitism, anti-intellectualism etc. (*Vreme*, issue 135, 20.05.1993). We have

encountered practically all the elements throughout the comparative analysis of the newspaper texts reporting on the event – The placing of the cornerstone for ‘Belgrade Waterfront’, that occurred on 27 September 2015 in Belgrade. The most frequently used rhetorical strategy is the strategy of insinuation, with intentional influence of the messages on the audience. The messages are founded in political populism and especially in its particular shape when the political leader presents ‘the will of the people’ and creates the path ‘for better life’. Ethical rules of the journalist profession that are based on the adopted moral and ethical principles and contained in normative acts (*Codex of the Journalists of Serbia*, *The Public Information Law* and the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, as a highest legal act), are mostly being breached, violating even the right to privacy. That was the case of one of the news agencies that displayed the names, photographs and public figures who purchased the apartments in the yet unconstructed housing space within the political project ‘Belgrade Waterfront’. This proves the principal hypothesis of the paper that media contents are constructing the reality by insinuating political events. Of all the newspaper texts used in the comparative analysis, only one of them was founded on the rhetoric of informing, reporting truthful information, not only with regards to the message and Prime Minister’s speech during the placing of the cornerstone, but also regarding the assembly of citizens protesting against this political project. It implies that all but one of the analyzed newspaper texts in this paper are characterized by self-censorship. According to ethical codes of journalism, self-censorship is regarded as breaching professional and ethical norms. This proves that political populism encourages censorship and self-censorship of media workers, who are not adhering to ethical codes in reporting political events.

The results of the research have demonstrated that huge political pressures in Serbia since the year 2000 until this day, had contributed to a transition of local journalists to other, wealthier and more stable media production agencies, which proves that financial elements influence both the flexibility of succumbing to censorship and self-censorship in the media of Serbia, and the violation of ethical codes.

In line with the authors Bataljević, the media may be considered as a constitutive element of democracy, only on condition that the real media freedom is reached in one society and that it is present in everyday life (Bataveljić & Bataveljić 2012). By the *Public Information Law, the Law on Radio-Diffusion* and the *Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance* the freedom of speech is legally constituted and determined. The media should professionally deal with their work without the influence of political decisions in creating media contents, through censorship or self-censorship.

We, the audience are becoming editors in chief of our own media contents through choosing not only what to read, but what to watch as well. Thereby we shall increase the circulation of newspapers and other agencies who will do their work in accordance with professional ethics, since their market will be determined by the audience, not the political leaders. Then there will be no room for censorship and self-censorship, due to the fact that the incomes of journalists will not depend on whether they will truthfully convey the news for the purpose of financial survival and eventual discontinuation due to political disobedience, but because the audience i.e. the final recipient will be the one who will chose them, and thus finance them.

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Branko Milisković: *Appointed*, 57th October Salon, Belgrade City Museum, 16th september 2018.

Photo from the performance Milena Dragičević Šešić.

Three hours long performance *APPOINTED* at the City museum of Belgrade (14-17h) held on 16th September 2018 in the frame of the 57th October Salon. It was the premiere of his newly constructed UN Secretary General's body which, for the very first time in history, was a woman. He performed 8 inauguration speeches using deliberately from time to time antonyms to humanize them or to provoke audiences to listen more carefully if the Secretary General is making mistakes in his addressing.

Branko Milisković is an artist devoted to performance art, questioning international political discourse. "Through his highly elaborate performing, artistically perfected to the minutest detail, he is problematizing a series of current social and political issues, from the question of gender to the relationship between the individual and the structures of power. In a series of works, the artist – by his appearance, voice and movement – is building the character of a performer who de-subjectifies himself and becomes a symbol, an instrument that faces the observer with the social and political environment of the present moment. Manifested as a character with no gender, origin or identification, Milisković's performer conveys images, situations and historical quotes, confronting us with his own prejudices and established interpretations of dominant social narratives. It is the courage in choosing and processing the themes, the skill in performing and the ability to transform the meanings of known sources from the past that positions Branko Milisković as an artist who makes a unique contribution to further elaboration of the form and role of performance on the global art scene." (Milica Pekić, *Attention! Here I am*, catalog of the October Salon 2018.)

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*Dimensional Approach to Populism:
Party Communication During 2014
Elections in Serbia*

Abstract

The populism has been a prominent topic in academic community quite some time and even proclaimed one of the most contentious issues in political sciences, but scholars have applied populist perspective on party performance in Serbia quite rare. The aim of this paper is to deepen our understanding of populism in the post-communist context by examining the quantity and quality of populism manifested in the mainstream political discourse in Serbia.

Although populism is polyvalent concept, this paper argues that significant consistency around dimensions of populism can be identified. Therefore, based on literature review the most common dimensions of populism were abstracted and integrated into the analytical matrix of this research: 1) people centrism 2) anti elitism 3) language style 4) crisis discourse and 5) exclusionism. Following outlined dimensions of populism, quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the electorate TV debates during 2014 parliamentary elections was done.

The results reveal the character of centrist populism: populist elements were almost equally dispersed across four out of five dimensions in the discourse of all political parties. Without excluding any group from the people, mainstream parties construct the people as wise diagnosticians of “societal illnesses” and blame each other for inability to implement popular wisdom to solve the systemic societal crisis.

Key words populism, political communication, election campaign, TV debate

Introduction: The rise of populism

The Europe has been struck by several waves of populism during past four decades. Since 1980 many populist parties have been flourishing and disappearing, coloring political landscape and stirring up the public debates throughout the continent. Taggart has proclaimed Europe a “fertile territory for populism” (Taggart 2004: 269), while Grabow and Hartleb note that “right-wing and national populist parties have managed to establish themselves as relevant political players throughout virtually the whole of Europe” (Grabow & Hartleb 2014: 5).

Most authors perceive populism as a threat for western democracies, indication of the modern political systems malfunctioning, or the erosion of the parties’ representation function. Taggart argues that populism “challenge the functioning of representative democracy in contemporary Europe” feeding on “the shortcomings or inherent difficulties of representative politics” (Taggart 2004: 269). Mair sees constant failing of parties to act as intermediaries between citizens and public policy in Western Europe as opening a door for a protest against party leaderships who became remote from the wider society and increasingly similar one to another in ideological and policy terms (Mair 2002: 88).

Kriesi (2014) warns that the Central and Eastern European party systems might be even more susceptible to populist phenomena compared to Western Europe, since the CEE party systems are not institutionalized to a full extent and mainstream parties have not been able to adequately represent their constituencies so far. As Kriesi summarizes, party systems in CEE are characterized by: “an extraordinarily high level of volatility; they have not (yet) developed stable roots in society, the concept of cleavages structuring the party system hardly applies to them; they are hardly considered legitimate by the citizens of their countries, and their organizations tend to be unstable” (Kriesi 2014: 372). Kriesi (2014) also draws attention to the increasing dissatisfaction of CEE citizens with political elites and spreading of anti-elite sentiments, especially perception about elite corruptibility. Since the party system in

Serbia can be taken as representative of the CEE, the main aim of this paper is to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of populism in the post-communist context.

Contextualizing the case of Serbia

Geographically situated at the crossroads between Central and Eastern Europe, Serbia makes a perfect example of a societal, cultural and political system with complex legacy, stemming from communist past, followed by authoritarian rule and democratic reformation. Since 1990 the country has gone through civil wars, a decade long economic isolation, NATO bombing and the period of authoritarian regime. These circumstances have shaped rather unstable political system, which could be characterized as less institutionalized than other post-communist states.

The institutionalization of a party system is usually estimated by four criteria: 1) stability of the party system configuration – continuity in election rules and competitors, as well as predictability of results 2) major societal divisions and ideological orientations reflected by parties 3) perceived legitimacy of political parties 4) dominant type of party organization (Mainwaring 1999). Most scholars agree that Serbian party system still fails to meet these four conditions (Orlović 2008; Stojiljković 2008). Namely, since 2000 new challengers have appeared at every election, established parties have been changing names and ideological orientations, in many cases party members publicly transferred from one party to another and election outcomes were always very tight.

This can be illustrated with few recent examples. SNS, as currently most influential party in Serbia, was formed prior to 2008 elections as a fraction of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS). Before the elections in 2014 two new parties have raised. The United Regions of Serbia (URS), was created in 2013 as successor of G17 Plus political party by uniting several national, regional and local political parties and groups of citizens around idea of decentralization. The New Democratic Party (NDS) was formed quite dramatically in the

eve of 2014 parliamentary elections, when the former DS leader Boris Tadić decided to leave the Democratic Party and to run for the seats in Parliament within the newly formed party. During 2014, the New Democratic Party had changed the name into Socio-democratic party.

Besides high volatility of the Serbian party system, constituencies demonstrate overall political apathy and wide spread distrust in political institutions (government, parliament, ministries) and political parties continuously since 2006 (Stojiljković, Spasojević & Lončar 2015). Political parties are generally perceived as corrupted, ignorant of people needs, pursuing particularistic, self-centered and usually materialistic interests. Both factors make significant impetus for populism. However, populist actors and parties have not raised much academic attention so far, while broader populist perspective on party performance in Serbia has been applied quite rare (Grgurević & Cvetković 2004; Stojiljković 2014b; Stojiljković, Spasojević & Lončar 2015). Furthermore, populism has been mostly discussed in general terms and hardly any empirical investigations have been done. Therefore, this research has exploratory character and was designed to measure occurrences of populism in political discourse during elections. For that purpose we develop multidimensional approach to populism and apply it in quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the electorate TV debates during 2014 parliamentary elections.

Dimensions of populism

Populism is highly contested concept in political science and political communication research. Although it is widely studied, populism slips clear and distinct defining. Among others Albertazzi and McDonnell stress that “term is often employed in loose, inconsistent and undefined ways to denote appeals to the people, demagoguery and catch-all politics” (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008: 2). Populism has been understood as ideology (Mudde, 2004), communication

style (Bos & Brants 2014; Jagers & Walgrave 2007), as well as political or communication strategy (Albertazzi & McDonnell 2008; Grabow & Hartleb 2014). The research of populism has been focused on populist political actors (Mudde, 2000; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013), populist message and communication (Bos & Brants, 2014; Ernst, Engesser, & Esser, 2017; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007), and on the populist attitudes and effects of populist message (Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove, 2014; Bakker, Rooduijn & Schumacher, 2016; Hameleers, Bos & de Vreese, 2016).

However, despite numerous definitions of populism significant consensus about the elements or dimensions that constitute populism can be identified. Therefore, based on literature review the most common dimensions of populism are integrated into analytical matrix of this research.

Almost all considerations of populism (empirical as well as theoretical) start with two central elements that basically echo Mudde (2004) definition of populism as “thin centred ideology” which “considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the pure people versus the corrupt elite, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people” (Mudde 2004: 562). For example, Jagers and Walgrave synthesize all historical and theoretical shapes of populism under three elements: “Populism always refers to the people and justifies its actions by appealing to and identifying with the people; it is rooted in anti-elite feelings; and it considers the people as a monolithic group without internal differences except for some very specific categories who are subject to an exclusion strategy” (Jagers & Walgrave 2007: 322).

However, the people are rather vague discursive construct that aims only at homogenizing imagined community. As Mudde (2004: 546) formulates, “the term is nothing more than a rhetorical tool that does not truly refer to any existing group of people” and it is “often clearer who and what populists are against”. The elite are ‘the significant other’ against which the identity of people arises. The elite and people are the ‘yin and yang’ of populism, or the ‘archetypal enemies’ upon whose conflict populism resides. Jagers and Walgrave (2007: 324) highlight that elite is polyvalent, taking many

faces, such as “political elites (parties, government, ministers), the media (media tycoons, journalists), the state (administration, civil service), intellectuals (universities, writers, professors) or economic powers (multinationals, employers, trade unions, capitalists)”, but generalize that “populists side with the people against the elites who live in ivory towers and only pursue their own interests”.

Therefore, we study the most common denominators of populism as relatively separate dimensions. People-centrism, as first dimension, was designed to measure referral to the people as sovereign of the society and explore how party representatives appeal to the people. The second dimension, anti-elitism, aimed not only to quantify elite references but to examine which elites were critiqued as most corrupt and malicious for society.

Most scholars treat characteristics of populist style separately form ideational dimension. Articulating the closeness with people and detachment with the elite shapes specific linguistic style, which can be described primarily as simplistic. In another words, populists tend to speak in the language of a common man, to play on the universal folk grievances and to frame their messages straightforwardly. Mudde (2004) points that such communication style is directed to the “gut feelings” of the people, while Grabow and Harleib (2014: 18) describe it as: “alarmist, vociferous, exclusionary, wildly oversimplified, taboo-breaking, deliberately misleading and opaque, subtle, opportunistic, confrontational (‘us against them’), negative campaigning”. Therefore, different stylistic elements that populist rhetoric builds upon, were examined as third dimension of populism in this study. Namely, all examples of “simplistic, emotionally charged language” were treated as indicator of populism and analyzed in more refined categories in order to contribute to scholarly understanding of populist linguistic repertoire.

Previously listed language qualifiers correspond with Bos and Brants observation that “highly emotional, slogan-based, tabloid style language” is used to portray the country “in dire straits” and to evoke “a sense of critical political urgency” (Bos & Brants 2014: 708). Moffitt and Tormey also stress that populism gets its impetus from the perception of the crisis and explain “the elite, the establishment, the state or the system (or other related signifiers) are

usually evoked in populist discourse as the source of crisis, breakdown, corruption or dysfunctionality, as opposed to the people who in turn have been let down, ripped off, fleeced, rendered powerless or badly governed” (Moffitt & Tormey 2014: 391).

The discourse of crisis is perceived as rather important building block of populism, although some authors treat it as rhetorical tool or element of linguistic style (Bos & Brants 2014; Ruzza & Fella 2011), while others as a part of the populist ideas (Rooduijn, 2014). Moffitt and Tormey (2014) even find “crisis, breakdown, and threat” along with “appeal to the people” and “bad manners” as defining feature of populism understood as political performance (Moffitt & Tormey 2014: 382). Without further disambiguation between different interpretations, we have investigated whether party representatives frame societal issues as pressing, under the “crisis discourse” as fourth dimension of populism. We analyse it as separate dimension, since such discourse allows politicians to spread fear among constituencies and claim that they will carry out the will of people and save society.

Finally, populists often find the source of proclaimed crisis within the social groups that do not belong to the people – immigrants, unemployed, or people of another religion or race. Besides vertical delineation between the people and the distant elite, populism includes horizontal division between the people and outsiders who are burden and a threat to the otherwise homogenous majority (Grabow & Hartleb 2014; Jagers & Walgrave 2007). Jagers and Walgrave refer to exclusionism as inherent part of thick populism. They regard appealing to people as thin populism, while expressing anti-establishment or anti-elite attitudes delineated on the vertical axis and exclusionary strategies on the horizontal a thick populism (Jagers & Walgrave 2007). The right wing version of populism is especially exclusionary. In the words of Grabow and Hartleb “right-wing populism makes distinction between us, that is, the ordinary law-abiding people of the heartland or mother country, and them (both the political establishment and foreigners—especially (Muslim) immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities)” (Grabow & Hartleb, 2014: 15). Usually those societal subgroups are stigmatized, blamed for political, cultural identity and economic

crisis, accused for exploiting welfare state and spending the people wealth in vain. The populist claim that these segments of population should be “scapegoated and fiercely dealt with, if not simply removed from the territory of the people” (Jagers & Walgrave, 2007: 324). Therefore, exclusionism was examined as sixth dimension of populism, with aim to identify which societal groups are portrayed as the other to the people by Serbian politicians.

Following five outlined dimensions of populism this research was designed to answer:

RQ1. How much are dimensions of populism widespread in the electoral communication of the mainstream political parties in Serbia?

RQ2. How mainstream political parties’ representatives articulate six dimensions of populism within electoral communication in Serbia?

Research design and method

The election period was chosen because of the higher intensity of party communication. TV debates were selected as genre that compress all election messages in one format, and neatly represent substance and style of the overall election communication. TV debates organized prior to presidential or parliamentary elections worldwide allow not only larger exposure to candidates in comparison to the general political news coverage, but also serve as communicative arena for confrontation and testing strength of political opponents in electoral process. Moreover, it is a valuable format for considering parties approach to communicating the substantive societal issues. Pre-elections debates often serve as a breaking point for hesitant constituencies, represent dialogic relationship between politicians on the stage and imaginary audience (Bollow 2004) and make contribution to overall political learning (Drew & Weaver 1991).

Electoral TV debates are relatively new TV format in Serbia and have been aired on the Public Broadcasting Service (Radio

Television of Serbia – RTS) as a weekly TV program “Reč na reč”. All four, 90-minute, TV debates aired between 21 February and 13 March 2014 were sampled for the study. Each TV debate was designed as a discussion on the specific topic, related to: 1) foreign politics, EU integration and Kosovo issue, 2) social policy and health, 3) judiciary and rule of law, and 4) employment and economy. Parties participating in the debates were selected by the RTS editorial board on the basis of the current parliamentary session prior to called elections, which is in line with our research focus on the mainstream political communication and parties. Seven political parties participated in debates: Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS), Democratic Party (DS), New Democratic Party (NDS), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and United Regions of Serbia (URS). Each political party was represented by different, highly ranked party member. During the selected period, the conservative SNS was the key party that formed the government with the left-authoritarian SPS. Other political parties which participated in the TV debates were in the opposition. The LDP and URS were liberal, DS and NDS socio-liberal, while DSS conservatively oriented (Stojiljković, 2014a).

Content analysis was chosen for this research as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson 1952: 147). Regarding the purpose of this study manifestation of the dimensions of populism were measured according to yes/no questions, for example: does the participant refer to the people sovereignty, does the participant express anti-elitism views, does the participant refer to crisis etc. These variables were analyzed in line with the identification variables, i.e. the overall topic, the question asked by the moderator, full name of the participant, and the political party the participant represented.

Qualitative content analysis was used to deeply analyze various styles of speaking, production of meaning and individual’s communicative competencies interlinked with the overall context (Deacon et al. 2010: 153). Therefore, for each yes/no question in the quantitative analysis, the specific textual variables were created:

how does the participant refer to the people sovereignty, how and towards which actors is anti-elitism expressed, to which crisis politicians refer to (what kind of crisis), and how does the participant label specific groups of people, e.g. minorities, migrants, LGBT community etc. Also, if the participant uses colloquial and tabloid language, appeals to emotions, language intensifiers, it was noted in the textual variable.

Results

The quantity of populism in the electoral communication of the mainstream political parties in Serbia

Results of the quantitative content analysis presented in the Table 1 reflect the fact that all parties in the sample were situated somewhere around the center of the ideological spectra. Therefore in the discourse of all political parties the populist elements were almost equally dispersed across four out of five dimensions and exclusionism ended up as empty column. It is also notable that number of populist claims and stylistic characteristics decline from the right

Table 1 Distribution of populist dimensions in electoral TV debates during 2014 parliamentary elections

Party	People centrism	Anti-elitism	Language style	Crisis discourse	Exclusionism
DS	18	20	7	5	0
DSS	22	14	12	3	0
LDP	18	25	17	0	0
NDS	19	12	9	5	0
SNS	30	10	18	4	0
SPS	32	7	31	4	0
URS	17	9	13	2	0
Total	156	97	107	20	0

to the left side of the Table 1. This indicates that mainstream political discourse in Serbia has not been populated by “thickest” elements of populism so far. However, political actors polarize public debate and lean on tabloid language style, which is indicating a strong presence of “thick” populism according to Jagers and Walgrave (2007).

The quality of populism in the electoral communication of the mainstream political parties in Serbia

People centrism

The results show that politicians address the people in general for abstract observations such as: “The state does not exist because of itself, but because of the people” (Bajatović, SPS, 13/3/2014). However, reference to the people depends from the topic of the TV debate.

When discussing about the judiciary and the rule of law, the political party representatives tend to see people as citizens, voters, ordinary people and tax payers. SPS is concerned with judicial system inadequacy to provide equality of the people before the rule of law and highlights the people’s right to protest. In contrast to these references SNS uses bottom-up approach and refers to power of the people to restore trust in institutions in charge of the fight against crime and corruption. Opposition parties refer to the people as the true value of the society, as citizens having the power and knowledge. The people’s knowledge was addressed as the main source of the people’s power over political parties – since the people know more than parties how the rule of law and judicial system function in everyday life, they know better than politicians what reforms are needed.

In regard to health and social policy issues, political parties refer to the people as patients, ill and victims. Similarly to previous thematic scope, the power of the people is stressed out in regard to their experience (knowledge) with the health system. Mostly, party members express empathy with the people. LDP sympathizes

with people for being deceived for the fair paid money, especially in healthcare: “after investing in the state health care for years, citizens now have to pay for medical treatment in private practice” (Pešić, LDP, 28/2/2014).

In the discussion about the employment and economic issues, people are referred to as workers, our brain and driving force. The highest values communicated by all participants are the job security and the right to work. Opposition parties recognize potential of the people for securing economic future: “The citizens are the biggest investors in this country” (Djurić, LDP, 13/3/2014). And express gratitude to the people for making financial sacrifice for the country: “The people have to spend money via SMS messages to resolve various problems which should be dealt by the power holders” (Vojić Marković, DSS, 28/2/2014); “In the banking system with devastated state banks, the state’s financial burden is transferred onto citizens” (Bajatović, SPS, 13/3/2014). The parties in power expressed commitment to make financial sacrifice for and in the name of the people. Most of such phrasing was aimed at justifying solidarity tax² and overall restrictive financial policy. The characteristic line sounds like this: “I am ready to pay higher taxes for a year if necessary [...] I will pay that tax today so that citizens of Serbia can benefit tomorrow” (Radovanović, SPS, 28/2/2014).

The people as “holders of truth” were evoked during debating about EU integration and Kosovo issue. Both parties of the ruling coalition associate truth with collective memory about the crucial events in modern political history of Serbia. Politicians say that the people have suffered during the civil wars in the Balkans, therefore they remember and know the truth about wars. Only SNS sees the people tied to the life of Serbian minority in Kosovo and relate it to the uncertain existence of the nation. While all parties interpret consequences of wars as victimization of the Serbian people by international actors, namely Croatia, international community

2 Solidarity tax was envisaged by the Amendment of the Law on the Budget System and adopted in December 2013. It was intended to decrease the public sector salaries higher than 60.000 dinars by 20%, and salaries higher than 100.000 dinars by 25%.

and the EU, only LDP sees the Serbian people as headsmen and executioners.

Altogether, the politicians have put their faith in the people: “to see the best” (DS, DSS, SNS), “to remember the best” (DSS), “to choose and decide for the best” (LDP, SNS). As Homen (NDS, 21/02/2014) have stressed, the people could not be fooled, since “citizens do not trust the promises of political parties, only deeds”.

Anti-elitism

Politicians, parties and government are mainly addressed as elites in election debates.

Political elite in general has been criticized for being lazy, inactive and not interested for the real problems of the people. Opposition parties criticize decisions of the actual government and parties in power for “secretive protection of powerful individuals” (NDS), or “media execution of parties and individuals who think differently” (DS). The ministers of interior, health and economy are criticized for the lack of knowledge and ability to reform the crucial sectors of society. In line with the construct of the people as the economic wheel of the country, the solidarity tax is attacked as most “harmful government policy”.

The wrongdoings of the government leads to the “parasitic societal system” in which the political and business elites get rich on the backbone of the ordinary people: “politicians of the government have luxurious life style, while citizens have to bear the burden of the budget misuse” (Vojić Marković, DSS, 28/2/2014). The views of opposition parties’ members are highly communicated through the party-people linkage. For example, when stating that all parties in power are held responsible for the spread of corruption in the society the DS representative stresses that the people are aware of that. In that respect, the power of the people as voters is summoned to “punish all politicians for the destruction of society” (LDP).

In contrast to opposition parties, ruling SNS and SPS mainly focus on the former government, which has left them irreparable societal issues. The previous government is blamed for the increase

of public debt, “privatization which devastated the country more than NATO bombing”, leaving the new government “ground zero” for further development of the society. The former government is demonized for severe wrongdoings, particularly for strengthening the political-business relations which contributed to the individual wealth accumulation, leading the people to the edge of poverty. The SNS and SPS use the truth as the highest value to address the failures of the former government to fulfill the given promises. According to Djurić (SNS, 7/3/2014), the former government was hypocritical and “lied” to the people and to the international community for the sake of short-term political and financial gains.

The representatives of the ruling SNS and SPS avoid to be identified as political elite. They tend to represent themselves as guardians of the people, who do not defend the people from political elite in general but from “corrupted wealthy individual politicians”. The SNS makes difference between capable and incapable politicians, advocating for the reward-punishment model. This reference has been prominent in the discussion about the parties’ interference in employment, where “incapable party cadres” linger the fast-forward changes and planned economic reforms (Joksimović, SNS, 13/3/2014).

Populist language

The repertoire of populist language is rather wide and all parties’ representatives have been using diversified stylistic tactics to express closeness to the people and distance to elites. The language intensifiers are used to address those who work hard: the best people, the burdened, victims of solidarity tax. On the other side, state is labeled as “wasteful”, politicians “corrupted”, the prime minister “dictator”. The discourse of Democratic Party has been especially shaped with strong language attributes “scandalous”, “unheard of”, “intolerable”, mostly used to criticize the misconducts of parties in power. The amplified verbs and nouns are used to account the inability of the government to deal with problems related to criminal activities and the health system. In relation to such crisis, DS representatives address the people directly, speaking on the

ground of their own experiences and deep insight into the existing problems. When DS representative wants to highlight that people are endangered by brain-drain of medical staff, he makes personalization: "I am 46 and I am a doctor. Believe me, there will be no one to cure us in the years to come" (Milisavljević, DS, 28/2/2014).

The parties which held government, SPS and SNS, are not in position to defend their highly unpopular restrictive financial policy. Therefore, they do not explicitly advocate for the continuity of established government's politics, but rather represent themselves as educators of society, appealing to the truth as supreme value within this thematic scope: "I am not going to tell lies, we must not lie the people, we must tell them the truth: it is a hard life everywhere" (Radovanović, SPS, 28/2/2014). With this linguistic approach they impose adjustment of the people to the policy instead of promising to improve standard of living. Politicians acknowledge the conditions in which ordinary people live and use abstract truth-lie relation as substitution for practical action-reaction process. On this ground, the ruling political parties as truth-tellers expect the people to adjust to the current situation, and not to dream about changes.

The communication style built upon the past events rather than their present or future development reveals in other topics as well. When answering the moderator's question "How should Serbia react when Priština does not respect the Brussels Agreement?", political parties' representatives do not verbally express in present or future tense, offering the solutions for the problem, but heavily rely on the events from the past that contributed to the built of national identity and the overall course of the political relations of Serbia with neighboring countries and the EU. Blurred past-present relations are used as communicative tool to avoid giving straightforward answer to concrete problems.

Crisis discourse

The DS particularly addresses the crisis of securitization, and the extent to which the criminal and unemployment rates have been increased. Following the same pattern, the NDS addresses

the failure of institutions to manage the rise of violence and corruption in the society. The usage of phrase “to tighten the knife”, related to the rapid increase of street-crime rate, serves also as a metaphor to criticize the government’s anarchistic approach to the problem and its indirect comparison with the gun tightening in the American Wild West. Considering that the image of Serbia is endangered by the government’s friendly relations with Russia, the party is afraid that Serbia might face with “Ukrainian scenario”. The meaning of fear, danger and break of rules has been produced in relation to the overall crisis and used to draw attention to the societal point-breaks.

On the other side, the SNS defends Serbian-Russian relations as crucial for the regional stability and mainly addresses the institutional crisis as the aftermath of previous governments’ inability to solve the most important problems. In SNS representatives’ words, the country has been put in the state of complete desolation and destruction, particularly because the crisis was never institutionally managed. The severe crisis addresses the country as a whole, especially because the issue of Serbian territorial integrity is understood in more abstract level. Therefore, the SNS does not imply to management of borders, but to the preservation of the territory as historical obligation of the Serbian nation. Evoking the battles and wars fought against the country’s inner and external enemies over past centuries, the SNS present Kosovo issue as a never-ending story. “The fight for Kosovo and Metohija” is understood as rooted tradition, told and practiced across generations.

The “collapse of the system” is the main societal crisis for the Socialist Party of Serbia. Its representatives use language metaphors to address the downfall of the health and social welfare: “The corruption is like cancer, which metastasizes and destroys the foundations of the state” (Jovanović, SPS, 21/2/2014). According to this party, the crisis was produced by the “ravage behavior” of the former DS government which failed to provide money for reforms. The money issue is the key point for the United Regions of Serbia as well. They use the phrase “debt slavery”, addressing defective decisions of the previous government, which is accused to have taken the 2-billion EUR loan from the International Monetary

Fund. The responsibility, however, is shared by the actual government, which was expected to pay the loan off in due deadline and share the burden of people – “the slaves”. The URS frames crisis in general as “the crisis of survival” and “the crisis of our existence”.

Conclusion

Based on the high quantity of elements in the first three observed dimensions, it can be concluded that populism is becoming common feature of mainstream political discourse in Serbia. This conclusion is in line with character of populism in Central and Eastern Europe, which Učeň (2007) calls “centrist populism”. According to him, prototypical parties of centrist populism are non-radical, often newly established political parties, which can appeal against ruling elites based on their novelty.

In our study, three parties can be considered as new competitors on the political scene, although they have arisen from already existing political parties and coalitions. Such “new” players usually emerge when well-known political figure separates from existing party and forms the new one, sometimes not even departing ideologically from the ‘mother’ party. Usually they make ideological move towards the centre along with public ceremonial ‘break up’ with ‘ugly past’ and total rhetorical ‘make over’, like SNS. Although artificial, this kind of ‘newness’ allows anti-elite and anti-establishment politics and rhetoric. Therefore centrist populism has specific impetus: new-old political actors can almost continuously use populist repertoire thanks to fake-newness. Phenomena of fake-newness nicely supplements the classic populist propaganda built upon anti-party sentiments described by Mudde (2004: 246): populists do not oppose political parties per se, but the established parties, claim to be a new kind of party, and express populist anti-party rather than extremist anti-party sentiments.

This research demonstrates that opposition parties (NDS, URS, LDP, DS and DSS) accuse the actual government, political leaders and some ministers for secrecy and lack of transparency,

for being deaf to people voices, enormous spending, protecting the tycoons, instrumentalizing the media, abuse of their position for personal gain and accumulating wealth. However, besides oppositional parties which have moral and political ground to claim that they will fight against a corrupt regime and political establishment, parties in power also nurture the same style of communication. They mobilize electorate by stigmatizing previous governments, blaming them for irreparable socio-economic crisis. Only LDP does not frame the societal problems and issues as crisis. Other parties construct crisis according to topic and usually frame it in relation to institutional and identity levels. They talk about the crisis of Serbian national identity and territory, the crisis of institutions “unable to prevent the corruption”, the policy crisis (e.g. health-care, foreign affairs, economy). Using specific language intensifiers, such as “abnormal”, “scandalous”, “wrong”, “intolerable”, “unheard of”, “debt slavery” or “anti-Serbian attitude” participants in the TV debates address specific crisis situations, but their discourse portrays permanent societal crisis. This portrayal of never-ending crisis makes a perfect ground for new-old political actors to present themselves as those who will follow the wisdom of the people and save the country by implementing the people will in political system. So far, centrist populism can be considered as moderate manifestation of populism, since none of the political players have addressed migrants, ethnic and sexual or any other minorities as treat to the people.

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Christoph Schlingensief: *Please Love Austria – Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container* (*Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefs Container*), Vienna, 2000

Foreigners out! Schlingensiefs Container alternately named “Wien-Aktion”, “Please Love Austria—First European Coalition Week”, or “Foreigners Out—Artists against Human Rights”, was an art project and television show that was held within the Wiener Festwochen. The concept developed by Christoph Schlingensief was an ironic replica of reality TV show and wanted to address crucial issue of Austrian political life at that moment – issue of xenophobia and fear from migrants. At that moment the Freedom Party of Austria of Jörg Haider had been elected into the National Council of Austria and formed part of the new government. That provoked numerous forms of protest within cultural circles of Austria but Schlingensief’s container was a direct performance of right-wing politics thus raising numerous controversies. Performance was staged engaging 12 real asylum seekers to live inside containers and audience was invited to vote one of them not only out of the show but out of the country. Containers in a certain way have simulated concentration camps as participants (asylum seekers) could not leave them freely and, when expelled, were losing rights to stay in the country. This was deliberate Schlingensief’s attempt to criticize Austrian society that was never really de-Nazified and that was at that moment turning towards right side of political spectrum. To involve and really provoke public opinion Schlingensief at the same time staged this show as an act of performance and a TV show produced and broadcast from the container set installed in Vienna. In this one, as in other works, he asked people who live in times of total media coverage to activate themselves, to realize that they are already involved in crucial societal decisions and thus have to really participate in political life and decision making processes. The show was subversive, provocative and disturbing act that is gaining on its actuality even more after his death when recently all states of central Europe started raising wired fences and developing rejection policies toward migrants and asylum seekers.

Nikola Mladenović

Trump's Parallax: Populist Configuration and the Media

Abstract

Who voted for Trump? Conservatives, racists? Maybe that's not the best approach. Clinton, compared to Obama, lost small percentages among all races, lower classes, less educated, even women and youth. Clinton failed to keep Obama's percentages, while Trump improved Romney's statistics among minorities and lower classes. These ex-Obama voters, who can hardly be called racists, were a decisive part of Trump's victory. Trump's populist configuration doesn't only consist of his voters, but also of ex-Clinton voters who supported an independent candidate or didn't vote.

That is the true form of Gramscian hegemony, that doesn't just manufacture consent but also promotes passivity. While Laclau focuses on people's unity under the populist leader who acts as an empty signifier, Gramscian perspective doesn't see things that monolithic. That is, Laclau assumes people consciously agree and support the populist worldview. He doesn't consider possible ideological manipulations or social struggles. On the other hand, Gramsci maintains the only thing a populist leader has to do is to bring the opposition to the point of contradictory consciousness that leads to inactivity, indecisiveness and passivity. That is, hegemony is cognitive. It is always a complex and ambivalent sum of very different people.

From this perspective, Trump's media approach doesn't have just entertainment but also a cognitive value. The paper shows how Trump tried not just to gain votes from different social groups but to make Clinton lose votes. Also, as a reality player or professional

wrestler, his performance depended on opponents' actions and more specifically – weaknesses. Because competition among wrestlers is fake (kayfabe), his aggressiveness was seen as staged. Media stunts provided him with a fairly good number of women's votes, but also African-Americans and working class, even though they're primarily Democratic Party's voters.

Key words Donald Trump, populism, Ernesto Laclau, political communication, popular culture

Trumpocalypse¹

The reaction to Trump's presidency is an emotional roller-coaster. The fear of populism is so strong that some authors like Douglas Kellner (2016: 33) called Trump an "asshole of the Super Rich" or "bullshit artist" (*ibid*, p. 49), crossing the line of cold and objective argument. Trump himself is one-dimensional narcissist, sadist, malignantly aggressive, necrophilic (*ibid*, p. 29) that promises restoration of white male power. Even more so, this negative name calling is transferred to the voters themselves. They're fundamentalist, backward, even racist. The voters are not even rational but are pursuing "aggressive instincts" (*ibid*, p. 33). Research of this kind, therefore, dehumanizes its subject. It disqualifies.

A lighter version can be found in the research of Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris (2016), who see the cultural backlash against the postmaterialistic values as the primary goal of populism. That is, populist voters want to stop the process of individualization and to preserve the tradition. While young people are getting more liberal and cosmopolitan, the parallel phenomenon is a "counter-revolutionary revolt" (*ibid*, p. 5) against multiculturalism and progressive values. They want to go back in time, to the country of their dreams, without ethnic or sexual minorities. They're older, male,

1 The term, to my knowledge, first appeared on Slate.com website as "Trumpocalypse Watch" campaign coverage column. Later, Huffington Post and New York Times also used the term.

less educated, religious, belong to the ethnic majority and the petit bourgeois (*ibid*, p. 4). Apparently, they're not rational actors, they pursue their aggressive instincts. It's "counterrevolutionary revolt".

This paraphrase of Herbert Marcuse forgets one important thing. Marcuse is not post-materialist or pro-capitalist but materialist and anti-capitalist. Today's struggle is not one of left and right but between neoliberalism and populism (Bonefeld 2017: 15). Both sides are regressive forms that paint the world black and white. Therefore, Marcuse is a dialectical thinker that couldn't support neoliberals just because their opponents are populists. In the later text, Inglehart and Norris (2017: 457) considered rising inequality as a necessary condition and cultural backlash as a "proximate cause" of populism. They introduced the phrase "authoritarian populism" because cultural backlash can't explain the rise of Bernie Sanders or Occupy movement. Therefore, maybe postmaterial values and intergenerational clash could explain this kind of populism, but what about populism as such?

And what about the voters? If we actually look more closely, we could see there is no such thing as old people voting for conservatives only. This can easily be rebuffed. Data provided by Pew Research Center (Tayson & Maniam 2016) show that older people (65+) really voted for Nixon and Reagan, Republican presidents, but young people (18-29) also voted for them. In the neoliberalized 1984, young voters were even slightly more inclined to vote for Reagan. Also, elders voted more for Bill Clinton and Mitt Romney than they did for Trump. Actually, there's a drop in the youth's support of the Democrats as well as elders' support of the Republicans, even though Inglehart and Norris maintain that the opposite thing is going on.

Less educated voted for Reagan, Clinton, Bush, Obama and Trump. That is, they usually voted for the new president. The same people who voted for Obama now voted for Trump. When it comes to race, Trump did absolutely nothing in the voter turnout. He didn't win practically any new white votes. If we assume racists vote for Republicans, then Trump didn't bring new racist votes. He actually got slightly less white votes and more Black and Hispanic votes than Romney. The same formula is applied to women, even though

women are not really remembered as much more progressive voters. They voted Nixon, Reagan, Carter, Clinton and Obama, just like men. Of course, the gender gap exists, but didn't start with Trump.

That is, if only male, older, religious, less educated and petite bourgeois, as well as members of the ethnic majority voted for Trump, he would not be the president. They usually vote for Republicans and Trump didn't change that. The paradox is that Trump got 42% of women vote or 29% of Hispanic vote, despite the promise of building a wall or the sexist video. Considering he got less total votes than Hillary Clinton, and became president because of Electoral College, these small winnings among the unusual voters were definitely what decided the election outcome. That is, while Trumpocalyptic critics' definition of populist voters' body is unfounded, what really happened is an old saying: the Devil is in the details.

Before I get to the details, I will reconsider Ernesto Laclau's theory of populism, and compare his approach to populist configuration with Gramsci's view of hegemony. I will also examine Slavoj Žižek's disagreement with Laclau. In the second section I will use data from New York Times' Exit Polls to show the voters Trump gained and Clinton lost. Then I'll turn to Trump's media activity to try to find a pattern that explains his extraordinary election success. I will show how he approached the working class, African Americans and women. Finally, I will connect previous sections and make some concluding remarks.

Reconfiguring Laclau's theory

Laclau rejects the usual intellectuals' fear of unreasonable crowds. The mass doesn't scare him. He seems more optimistic than Walter Benjamin, because all aesthetizations of politics, coming from top to bottom, can't hypodermically penetrate the society and naturalize its meanings. Laclau (2005: 19) doesn't want to use the category of populism to disqualify, to project an image of irrational/immoral mass that deviates from the norm. Actually, populism is just a

discursive resource (*ibid*, p. 176) that can help us to understand the construction of political as such, of collective identities and their engagement in the political field. While hardcore liberals since Thomas Hobbes are constantly against collective arrangements and citizen's associations (Honneth 2014: 23), Laclau thinks there can be no society of eccentric and narcissistic individuals unified only on formal rules.

We need affect to identify with other people on libidinal level. Every social relation has to be connected to the idea of love. Social has to be emotional; there is no society without people's closeness to each others. When we love another person, our ego shrinks, we are ready to sacrifice ourselves for the object we idealize (Laclau 2005: 54). Even though political leader is not our lover, he/she can gain our sympathies. Identification doesn't have to be just idealistic, but that we can like somebody because of his/her flaws (Žižek 2017). In the case of Trump, critiques of his ignorance of foreign policy produced counter effects, because ordinary people have recognized him as one of them, someone that educated people want to put to shame.

Therefore, the group's organized around the leader, that can be destructive like Kellner's Trump, but he/she doesn't constitute the group by himself/herself, because the mass is not a passive receiver of leader's messages (Laclau 2005: 60). Leader doesn't even have this power, because in order to get support by a lot of people the rhetoric needs adjustments, to make it less concrete and more vague. Its logic should be less clear in order to get closer to diverse interests of many people. Simplified and empty symbols could then express a "social rationality" (*ibid*, p. 14) that serves as a framework for the subjects of the postmodern condition, and these symbols are more efficient than ideas developed by intellectuals.

Laclau's view of hegemony moves away from Gramsci's (1951: 164), who sees it as a cultural leadership of intellectuals that shape the society. Intellectual complexity doesn't fascinate ordinary people, so the political can't be constructed this way, but through rhetorical production of emptiness, in which anyone can place their desires, interest or values. Ordinary people, by overreading this emptiness, can actually create an ideology that is not simplified, but

is an idea that went through the social milieu, different relations or cognitive elements. The idea is constituted within the thick social, not through theoretical abstractions. Populism can therefore be full political experience.

There are two more conditions for the creation of Laclau's populist configuration. Before popular identity of the mass is formed under the empty signifier, society has to be divided between the people and the elite. System has to be seen by the people as irrevocably corrupt (*ibid*, p. 177). Marginalized groups have to articulate its interests and values in order to form a chain of equivalence (*ibid*, p. 74). This unifying symbolic construction should allow the mutual recognition and partial integration of diverse groups. Without this connective chain there is no populist configuration. Only together these groups can acquire a better position in the society's power struggle. For example, Hillary Clinton wanted anti-Trump Republicans to enter her coalition. The "anti-Trump" identity would serve as an empty symbol, a scarecrow (Žižek 2017).

Populist configuration is based on the perspective that members of the Establishment are an obstacle to wellbeing of the people, and when different social groups see one another as potential allies, the chain of equivalence can be formed as a completely new political dimension (Laclau 2005: 162). The idea of people as a whole is impossible without representation. Power is formed primarily through symbolic production of emptiness. This is, after Gramsci, another of Laclau's disagreements with political thinkers such as Claude Lefort that sees society as a conflictual entity. He insists that the place of power has to remain empty (Lefort 2003: 34). No one can hold this place; it has to stay fragmented, a particularistic society, a result of many strategies and many struggles. Without constant confrontation of different political logics there is a possibility of falling into totalitarianism. But Laclau (2005: 166) doesn't see the place of power as some structural location. It is a form of identity that constitutes the people. There's no populism or democracy without it (*ibid*, p. 169). Both Žižek and Lefort would insist that we need an empty place of power so that every popular identity wouldn't be seen as eternal but contingent, temporary, not worthy of totality itself (Žižek 2008: 284). But because Laclau

sees history as a series of populist configurations, these remarks lose their strength: Laclau doesn't say there is a universal agent of social change.

For Žižek (2017), populism is a form of depolitization led by the middle class that wants to return to more simple times, without social antagonisms. Now that the social change spreads even to the intimate relationships (Žižek 2008: 281), it seems the middle class is reacting to this change and wants to restore harmony. Of course, one could confute this with a remainder that the idea of classless society without structural conflicts is also harmonistic, but Žižek thinks that populism is doing more than facilitating the functioning of capitalist society. It is also reactionary, it doesn't serve social change, doesn't bring anything new and authentic, but sows only fear of something dangerous (*ibid* p. 304). For Laclau (2005: 245), it is political philosophy that constantly reduces the politics to the police. Instead of threatening, mindless crowd in search for a totalitarian leader, Laclau reverses things: populism sets the people free.

What is really behind this critique? Maybe an attempt to prove Occupy movement is not populist? Žižek certainly wouldn't accept that he participated in a reactionary movement. Some critics say that populism is not when you say "We are the 99%" but "We are 100%" (Muller 2016), because synecdoche has to represent the whole (Laclau 2005: 72). But populism needs an antagonism between the elite and the people, so it can never be about 100%. Also, the 99% man is a populist hero that embodies the social media's ideology of interaction, openness and directness (Gerbaudo 2015). Tumblr blog "We are the 99%" can only be seen as a method of aggregating different groups in order to create a chain of equivalence, which makes Occupy a populist movement (*ibid* p. 68).

What Žižek missed is Fredric Jameson's "always historicize". It is a fact that the American People's Party from 19th century first talked about 99%. Party is famous for its anti-Semitic demonology of the 1% of the rich (Matić 2002). While Žižek constantly tries to portray Laclau as non-dialectical thinker, it is he who fails to see this fascinating path of the 99% slogan from a far right party to leftist social movement. Žižek (2008: 282) also thinks Laclau doesn't acknowledge that populism can be produced by the elites

themselves, like in the case of United Kingdom, where the mothers in the single parent households were the target of populist critiques. But Laclau knows populism is not just progressive, and this actually proves the point of Laclau's linguistic turn. Popular identity can be produced rhetorically, so it can produce single moms as the problem.

Of course, it doesn't mean Laclau's theory doesn't need some adjustments. One of the problems that need to be considered is ideological manipulation. It seems Laclau's chain of equivalence is created by people completely aware of what they're doing, like both the libidinal identification and rational choice are something that is expected. But what about the ideology of culture industry (Horkheimer & Adorno 1989) and manufacturing the people's consent (Chomsky 1988)? We can't expect that everyone is consciously forming a populist configuration, but that their values and choices can be manipulated. Antonio Gramsci (Gramši 1979: 110) states that there is no successful hegemony that hasn't acknowledged in some way the interests of the subordinated class. Powerful actors always try to construct at least something than looks like a compromise.

Gramsci also shows that hegemony doesn't have only psychological or moral value, but it's also a matter of gnoseology. It's not just cultural and moral leadership but also cognitive (Gramši 1980: 86). If we see populist configuration as hegemony, we can acknowledge certain people don't have to explicitly agree with dominant worldview. Unity is not a necessary element for the hegemony. All that is needed is a "theoretical consciousness" that can "bring us to the point of contradictory consciousness that doesn't allow any action, decision or choice, and induces a condition of moral and political passivity" (*ibid.*, str. 81). It's enough to bring yourself into a paradoxical situation, to try to critically understand the world around you as the "struggle of political hegemonies" (*ibid.*), so that you feel there's no point of doing something. This is what happened with a small but important number of people that voted for Obama but not for Clinton. A part of those votes went to Trump, but a larger number left both candidates and went to independent candidates or nowhere at all. These ex-Obama voters, who can

hardly be called racists or white supremacists, were a decisive part of Trump's populist configuration.

Voters: a paralactic view

If we don't want to present Trump's voters as some pathological entity, we need to be more precise. I can't accept the differentiation between normal and abnormal voters, culturally progressive and backward. The whole issue about white nationalism or racism of Trump's voters misses the target. Not just because KKK members vote for every Republican candidate, but because Trump didn't become the president because of KKK. If only white supremacists voted for Trump, he wouldn't be in the White House. Constant focus on the fanatical element among Trump's voters is less research and more a campaign. Is Kellner writing an engaging work to influence public opinion or to contribute to political science? I will try to define the real structure of Trump's voters. To do that, I won't compare opposing candidates in the election, but Democratic candidates (Obama and Clinton) alone and Republican candidates (Romney and Trump) alone, in last two elections.

Inglehart and Norris (2016) maintain that populist core voters are older, more religious, less educated citizens, mostly males belonging to the ethnic majority, and of course, very often petit bourgeois. But focusing on core voters in an election where core didn't decide the outcome is a time waste. According to the Exit Polls of New York Times (Huang et al 2016), Trump even lost 1% of Romney's White voters. There was no new ethnic majority's support for Trump. Also, Trump got just 1% more male voters than Romney but lost 3% of senior citizens. He got more evangelists and people with a high school degree (3%), as well as citizens with median income below 30.000\$ (6%), while he lost some of the more affluent citizens. Paradoxically, Trump gained 2% of African and Hispanic Americans and 3% of Asian Americans. That is, Trump maintained the usual Republican voters and enlarged it with minorities, less affluent and less educated.

Remarkably, Trump lost only 2% of Romney's women, while Hillary Clinton lost 1% of Obama's female voters. They both lost some women voters. This is fascinating when we have in mind the legendary Trump's sexist video. Clinton didn't just lose 1% of women but also men (4%), Whites (2%), African American (5%), Hispanics (6%) and Asian (8%). Trump took just a part of these voters, while a good number went to independent candidates or didn't vote. Clinton also lost 5% of young voters, 6% of Obama's voters with a high school degree, a whole 10% of people with median income under 30,000\$. Clinton gained a more affluent and more educated, that were not Obama's targets. All these small percentages are precious in a campaign where Electoral College decided who will be the president. Those votes left the Democratic candidate and the majority of them didn't went to Trump.

This statistics has to change our understanding of populist configuration. It doesn't consist of only Trump's voters, whether they're ordinary Republican voters or ex-Obama voters. With Gramsci' hegemony in mind, populist configuration occurs where the consent is manufactured or citizens are brought in a contradictory position that leads to passivity. Politicians don't have to just gain supporters but also to make their opponents lose voters. Slandering the enemy, presenting him/her as corrupted or evil, confusing the voters into thinking no one is worthy of their vote, these are all the method of shrinking the number of votes that would go to the opponent. Trump got less votes than Clinton, but it is statistics that helped him gain the presidency.

Therefore, we should define *Trump's populist configuration as a sum of Trump's voters and Clinton's lost voters*. That is, if somebody didn't vote because he/she thought it's a moral thing to do, and both candidates are bad, that kind of decision will have consequences. This is not just a Trump's strategy, of course. Hillary Clinton tried to take some Republican fractions in order to get the needed delegate votes. We could even hypothesize that hardcore Sanders' supporters were the ones that helped Trump become the president. Moral or cognitive dissonance can help the opponent to win. What I'm trying to show is just a structure of Trump's populist configuration. When we are aware the primary target of Trump's

campaign were not just core Republican voters, but people that will not vote for him at all, Trump's media approach makes more sense, and the spectacle gains meaning.

Trump and the media

Was Trump trumping the media? Maybe, but it takes two to tango. In order to show this I will rely on general information about the campaign that could be found in pretty much any information source. Here, I will rely primarily on the "NBC Nightly News". NBC is a TV network close to the Democrats, and it is expected to be more critical of Trump. However, we could find at least two problems that is NBC's own fault. First, it is a commercial network, that has a tendency towards infotainment, and this installation of entertainment industry within the news media (Curran 2011: 22) had Donald Trump, a reality player, as a consequence. If NBC constantly reports about Trump in an entertaining way, than it is expected the audience won't take everything he says seriously. And second, in the last months of the campaign, when NBC became more critical of apparent Trump's sexist or anti-Semitic views, NBC got so ridiculously serious that it failed to see Trump's son in law is Jewish. Both infotainment and unfocused critique were actually helping Trump.

What else NBC failed to do? For example, in order to help Hillary Clinton during the primaries, it made comparisons of Trump and Bernie Sanders, like they're actually similar candidates, that they share the same views on trade, have similar foreign policies and are critical of the Establishment. Identifying Sanders and Trump as populist candidates in order to portray Clinton as the moderate one eventually hurt Clinton herself, after it was discovered that Democratic National Convention supported her or when the transcripts of the Wall Street speeches were made public. Only thing that Trump had to do is to maintain she is a "queen of corruption", that she and Obama helped the forming of Isis, and to call for Sanders' supporters to vote for him. NBC reported that Trump

even said to the DNC chair: “Debbie, you’re fired”.

Also, it appears the blue collar workers slipped Clinton’s mind, as she expected them not to vote for Trump. She even used a very bad phrase for these less affluent people. Once they became the “basket of deplorables”, it was fairly easy for Trump to ask for votes of union workers from Ohio or to even get 29% of Hispanic American votes, even though he promised to build a wall on the Mexico border. Along with Brexit’s restoration of UK’s sovereignty and national pride, Trump’s view of immigration hasn’t made him lose the votes of the minorities. He even presented himself as a guy who eats “fast food because at least I know what’s in it”, and NBC helped him to acquire this populist image. Even though most of Trump’s supporters are not socially marginalized (Rothwell & Diego-Rosell 2016: 11), Clinton’s “deplorables” comment helped Trump gain the votes from every social class.

The Millennials saw him as passionate and spontaneous, while Clinton was seen as too robotic, not “cool” enough. Trump was more entertaining, indeed. When he was asked by a journalist does he think of himself as a role model for today’s youth, he answered “No, next”. While Michelle Obama or Al Gore were trying to get the Millennial vote by talking about serious issues such as environment, Trump maintained his image from the American wrestling shows. This is a “kayfabe” approach of obvious fake competition among wrestlers, who could say bad stuff about one another and get into a staged fight, but the audience knew all is an act. Kayfabian is a “con artist” (Mazer 1998: 23), one who knows it’s just a game. NBC failed to recognize Trump’s kayfabe, his constant struggles with “Little Marco”, “Lying Ted” or “Crooked Hillary” was something imported from the American wrestling.

With these fake fights Trump succeeded in creating an image of really independent candidate, both from left and the right, because everybody was attacking him, and he was kayfabiing everyone. If we don’t acknowledge Trump’s kayfabe, we can’t understand his approach to minorities. For example, Trump called Senator Warren Pocahontas. He made fun of her Native American background. We can expect that the audience will see it just as part of the game, especially because he is attacking members of

the perceived Establishment. When the Kahn family appeared on the DNC to talk about their son's death in the Middle East, Trump said that the mother haven't said anything, implying her Muslim husband doesn't allow her to speak in public. Of course, Trump was targeting his audience. First, people who are afraid of Muslim culture, but also women who see it as the example of patriarchal power. That is, under this kayfabe attack there's a quasi-feminist message that delivered 42% of female votes to Trump.

His approach to African Americans is even more fascinating. First, there is an "accidental" plagiarism of Michelle Obama's speech by Melania Trump. Their speeches had many similarities and it's bizarre to even think this was just a mistake. Maybe a professional mistake. After all, Trump campaign has denied this for 36h, and when it became almost old news, they changed the statement. Trump even had fun with it, by saying people applaud to Michelle but don't like Melania's exact speech. What actually happened is another 36h of publicity. With 72h of free media, Trump didn't just tried to show how he's not a racist, because he plagiarized Black woman's words. He actually didn't win much African American votes. But he succeeded in strengthening the white voters who were unsure if Trump really was a far right populist. Eventually, he changed his position about Obama's birth certificate, even though he's been talking about it for years.

Trump even went into a counterattack in the case of floods in Louisiana. That is, when New Orleans was destroyed by Katrina, and African American population was particularly hit by this disaster, president Bush was on vacation and didn't plan to help the victims. His low rating never recovered after that (Castells 2009). For American citizens, Bush's behavior was unacceptable, and it could be interpreted as one of the reasons for Obama's triumph in 2008. But in the case of Louisiana floods in 2016. it was Obama who was on vacation. The first one there was Donald Trump. He has learned the lesson. After that, he could even point a finger at Hillary Clinton, and call her a bigot who talked about "superpredators" in the 1990s.

This helped him to get away with the notorious sexist video. It wasn't just kayfabe or "locker room talk", but that his opponent

wasn't something feminists would dream of. Hillary was surrounded by several problematic characters, including her husband Bill, the alleged sexual predator. Anthony Wiener, husband of Hillary's assistant Huma Abedin, got into a "sexting" affair in the middle of Trump's video scandal. Trump literally thanked him for good job and maintained that he actually respects women. Even though some comedians made fun of him, that didn't damage his reputation, at least not enough. The reason could be what Clinton's campaign did six months before that: they labeled Bernie Sanders and his supporters as sexist (Mladenović 2017). It seems that Hillary's usual strategy is to imply her opponent is sexist. Depending on the memory of the audience, this strategy can easily become a boy who cried wolf story. Once a real sexist shows up, nobody will believe you.

The last problem with this issue is that suddenly some of the right wing journalists, like Fox's Megyn Kelly, started a campaign against Trump. In an interview with Newt Gingrich the video was the main subject. Gingrich said Kelly is "fascinated with sex", she responded "fascinated by the protection of women". But it is not the surface that makes this problematic. It is the history. Kelly is remembered as someone who presented Occupy Wall Street protestors as "morons", and said that police spray is made of pepper, which is just a food ingredient (Fuchs 2014: 342). This cynical approach to the Occupy movement then translated somehow into a feminist fight now. This is just a tip of the paradoxical iceberg that shows Clinton would probably have better chances if Trump's video never saw the light of the day. She could not control her staff nor media's response to it, and both made thing worse for her. Her calls to go where no woman has gone before were left unanswered.

Concluding remarks

Populism is a contradictory phenomenon. Some populist parties are for neoliberal policies, while some are turning back to welfare state. In the past, populist movements led to both socialist revolutions

and fascist reactions. United States' paradoxical history shows this. It is a country in which the 99% rhetoric of anti-Semitic People's Party became a slogan of the Occupy movement. It is a country in which Abraham Lincoln, who freed the slaves, is a Republican, but the first Black president came from Democratic Party. This shows us how we can never be sure what populism can do. What we should not do is to disqualify it a priori. This is what Laclau does, he believes the people are doing the best they can to change their societies. Even though Laclau seems too optimistic, practically believing the trial and error approach will eventually lead to social utopia, the hope neoliberalism will reform itself is even less possible.

The struggle between populism and neoliberalism, leaves us with no clear choice. In this paper I showed the confusion of ordinary people. Their votes really seem like a big mess. Some authors, like Douglas Kellner, are practically outraged that minorities or people from lower income quintiles voted for Trump, but the real truth is the choice was fake to begin with. Once Sanders was eliminated, there were just two neoliberal candidates left. This made all voters' decisions hard. The contradictory consciousness leads to resignation, apathy, inactivity. The populist configuration that was on the rise was clearly anti-establishment, like Laclau's theory presumes. The decision of the DNC to have Hillary Clinton as a candidate, someone who may not personally be responsible for neoliberal globalization but is nevertheless seen as its representative, wasn't Trump's fault.

Once this structural divide of the American society was created, the future became a question of libidinal identification with a leader and the chain of equivalence that was aimed against the Washington. Trump saw this opportunity and took it. This paper showed some of his media manipulations, but I also wanted to make clear Trump did not do it alone. Neoliberalized networks such as NBC couldn't provide critical reporting, because they would have to report about neoliberalism. Paradoxically, media are populist because they're neoliberal, because ordinary people see their news selection and processing as inadequate and one-dimensional. Not talking about economic doctrine that created the social crisis led to numerous talk shows that translated the crisis in nationalist

terms. While Marxism maintains that class interests are hidden behind national interests, the so-called liberal media forgot both. They were not talking about class or nation, but right wing media did. Trump's empty signifier of America Great Again was perfect for this populist configuration.

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Part IV
**ARTS AND CULTURAL
POLICIES IN ERA OF
NATIONALISM AND
POPULISM**



Saša Stojanović: *Choose your own Teletubbies*, performance, 28 December 2011, Belgrade, in front of the National Assembly.



Saša Stojanović: *The Other Mother*, performance, criticizing aggressive policies of corporate capitalism (Danube Foods Group), Belgrade, 2010.



Saša Stojanović: *Danas*, performance in front of the monument to Azerbaijan dictator Heidar Aliyev in Tašmajdan park, Belgrade, 2011.

Saša Stojanović: *Public performances*

Saša Stojanović: Choose your own teletubbies. The performance was addressing the citizens of Serbia to take a step “out of the cage” and to start life based on social solidarity. He identified 250 Serbian MPs as Teletubbies that are absolutely same in spite of different colours or in spite of the fact that they belong to different parties. Both values and aesthetics that they share are equally banal and stereotypical, and Stojanović accuses them all of being just marionettes in the hands of new transitional tycoons that in reality govern society. Stojanović offers an alternative, criticizing capitalist Neo-liberal system that is enslaving majority of population, being helped by reign of fear and control, dictated from the Parliament that is creating such a system through numerous laws in favour of super rich that are in reality the only one to hold the real power. Counting till 250, Stojanović stood for 15 minutes offering to citizens also the “election” – the possibility to choose “your own Teletubby” – your own deputy that do not think, that do not act, and especially do not act in favour of citizens.

Performance **Danas** focused on devastation of public spaces by “monument (non)policies” that celebrate and promote dictators and doubtful historical figures. At the same time, those policies are uncritically presented in our media and daily press that was symbolized with article published in daily newspaper Danas.

Performance **The Other Mother** made visible effects of corporate capitalism and its aggressive economic methods. Chosen example of Danube Foods Group emphasized ways of purchasing small domestic milk producers, thus creating a monopoly influencing the raise of the milk price on the Serbian market.

Marie Cazes

Miikka Pyykkönen

*Putting Culture Back in its Place:
The Populist Cultural Policy
of the Finns Party*

Abstract

Since its breakthrough in Finnish parliamentary elections, the national populist Finns Party started to play an important role in Finnish politics. This role was confirmed after the parliamentary elections of 2015 when the party took part in the governmental coalition and received, among others, the portfolio of the Minister of Culture. The new role of the Finns Party allows it to take part in policy making. This article focuses on the cultural policy of the Finns Party since 1995, with an emphasis on the late 2000s to the present. This study examines the cultural policy of the Finns Party manifested in its programmes on culture, language and migration through rhetorical analysis. It also considers its actual participation in governing bodies, especially the Education and Culture Committee of the Parliament and the Finnish Public Broadcasting Company YLE. The main questions of this article are: what does culture mean for the Finns Party? What kind of culture is good and acceptable according to it? What kinds of cultural policies does it try to promote?

Key words Populism, cultural policy, culture, nationalism, Finland, Finns Party

Introduction

Finns Party (Perussuomalaiset in Finnish, from now on PS; until 2011 ‘True Finns’ in English;) has been part of the political map of Finland since 1995. From the very beginning of the existence of the party, its activists have sworn by the name of populism and cultural nationalism. For them ‘populism’ means “the democracy which bases on the popularity among the masses”. They claim that, because they are a party consisting of “ordinary Finns” they can sense and thus represent the true sentiments, desires and aspirations of the Finnish folk better than other, somewhat elitist parties Perussuomalaiset. 2018; cf. Müller 2016). They combine populism explicitly with nationalism and national culture:

Populism is not universal ideology, like socialism or capitalism, but it is always connected to culture and folk character. Even our party name the Finns tells that our politics base on history of Finland and Finnish culture. The Finns Party wants to defend the own national sovereignty of the Finnish people, which means that only and exclusively the people, who form a nation of their own and separate from the other nations, have eternal and unlimited right to freely and independently decide about all their own affairs. (Perussuomalaiset 2018, transl. MP).

During the past decade, they have been the only party with the explicit cultural policy programme. This highlighted in their distinguished and much debated cultural policy programme for the 2011 elections, in which they made a huge success and raised to the crowd of the four biggest parties in Finland. The central point in this four pages cultural policy programme was that the good and acceptable art is the one, which is favoured by populace, and which leans on the traditional understanding of national identity, and feeds patriotism. Cultural heterogeneity of Finland and experimental avant-garde art (“postmodern artsy art”) should not be funded by public money.

PS has come a long way since the victorious 2011 elections: Since 2015 it has been in the Government and early 2017 Sampo

Terho, one of the representatives of the far-right side of the party, became the Ministry of Culture. In addition, the members of the Finns Party have gained important positions in the decisive bodies: four member¹ in the board of administration of YLE (Public Broadcasting Company) and three members in the Education and Culture Committee of the Parliament. However, according to the latest polls and municipal elections of 2017 the popularity of the PS has decreased from almost 20% below 10%. In June 2017 the party split into two after its party meeting. The far-right side of the party got the power and the displaced moderate side left the party and formed a new group called *Blue Future* (at first *Blue and White Alternative*). All the ministers of the current Government belong to this new group.

In this article we analyse the party programmes of PS and their presence in governmental bodies regarding cultural affairs. Our overarching research questions are, *what kind of culture and art is good and acceptable according to the Finns Party*, and *what kind of cultural policies they try to promote*.

We begin our article with an overview of history and present of populism in the Finnish politics. Then we describe the parallel situation specifically in cultural policy. After that we first analyse PS programme rhetoric on cultural, migration and language issues, and then their actual participation in governing bodies. We end our article by summarizing the key findings of our analysis.

Populism in Finnish politics

Populism can be seen as an old phenomenon in Finnish politics. Indeed, some agrarian populist movements, such as *Lapuan liike* (the Lapua Movement), were active already during the 1930s. However, they did not gain much popularity in the longer run and

1 In summer 2017, when the PS divided into two, the seat division changed, following which the PS and the Blue Reform, which separated from the PS, both have two seats.

never attended the Parliament, for instance (e.g. Vahosalmi 2017; Mickelsson 2007: 103–104).

It is only with the Small Farmers' Party of Finland (*Suomen Pientalonpoikien Puolue*), an agrarian populist party established in 1959, that populism reached Finnish parliamentary politics. Indeed, this first populist party was created in February 1959 by Veikko Vennamo, an MP from the Agrarian League (*Maalaisliitto*), who decided to build his own party because of disagreement on policies for the small farmer population (e.g. Hokkanen 2002: 460–472). During those decades, Finland underwent deep structural changes. The society was transforming from an agrarian society to an urban and industrialised one. Because of the changes and features of that transformation, the Agrarian League became the Centre Party (*Keskustapuolue*) as a response to the development of society and to reach a wider electorate (e.g. Kääriäinen 2002: 100–106).

On the contrary and also as an opposition to the Centre Party, the Small Farmers' Party of Finland changed its name to Finnish Rural Party (*Suomen Maaseudun Puolue*, from now on SMP) in 1966 to show that they still stood for the rural world and people excluded from the urbanisation and industrialisation of Finland. This political position was a success: in the parliamentary elections of 1970 and 1972, the Finnish Rural party gained 18 MPs, which was a huge victory. In 1970 Finland was one of the first European countries in which “modern populism” gained ground in elections; for example in Denmark it happened in 1973.

During the 1980s, the SMP also participated in the governmental coalition after the party won 17 seats in the parliamentary elections of 1983. The SMP had a strong leadership under Veikko Vennamo, who left the top position of the party to his son, Pekka Vennamo, in 1979. Those successes allowed the party to take part in the parliamentary process and policy making, but they were also one reason for some internal division. In those times, the party mainly focused on the “forgotten people” of rural areas, and its rhetoric was agrarian populist. Its policies were mainly based on defending small farmers, small entrepreneurship and rural areas against the elites of big cities. This opposition between the elite and

the people is still one of the main features of populism according to many scholars (e.g. Mudde 2007: 23).

Finnish populism took ‘a nationalist turn’ after the internal division and bankruptcy of the Finnish Rural Party in 1995 and the creation of a new party, *Perussuomalaiset* (PS, Finns Party), the same year. After some elections with minor success, the Finns Party started to gain more popularity in elections in the late 2000s. In the parliamentary elections of 2011, it reached a huge and surprising victory. It got 19% of the votes and 39 MPs. In the parliamentary elections of April 2015, the Finns Party gained nearly 18% of the votes and 38 MPs, and in May 2015 it formed part of the governmental coalition.

Some other national populist parties or movements also exist in Finland, such as *Suomen Sisu*, *Muutos 2011* and *Vapauspuolue* (e.g. Mickelsson 2011: 147), but their success in elections or impact on actual politics has been clearly smaller than with the PS. However, *Suomen Sisu* has many active members who are also members of the PS (e.g. Mickelsson 2011: 149).

The history of populism and cultural policy in Finland

One might argue that there is a long history of populism in Finnish cultural policy. If we look at the statements that the famous figures of the Fennoman movement made around the mid-1800s, it is easy to conclude that their way of understanding and representing national culture and the meaning of art was often populist. Zacharias Topelius, for instance, did not describe the varieties of ordinary people and their cultural habits in his path-breaking textbook *Maammekirja* (Book about Our Land), but also formulated the new popular image of Finnishness for the use of these ordinary people to identify with and build their self-understanding accordingly. He represented the common national identity as naturally given, given by history, by god, and by the nation itself. Very similar to what have been the more recent objectives of the European populist parties’ – such as PS – formulations of national culture and identity.

This land is my fatherland. [...] All its sons and daughters are the same. [...] God has unified them to the same homeland and under the same laws and government during many hundred years. What bad or good has happened to one, has also happened to another. They have raised, lived and died side by side in the noble north, under the same sky, by doing the same hard work to save their lives. They have the same Christian faith, same rights, same responsibilities, same interest, same harm, same freedom, same love, and same hope. Hence are they fellow countrymen, brothers and sister at all times. May God give us all amicable minds. What God has unified, should the man not separate. (Topelius 1875, XX, transl. MP.).

When the Finnish people were dragged “from darkness into the light” in this Fennomanian nation building process, arts played a key role besides more anthropological view on national and popular culture. Modern arts – meaning national romanticism of the mid-1800’s – were seen as enlightening and bringing people civilization, but also showing outsiders that Finland is a civilized culture and nation, and, hence, ready for independence. According to Sakarias Sokka (2012: 26) and Erkki Sevänen (1998: 273, 274) culture and cultural life were inseparable part of nation building. Some of the Fennomans saw the conduct of cultural life as the number one task for the rising and young state. Just like the current right wing and nationalistic populist politicians, the Fennomans built their understanding of Finnish culture on (a) the assumptions of what do the common Finns understand as Finnish culture and value about it, and (b) the assumptions of what the commoners would need to become even more enriched by the Finnish culture.

Once the arts and cultural policy started to institutionalize as a state action after the independence, the populist tone silenced, especially the side appreciating the expressions of popular culture, but cultural policy actions began to concentrate on civilizing commoners through highbrow arts and culture (Sokka 2012: 45). However, there was a strong political extreme right wing movement in Finland in 1920s and 1930’s. Although they did not have explicit programme on cultural or art policy, they had impacts on the cultural and artistic practises of their time. Swearing by

anti-communism the activists of *Lapuan liike* and later *Isänmaallinen kansanliike* (from now on IKL; Patriotic Popular Movement) tend to underrate and even abolish the leftist cultural expressions. Their argument was that the leftist cultural expressions were declining people's taste and thoughts and they were even dangerous because of their antinationalism. Like the Finns party in their "anti-postmodernism", IKL also had an anti-modernist art views, for instance against jazz-music and "Western decadent culture", the latter referred chiefly to the modern and avant-garde art of the 1920s. (Siltala 1985; Silvennoinen et al. 2016.) However, their views did not get wide or deep foothold in the official Finnish cultural policy of that time.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, after the Continuation war the right wing populism was only minor thing for many decades in Finland. The thing changed in the late 1950's when SMP was established. However, the party was not very active in cultural issues. One of the most visible things was their impact in fighting against the monopolization and leftist program policy of National Broadcasting Company YLE in the 1960s. Together with National Coalition Party (Kokoomus) they tried to prevent the centralizations of all radio broadcasts under YLE ('STV' at the time). In 1967-1969 they were active in trying to wrench the leftist managing director Eino S. Repo out from YLE, because of his leftist program policy and willingness to disband other channels and commercial radio and TV production. They finally succeeded in their attempts in 1970 after their historical election victory and with the support of National Coalition Party. (Arminen 1989: 75-80.)

In 1974 SMP published their own special program of cultural policy in their Party meeting in Turku. The tone of the program is very similar as in the statements on culture of the most Finnish-minded Fennoman cultural activists of 1800s, on the one hand, and in the cultural policy statements of the (True) Finns party later, on the other. Although the general statement in the beginning of the program refers also to the humanism and equality familiar from the statements of the UN and UNESCO, for instance, and the part of the program dealing with minorities is absolutely over flowingly supportive of the Sámi cultural rights, the program in general

invokes to cultural patterns and arts typical and even natural for the Finnish people, and it presents the forms of arts and culture, which are good for the Finnish nation and its people.

The primary task of the citizen education is to try to accentuate humanity, respect for life, and the appreciation of work, and Finnish national traditions, love of fatherland, freedom of religion and opinion, honesty, decent Christian life values, and all good qualities of citizen in general. [...] The primary employment of Finnish musicians must be supported and their economic position strengthened. The folk art in general has to be supported. We are against the import of drugs and decadent habits under the guise of art or by other means too. [...] The significance of local heritage work and unpolluted nature as part of general cultural work has to be emphasized more than before. [...] SMP does not accept culture alien to our people and ideologies implanted from outside. The more the true cultural values become internalized by the wide layers of our nation, the more sustainable and creative becomes our own essential national culture. (SMP 1974, transl. MP)

Since the foundation of the party, PS has brought culture and cultural policy strongly to their agenda. For them they have been means to influence on 3 issues important for their politics: enhancement of nationalism, control and decrease of migration, and the weakening of the position of modern arts. Rather striking is that PS has been the only part after the Millennium with the cultural policy program in national elections. We will now move to the analysis of PS and their considerations on culture and cultural policies.

Case study: the Finns Party

The Finns Party (PS) was created in 1995 by some former members of the Finnish Rural Party after its bankruptcy. One of the founders was former secretary of the Finnish Rural Party, Timo Soini, who took the lead of the Finns Party in 1997.

In its first manifesto, which reached urban voters, the PS claimed to defend the middle class (e.g. Ylä-Anttila 2017: 27). During the 2000s, the party had some local success with some popular candidates (e.g. Arter 2013), especially Tony Halme, a former boxer, in the elections of 2003 (e.g. Arter 2012: 814). In 2007 the PS started to collaborate with persons sharing more radical opinions especially on immigration and Islam, such as Jussi Halla-aho, who was a candidate of the PS without being a member of the party. Before running as a candidate in elections, Jussi Halla-aho was known as an anti-Islam blogger with his blog *Scripta*, which was one of the most read blogs in Finland at the time. Jussi Halla-aho joined the PS in 2010. Since those years, there were two factions in the party, an openly anti-immigration one under the natural leadership of Halla-aho, and a more moderate one under Timo Soini, the official chairman, who always tried to keep the more radical group of his party under control.

The PS started to rise in elections, growing from 1.6% in 2003 to 9.8% in the European elections of 2009 before its breakthrough in the parliamentary elections of 2011, in which, as previously mentioned, they had 19% of the votes.

After the parliamentary elections of 2015, in which it kept 38 seats, the PS formed the government with the Centre Party and the National Coalition. The PS had five ministers, which were the following: Foreign Affairs, Defence, Social Services, Labour, and European Affairs and Culture. However, during its participation in the government, the popularity of the PS started to decrease in opinion polls, and this also showed in the municipal elections of April 2017, in which it had little less than 9% of the votes².

After those municipal elections, the PS organised an election for a new chairperson. This internal election had been planned and announced before the municipal election results. In March 2017, Timo Soini, Chairman of the Finns Party for twenty years, stated that he would not continue as the leader. The two candidates were Jussi Halla-aho, the natural leader of the anti-immigration faction, and Sampo Terho.

2 <https://vaalit.yle.fi/tulospalvelu/kv2017>, accessed 9 January 2018.

In June 2017, the party split following the election of Jussi Halla-aho as Chairman. Indeed, Jussi Halla-aho has a conviction of hate speech so the other parties' leaders in the governmental coalition did not want to collaborate with the new PS leader, and they kicked the party out of the government. But at the same time, Soini, Terho and other MPs defected the PS to create a new parliamentary group called *Sininen Tulevaisuus* (Blue Reform³), which was included in the government, as a result of which the composition of the government remained unchanged since all the former PS ministers joined the Blue Reform⁴.

After the split of June 2017, the former PS members of the government continue their work under the parliamentary group, and a now party, named Blue Reform with Sampo Terho, Minister of Culture and European Affairs, as their leader. The Blue Reform party claims to be “a movement for tax revolt of the middle classes”⁵. Thus, we can say that the Blue Reform remains in continuity with Vennamo's and Soini's ideology and has taken distance from the controversial radicalism that took the lead of the PS. Furthermore, they position themselves as traditional cultural nationalists by claiming to be a movement in continuity with the Finnishness and Fennoman movements.

What culture means for The Finns Party

In the subchapter after this one we will focus especially on the pivotal PS election program of 2011, the cultural policy program, which still defines PS cultural policy to a great extent. This subchapter underlays that chapter by focusing on different kinds of significations of culture PS represents in different programs. The

3 The Party uses this translation, but a literal translation would be 'Blue Future'.

4 According to Lauri Nurmi, the split was not a surprise and had been well prepared. <https://www.aamulehti.fi/uutiset/nain-jussi-halla-aho-juonittiin-soinin-seuraajaksi-aamulehden-toimittajan-uutuskirja-avaa-perussuomalaisen-historiallisen-repeamisen-taustat-200481126/>.

5 <http://www.sininentulevaisuus.fi/in-english/>.

point of departure is the general observation, that PS frames culture in three different dimensions in their programmes: (i) art, (ii) cultural heritage and (iii) national and ethnic culture. Next we offer examples of these from different programs and analyse them.

We start our observation from the General Program of PS published 1995. Culture did not play very visible role in this program. In terms of culture the spirit of the program was very SMP-like: The attitude on multiculturalism is fairly moderate and modern or abstract art remains without attention. Only “narrow high brow culture” is mentioned as something to resist. As is typical for populist parties, the rationality behind culture or cultural policy is represented vaguely by speaking for Finnish values and culture without opening their content and meaning.

“We accept foreigners to build our country and live here, but we do not let any of them to come here and harm our people’s home. They have to accept our order of society and justice, and then we on our behalf can accept their cultures and the difference of points of departure of lives, and we give them the right to live with us as equal individuals. (Perussuomalaiset 1995, transl. MP).

We have to address sufficient resources to the development of our folk culture. The spiritual wellbeing of the people has to be guaranteed. The excessive preference of narrow high brow culture with the society’s assets is got to stop. (Perussuomalaiset 1995, transl. MP.)

The next PS program where culture was present was the one of Parliamentary elections of 2003. It speaks about culture only in respect of migration. The tone was more radical than in the General Program 8 years ago and give the first signs about the radicalization of the party regarding views on migration and the compulsiveness of Finnish national culture:

The prerequisite is that immigrants become part of the Finnish people, live accordingly the laws of our country, give qualified labour input to the creation of our common welfare, adopt our language and culture and the Nordic social and political system. In Finland we should not tolerate an alien patterns and traditions offensive

to human dignity, such as circumcisions violating women's dignity, child marriages and barbarian practices of family honour. (Perussuomalaiset 2003, transl. MP.)

The next program of PS, which talked about culture, but also the rationalities and aims of the cultural policy was the Program for the 2007 Parliamentary Elections. The tone of the program concerning the meaning and role of national culture and the relations of cultures in Finland was very similar to the one in 2003 elections. The program emphasizes the hegemonic position of Finnish culture – what it technically contains remains still undefined (cf. Silvennoinen 2017) – in Finland and necessity of newcomers to assimilate to it and Finnish society in large. New thing now is that the migrant cultures and multiculturalism are explicitly represented as a threat to Finnish culture. As is typical for the populist rhetoric in respect of nation and culture the program speaks about the views of the party as they were the views of all Finnish people, “we” equals all Finnish people.

We get along and we want to get along with other nations and cultures. However, in Finland we live under the Finnish conditions and it means that we will have our Christmas parties and sing our Summer Hymn as we have done until now. [...] The basic idea in immigration policy should be "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". [...] It is immigrants' own business to maintain their culture, the tax money should not be spent to it, because it does not directly help the integration of immigrants in Finland. Multiculturalism should not be cherished by underrating our own culture. (20) [...] When expanding the immigration would endanger the position of original Finnish culture (Perussuomalaiset 2007: 14, 20, transl. MP.)

The arts or art policies are not explicitly tackled in the program, but there is one sentence about how arts and crafts should get bigger position in the education curricula (*ibid*, p. 14). The first time when PS speaks about the culture in municipal election program was 2008. The program deals with culture with wide scope and from different perspectives: in respect of education, basic services for all people, and, naturally, migration. The tone is stronger and

stricter than before. On the one hand, in terms of art and folk culture the program speaks about “healthy culture”, which refers to conditions, where the publicly organized cultural activities base on the “wholesome Finnish values”. “The municipalities should not support financially such cultural activity, which is offensive to the Finnish family values and Christian values”. The emphasis is on the support to the hobbies of the inhabitants of the municipalities and the expansion of arts and crafts subjects in schools. The “elite culture” gets a condemnation again, because it does not serve all the people:

[W]e are not willing to support elite culture. [...] We call elite culture such expensive cultural production, which does not interest the majority of the people at all or which the majority of the inhabitants of municipality are not ready to support (Perussuomalaiset 2008: 11).

On the other hand, immigration and immigration policies got strong critique again. The program continued from the parliamentary election program of 2007 by saying that the reception of refugees from the cultures stranger to us creates unsecure feelings among the native population and that, if the refugees are placed into municipalities, they should be from the neighbouring areas with cultures familiar to Finnish one (*ibid.*, p. 19). According to the program, the political solutions to support minorities should be such that they do not downgrade the position of majority and make them feel less important (*ibid.*).

The above-mentioned theses and significations form the basis of the cultural policy of PS: 1) Public support to arts should direct at folk arts and arts and crafts instead of elite art/culture. 2) The alien cultures of the migrants form a threat to the original Finnish culture, which should be clearly placed in the front in cultural policy. In the next three chapters we will analyse the three programs after 2010, which are the most important from the point of view of cultural policy.

The cultural policy programme of 2011

Already in its first party programme in 1995, the PS made a short statement on cultural policy, in which it stood for more resources to develop “folk culture” (e.g. Perussuomalaiset 1995). Between 1995 and 2011, the party did not say much about cultural policy, but for the parliamentary elections of 2011, the PS was the only party in Finland that gave importance to this topic to the extent of dedicating a separate programme to it. This subchapter aims to analyse this cultural policy programme.

The party’s programme for the parliamentary elections of 2011 is the longest they have published. The programme is 69 pages long, divided in 14 chapters and topics, and for the first time has a specific chapter on cultural policy. The place of this cultural policy chapter in the programme is special, because it comes second, right after an introduction on the party’s values and ideology, and before other topics such as healthcare, economy, immigration policy and European policy. The cultural policy programme talks about the party’s view on culture and Finnish culture, the Finnish language and art, the national broadcasting company YLE and regional culture such as culture in the countryside.

As for Finnish culture, the central point of the PS is to defend traditional art to reinforce national identity (e.g. Cazes 2015: 35-37). The programme states that “the Finns Party feels that preservation of the existent Finnish cultural heritage is essential compared to supporting contemporary postmodern art. Cultural funds given by the state should be directed towards this, they enforce Finnish identity.” (e.g. Perussuomalaiset 2011: 10, transl. MC.) Only Finnish culture and nationalist art are good for the party’s aim to preserve Finnish identity and culture in a multiculturalising world. For the PS, culture should be “put back in its place”, meaning the national romanticist enforcement of national identity. In this programme, the PS takes examples of famous Finnish artists from the Finnish nationalist movement, such as Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Albert Edelfelt and Jean Sibelius. The PS – as well as the Blue Reform – explicitly claim to continue the traditions of the Finnishness and Fennoman movements. The Finns Party’s view

on culture is clearly national romantic in that they want to use it to promote the Finnish nation.

Concerning the Finnish Public Broadcasting Company YLE, the Finns Party wishes to decrease the offer of American English programmes and increase Finnish production to promote Finnish culture by the diffusion of documentaries, theatre or concerts. This opposition to Anglo-Saxon culture is a way for populist radical right parties to resist Americanisation and cultural globalisation (e.g. Mudde 2007: 191, 192).

The party's will to preserve strong regional culture and regional traditions connects to the policies of the former populist party, the SMP, and its agrarian populist view of society as an opposition between the elites of the cities and the authentic people from the countryside. We also have to note that the two regions mentioned in the programme, Savonia and Ostrobothnia, are regions from which the party receives most of its electoral support, as also did the SMP historically (e.g. Helander 1971: 84). Hence, this defence of certain regional culture can be seen as a way to touch its electorate.

Despite the fact that the PS argues in favour of preserving local culture, it does not discuss the status of the two minorities recognised by Finland's Constitution, which are the Sámi and the Roma. We can say that they only aim at defending local forms of the majority culture. In this respect, there is a considerable change if compared to the SMP's cultural policy programme of 1974, which defended the Sámi's culture, language and education.

The Finns Party language policy

As mentioned above, in its cultural policy programme of 2011, the PS specified some language policies, but it is only in 2015 that the party released a language policy programme (*kielipoliittinen ohjelma*). Indeed, for the parliamentary elections of 2015, the PS issued seven separate programmes, one of which was on language policy. Its two main proposals are the abolition of Swedish as a mandatory subject in schools and the defence and preservation of

the Finnish language and Finno-Ugric languages relative to Finnish.

The Finnish language is part of the Finnish cultural entity defended by the PS. In its language policy programme for the parliamentary elections of 2015, the party argues that the Finnish language lies at the core of Finnish national identity and needs to be protected. In addition to defending the Finnish language, the party also speaks for the preservation of Finno-Ugric languages, especially Karelian, which is closely related to Finnish. This proposal of language policy is worth paying closer attention. Indeed, this argument is directly linked to the Fennoman movement and *The Kalevala*. They also talked about “kalevolean languages” (referring to the Finno-Ugric languages). The PS uses this imagined terminology directly linked to a major element of the Finnish national romanticism movement, *The Kalevala*, an epic poem, which has played a key role in the cultural-historic construction of Finnish identity. Thus, references to the Karelian language and Karelia are also strongly linked to the nation-building process of Finland (e.g. Harle & Moisio 2000: 248).

The idea to end mandatory Swedish in schools can already be found in some former programmes of the PS, e.g. the one of 2007 (ibid. 14), but in this 2015 programme this idea is far more explicit and developed. The party’s main argument for the proposal to end mandatory Swedish in schools is equality. It argues that most Finns live in regions where there are no Swedish speakers, so there is no use of learning Swedish for the Finnish-speaking majority, while for the Swedish-speaking minority it is useful to learn Finnish in school, because Finnish is spoken by the majority of the population all over Finland.

After the split, the new party Blue Reform published a manifesto in which it claims to be “a part of the historical movement of Finnishness, which promotes and reinforces the status of the Finnish language. The Blue Reform supports freedom of language in all levels of education.” (Sininen tulevaisuus 2017.) This means that the Blue Reform supports the same Finnish-centred language policy. In addition, Sampo Terho, Chairman of the Blue Reform, is Minister of Culture, who promotes a law to change the language policy of mandatory Swedish in schools.

There is a strong link between nationalism and language in the programme. It focuses only on the Finnish language and its relative languages, although historically the construction of Finland as a nation was at the beginning carried out by Swedish speakers defending and “creating” a Finnish culture and language (e.g. Tommila 1989). As Anderson (2006: 74) suggests, the construction and defence of a national language helps in the nation-building process.

The Finns Party in governmental bodies

The Administrative Council of YLE (*hallintoneuvosto*) is composed of 21 MPs elected by the Parliament. During the current government term, four of these members were from the PS and after the split two from the PS and two from the Blue Reform. The Chairman is Kimmo Kivelä, a former PS MP and now a Blue Reform MP. Among other duties, the Administrative Council of YLE “decides on issues concerning considerable restriction or expansion of the activities or significant changes in the organization of the company, oversees and supervises that tasks involving public service programme activities are carried out, decides on the economical and operational guidelines, reviews and approves the annual report of the Board of Directors”⁶. This means that the Council has decisive power over decisions concerning YLE.

In its cultural policy programme, the PS wants to decrease the diffusion of Swedish programmes on YLE. One thing the current YLE Council has brought about is to merge FST (‘Finland’s Swedish Television’) with YLE Teema (a science and culture channel). This has reduced the number of programmes and the amount of airtime of Swedish programmes remarkably. However, if we look at YLE’s annual report of 2016, we can observe that the use of YLE Swedish (*Svenska YLE*) online has risen⁷.

In this same programme of 2011, the PS also wishes to increase the diffusion of Finnish production content. To find out

6 <https://yle.fi/aihe/artikkeli/2014/12/31/yles-administrative-council>.

7 See Yle 2016 Annual Report, p. 41.

if this has happened or not, we can again observe YLE's annual reports between 2012 and 2016. They show that it increased on the two main channels, YLE 1 and YLE 2, but decreased if all the channels are counted in. However, between 2015, when the PS's MP was elected as the Chairman of the Administrative Council, and 2016, Finnish production content increased from 20.6% to 22.9%, including all the channels⁸.

In the Education and Culture Committee (*sivistysvaliokunta*), the PS has a few members among MPs from other parties, as in every committee. Out of the 17 members in the Education and Culture Committee, there are two PS MPs and one from the Blue Reform, Kimmo Kivelä, who is also Chairman of the Administrative Council of YLE. The Education and Culture Committee works, among others, on education, art and cultural activities.

One law proposal submitted by the Education and Culture Committee is to give pupils the opportunity to choose another language than the second official language of Finland, which is at the moment mandatory to learn. Indeed, if a child's mother tongue is Finnish, he or she has to learn Swedish and vice versa, because Finnish and Swedish are the two official languages of Finland since the first Constitution of 1919. As explained above, this idea to end mandatory Swedish in schools was promoted in the Finns Party's language policy programme of 2015. This law will first be trialled in regional experiments starting in August 2018. The preparation of this new law was to a great extent the accomplishment of PS and Blue Reform MPs.

Natural Finnish culture threatened by other cultures – 'culture' in the Finns Party's migration policy statements

One of the key contexts where culture is frequently mentioned in the PS policy programmes is the one concerning migration and integration of foreigners into Finland. The core of the party's integration policy is "when in Rome, do as the Romans do". They stand

8 See Yle 2016 Annual Report, p. 53.

firmly against multiculturalism, as we have already referred. In this section, we focus on those chapters in the party's programmes that deal with culture in relation to immigration and integration.

The first actual public statement on migration issues was made in the party's programme for the parliamentary elections of 2007. It describes Finnish culture as an independent cultural entity of its own. Finnish culture and tradition are understood as natural and self-evident for people born in the Finnish territory who have Finnish ancestors (e.g. Pyykkönen 2011: 148-149). The programme separates Finnish culture from other cultures, especially those of migrants. Alien cultural patterns resulting from increasing immigration and extending multicultural conditions are seen as threats to this 'natural cultural entity' of the Finns. Finnish culture is not the only element getting an essentialist – although vaguely expressed – signification here, but migrants are essentialised as well: they are exclusively cultural beings, who do not even want to integrate into Finnish society because its culture is strange to them. The paradox in this 2007 programme – this holds for other programmes as well – is that while it tries to be explicitly against multiculturalism, it leans on the core idea of multiculturalism in claiming that all humans are primarily cultural beings. It asserts that individuals cannot escape this 'fact' and that human groups essentially differ from each other culturally. Ironically, this is not far from UNESCO's idea about the diversity of cultures being a universal fundament of the human condition (e.g. UNESCO 2005).

The preservation of immigrants' own culture is their own business, the funds of the state should not be used for that because it does not directly help the integration of immigrants into Finland. The kinds decisions that, further, call for the local population to abandon its own tradition for a foreign culture are completely unacceptable to us. Multiculturalism should not be cherished by underrating our own culture. (Perussuomalaiset 2007: 20, transl. MC.)

Because no proper efforts are made to integrate the immigrants who are already here into our society, and as in Sweden cultures within cultures start to emerge, large-scale immigration would also eventually drive the original Finnish culture to an endangered position. (Ibid., transl. MC.)

What is typical in the programme speech of the Finns Party is that it more or less strategically views the Finnish people as more homogeneous and unanimous than they actually are. Even the speech favouring multiculturalism is interpreted as a sign of this homogeneity. However, yet again, it remains without definition how this cultural uniformity manifests in practice. The expression 'cultural norms' is closest to a concrete definition, although it does not define anything in the end either. The migrant cultures are not specified either, but the reader is left with the idea that the cultural others are those who do not adapt to Finnish cultural norms. The programmes even take these assumptions as far as describing scenarios of the things that migrants and multiculturalists would change in Finland if they got too much power. The PS claims that these instances would demand that the legislation and norms have to be changed to correspond to ones abroad, especially those of the countries of origin of the non-European migrants.

Mainly, the manners of the country mean Finnish laws, but cultural norms are also part of our society. Despite the increase of individualisation, the Finns Party sees that Finnish culture still prevails in Finland. One sign of this is the constantly repeated demand to increase multiculturalism. Cherishing Finnish culture and maintaining societal order are not racism. (Perussuomalaiset 2011: 40, transl. MC.)

The Finns Party does not accept that the starting point of integration policy is such that the original population should adapt to the manners of immigrants or that special legislation and official practices would be created for people coming from foreign cultures based on the culture of their country of origin. (ibid, 40)

What is repeated in the party's 2007 and 2011 programmes is the argument that Finnish culture is threatened by foreign, migrant cultures. This idea fits with its claim of strengthening Finnish culture as it fuels fears that the assumed uniformity of Finnish culture is crumbling. What is needed, then, for securing the integrity of Finland and Finnish culture is the conservative cultural policy of the PS, which respects Finnish values and norms. This way, the party's cultural policy aims at building a presumption of the unanimity

of Finnish people in terms of perceptions of national identity and interests, and also concerning the negative sides of otherness.

In the 2015 parliamentary elections, the Finns Party released a separate immigration policy programme with the title “For the Finns” (*Suomalaisten puolesta*). The main perspectives of this programme are the same as before: immigration is a threat to Finland and Finnish culture, and multiculturalisation and its promotion have to be stopped. The focus of the 2015 programme is on the “refugee crisis”, which escalated in 2015. This time, the primary rationale of resisting (refugee) migration comes from the expenses of immigration and the resistance against “asylum shopping”, which, according to this programme, increases the expenses of those vulnerable Northern European countries (including Finland) “with generous welfare systems” suffering from the economic crisis, lack of resources and unemployment (Perussuomalaiset 2015b, 3).

The cultural perspective is linked to the abovementioned rationale, and the outspoken point of departure of the programme is:

Europe, especially the Northern European welfare states with their generous welfare systems, is a tempting target to those migrants who do not have necessary skills to survive in the labour markets or who do not want to – for cultural or religious reasons – adapt to European ideas of equality and freedom of expression, which are important for integration. [...] Immigration changes the population structure of the target countries permanently, breaks the internal cohesion of society, strains public services and economy unduly, leads to the ghettoisation of neighbourhoods, promotes religious radicalism and its by-products, and fuels ethnic conflicts. (Perussuomalaiset 2015b: 3, transl. MP.)

The immigration policy programme does not explicitly define which of the aforementioned challenges of multiculturalism or migration belong to the sphere of cultural policy actions. In the 2015 parliamentary elections, the aforementioned language policy programme was the one making explicit claims for new cultural policies to protect the Finnish language. The educational policy programme also takes a stance towards controlling pupils with

immigrant background, but with no reference to their cultures (e.g. Perussuomalaiset 2015c).

The evolution between these programmes shows that the way of speaking about migrant cultures and Finnish culture has remained more or less the same all along. The uniform Finnish culture is always in the position of a potential victim threatened by foreign cultures and the requirements to pay special attention to them in Finland. What changes from one programme to another are the challenges and threats that relate to culture(s). In 2007 Finnish people are manipulated to abandon their own traditions. In 2011 even the Finnish laws and norms are in danger. In 2015 the economic burden of migration worries the PS the most.

In all, the PS's core argument for immigration and integration policy is immigrants must make strong efforts of integration to preserve what the party considers to be a given Finnish culture and society. This 'will to integrate' and to understand cultures as homogeneous entities is above all linked to the forms of nationalism typical for European populist parties in general. One feature of this is 'ethnocracy' (e.g. Mudde 2007: 144), with a will to oppose the organisation of special services and facilities for cultural minorities being one, and assimilation another of its core elements.

Conclusions

According to our analysis there is a continuum in the nationalistic culture speech trying to affect the populace from Fennomans to the modern populist parties. In an anthropological sense the aim of this populist nationalism is to build a picture of culturally uniform and whole population, which differs from its 'significant others'. In 1900s these others were Russians and Swedes, now immigrants coming outside Europe. In the core of the sociocultural aspect of this populism is the Finnish cultural heritage, by which the populists mean language, Christianity, common history, industrious nature, and close relationship to the nature. Its aesthetic dimension consists, on the one hand, of national romantic visual arts, national

architecture, patriotic hymns, symphonies and chants, and, on the other hand, of folk music, singing, dance, and stories. The objective of the nationalistic populists is to invigorate the national romantic high arts and traditional folk arts.

The Finnish populist parties, SMP and PS do not differ from each other much in terms of content of their cultural nationalism: PS clearly continues the tradition of the SMP in speaking for Christian moral, and unifying Finnish cultural values and tradition. They both prefer folk art over (post)modernist artsy art. Both also take a negative attitude towards "alien cultural features", which potentially threaten the Finnish culture. What differs their cultural policies is that the PS puts more emphasis on culture and tries to explicitly sketch cultural policy principles and practices. The other thing distinguishing them is the open antipathy of PS against migration and minority cultures. Whereas SMP more or less welcomed refugees in need and spoke for the minority rights of the Sámi, the PS clearly speaks for the "majority rule" regarding culture and do not favour any kind of refugee migration. In the times of PS the suspicious or hostile attitude has also openly targeted at the non-European migrants, especially Muslims.

As we have shown in this article, PS and SMP both have had positions in the decisive political bodies. Usually they have only had rather slight direct impact on the directions or decisions of these bodies, but with the representatives of the other parties they have managed to overrule the policies and decisions of their political opponents. PS has now representation in different committees and bodies and even the Minister of Culture is their MP. There is no empirical research about the political decision making processes and their concrete achievements in those bodies, but some current policy changes and decisions indicate about their influence:

- The regulation on immigration, especially concerning asylum seekers and family reunifications, has got much stricter during the past two years.
- The national broadcasting company decided to unite Swedish channel and YLE Teema (culture and science channel), which

meant the decrease of number of both programmes is Swedish and about arts and culture.

- In November 2017 the Ministry of Culture cut all public financial library support to the cultural journals and magazines, many of which are leftist, openly multiculturalist and favour radical and avant-garde arts.

For the Finnish populists 'putting culture back to its place' means conservative maintenance of typical traditions and values, and restoration of their significance and mythical glory. Everything new, whether it means new ways of life or new forms of artistic expression, is considered alien and thus at least potentially threatening. What is favoured, are cultural flows and expressions, which stem from the Finnish traditions and are popular among the masses. Populism, for PS especially, but also for the other explicitly populist groups, means the "realization of folk will". Politically this implies that the party claims itself as the one, who can interpret the people's desires and can represent their collective will. However, everything that can be interpreted to be against this will of the people represented by the party is considered to threaten the traditional values or social cohesion, even if that is voiced by a large number of the people. (Cf. Müller 2016.)

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Yael Bartana, *True Finn*, 2014. HD video, 50:00 minutes.
Image courtesy of Capitain Petzel, Berlin; Petzel Gallery,
New York; Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam; and Sommer
Contemporary, Tel Aviv.

The film commissioned for the festival of visual arts in a public spaces that through variety of programs – talks, discussions, workshops, artists’ films – aims to open up new perspectives to the socially important contents. In this film, Yael Bartana takes up a highly topical issue and asks: How does national identity operate as a means of inclusion and exclusion? What mechanisms exist for this in Finland? Can an immigrant become a true Finn? The artist invited people living in Finland, but with different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, to take part in creating a utopian moment in Finland. What happens when they have to live together for seven days and define themselves through one another? In the film you follow along with the assignments the participants have been given, like designing a new flag for Finland and composing new lyrics for the Finnish national anthem, as well as the many discussions they had during the week about who is a “true Finn”. Bartana also uses archival material from films that show stereotypical images of not only Finns, but also the indigenous people – the Sámi and Roma people. “She is a strong visualist and her work both appeals to the intellect and raises strong emotions. Her works are often actions in real places and social situations” (Paula Toppila for the *True Finn*). In the world of populist policies, nationalism is a feeling that is mostly raised in political communication, searching approval of population. Thus, her themes, although deriving from her native Israel’s problematic situation, are covering much wider issues such as homeland, belonging, return and national identity.

Dejan Mitov

*The use of Architectural Scale
Models in Populist Representation of
Megastructural Projects*

Abstract

When presenting individual architectural projects, an architect most often knows who his target audience is and therefore he or she can adapt the presentation according to their specific interests. In the case of presenting public projects, it is impossible to communicate with all those who will at some point see and review the project. Often there is no opportunity for verbal communication with the audience, so the question is how to present something and be sure that the audience will adequately understand it, the way the architect has envisaged it, and not in their own way, given that the aim of each presentation is to come up with an understanding of the idea and therefore its approval.

Architectural scale models are a tool that architects have been working with for a long time already. Materials used for manufacturing of scale models have changed, and so have the manufacturing techniques and thus the level of detail, but their use is imminent regardless of all modern computer graphic tools. Due to the complexity of production and the cost of presentation scale models, they are created only after the projects have been completely finished, primarily because any changes to the scale models are complicated and costly. As such, audiences find them interesting, attractive and easy to understand, which is why they are the most common way of presenting projects that imply communication with a large auditorium.

The use of scale models for the purpose of the project presentation was analyzed on the example of the “Belgrade on the Water”

project, in order to come to a conclusion why scale models are the favorite means for presenting megastructural projects. Given the political connotation of such projects, the following should be considered: whether the scale models are represented due to the ease of their readability or because they draw attention away from essential to less irrelevant details.

Key words architecture, scale models, presentation, megaprojects, populism, politics

Introduction

The development of computer technologies has opened up a range of presentation possibilities that can fully delight the observer and more closely introduce and actualize the architect's ideas. However, despite a large number of computer-based dynamic tools, physical scale models remain a favorite means of representation. (Stavrić, Šiđanin, Tepavčević 2013)

The subject of this research are the megastructural architectural and urban projects of public importance. What is common to all of them is the close connection between architecture and state government bodies, i.e. politics. There is no single megastructural project that can be implemented without the consent and support of state bodies, i.e. it must be part of the current politics, so much that politics is often put ahead of everything else, so it is not rare for individuals who are heads of political parties to be seen as the creators of these projects. Megastructural projects attract the attention of the wide public and they can easily challenge critical attitudes, therefore it is necessary to present them adequately and to bring them closer to the public because their support is necessary for the realization of such projects. The motive behind this research is a continuing aspiration to find an effective tool for presenting an architectural idea (Tepavčević 2010, Stratimirović 2015) and its goal is to show the significance of architectural scale models when presenting megastructural projects and why they are the favorite tool for such a purpose, even though there are various other

contemporary forms of representing architectural ideas. (Imamura 2013, Morris 2006, Smith 2004, Pignataro, Lobaccaro, Zani 2014, Mitov, Tepavčević 2015)

The “Belgrade on the Water” project, although it has the name of only one city, has received an epitome of the national project from the beginning, both due to its location, the number of people directly or indirectly involved in it, as well as the financial impact on the domestic economy. (Lalović, Radosavljević, Đukanović 2015, Zeković, Maričić, Vujošević 2016) For its promotion and presentation, a large number of scale models have been used, which are available for public viewing and often displayed at frequent locations, such as shopping centers, various fairs, Nikola Tesla airport, city squares and similar. This paper aims, based on this example, to provide the answer to the question of whether there is a populism in the use of scale models. (McGuigan 2003, Laclan 2005)

Representation of Architectural Projects via Scale Models

Throughout history, architects have been faced with the problem of conveying their ideas and visions to others. At a time when technology is quite developed, a large selection of tools that can be used for this purpose is available. Today, when computer graphics and animations are widely represented, the level of realism that is achieved is quite impressive and enough to fascinate everyone. Therefore, it could be said that the scale models as static models are overcome and unnecessary in the work of architects. However, the established practice around the world is that scale models are still manufactured, and the aforementioned development of technology has only helped to improve the quality of their manufacture.

There are different types of architectural models, but the basic division is on working scale models, that is, those used during the design process and the presentation scale models manufactured when a certain phase of the project is finished, so it is necessary to present it to the audience. (Morris 2006) The first type of scale models has seen a rise in its significance in the 20th century. During

the 1950s, it was not possible to imagine a complex geometric form without the simultaneous application of the scale models and drawings. This is illustrated on examples of projects of Ronchamp Chapel by Le Corbusier, TWA terminal by Eero Saarinen or Berlin Philharmonic Concert Hall by Hans Scharoun. In their work, they relied heavily on scale models which they used to observe spatial relationships and examine the construction of objects. (Stratimirović 2015) This presentation value of architectural ideas through scale models was presented at the New York Exhibition called “Idea as a Model”, held in 1976 and organized by Peter Eisenman and Aldo Rosy. At the exhibition, the physical scale model was presented as a concept rather than a narrative, with the idea of showing potential value of scale models within the framework of architectural practice. This exhibition is today considered a reference milestone in the interpretation of architectural models as a work medium. (Stratimirović 2015) If we look back to the post-war period in Japan and the Metabolic Movement in Architecture, which has remained known as the Utopian Movement, its representatives have based much of their research and proposals on the development of Japan through the use of scale models. (Imamura 2013) This is best evident through the number of scale models used to present their ideas around the world. Metabolists based their ideas on the creation of megastructures that, at that time, were not easy to present only through the drawings.

The second type are presentation scale models and they are used for presenting certain phases of the project: in the tender phase, models are made in small scale and have a low level of detail, however as the project gets closer to the realization the scale project becomes bigger and the level of detail is greater. Presentation models can be done in a monochrome or realistic visual style. The former are most often used in professional circles because they are deprived of excess details and color, so the observer concentrates on the essence, that is, on the geometry of the object and the relation between light and shadow. As far as back in the XV century, Leon Battista Alberti claimed that the models must be of a single material if we want to show the essence, otherwise we will just draw attention to the irrelevant and thus deceive the

observer. (Smith 2004) On the other hand, realistic presentation models are extremely narrative and appealing to many observers, because they are by their nature easy to understand. When looking at the realistic models, the truth is that the eyes the observer are focused on details such as: people, cars, trees, mobiliary, and so on, however this does not mean that someone wanted to draw attention to the irrelevant, that is simply the psychological moment of every observer.

One thing that is common to all types of scale models is the ease of understanding and reading given spatial relationships, regardless of their geometric complexity. Because of their three-dimensionality, an observer can view the model, and adapt it to himself / herself and to his / her viewing angle, thereby increasing the likelihood of understanding all spatial relationships. He or she can pause in a certain position and observe from any angle and take as much time as he or she needs to understand everything. Because of this, the scale models are clear to everyone, regardless of the education and ability to read space, which is not the case with two-dimensional and perspective images which can often be confusing to a particular group. If the observer does not understand something in the drawing, there is a high likelihood that he will not admit it, but will describe the project as bad, while scale models reduce this danger. With the perspective paintings, an architect can easily manipulate the frames and what he will show to an observer, which can make certain details hidden or exaggerated. In motion animation, the dynamics of motion are again determined by the individual, and it is very likely that many will find it unsuitable to their taste because some segments are slow and boring, while others are fast and vague. Scale models as such show all spatial relationships at the same time and it is almost impossible to hide any details, plus the observer can adjust his way of thinking on his own, no one else is able to impose it on him. Therefore, scale models are a good means of expression when talking to a large and diverse auditorium.

Megastructural Projects and their Scale Model Presentation

Power, i.e. politics is involved in all major architectural and urban projects. There are local projects in small communities, which primarily concern the local authorities, and large projects in the capital cities, which often cease to be only local but also become national ones. Such projects come to life as a need for modernization and expansion of cities, or may also be due to natural disasters, which was the case with Skopje after the earthquake of 1963. By using large scale projects, the country demonstrates its current capabilities, but it is precisely through these projects that their real capabilities are seen. For large projects, the people's will is a very important aspect as their approval is necessary, so it is certainly always a special question how to relate the message to the public and how to communicate with them. The possibilities are varied, and here we want to analyze the use of scale model in such circumstances.



Picture 1 Stefan Uroš II
Milutin Nemanjić with a
scale model of a church
from Gračanica Monastery

It is the well-known fact that the kings of medieval Serbian monasteries were painted holding scale models of their endowments. One of them is a fresco from the Gračanica Monastery of King Uroš II Milutin Nemanjić holding a scale model of that same monastery (picture 1). There are other similar cases later, but it is definitely the most interesting period of the 20th century when scale models received a completely new dimension, as previously stated. Adolf Hitler, who greatly appreciated architecture and knew its importance in laying the groundwork for the thousand year old country, can often be seen in photographs along with various scale models. Certainly the most famous is the scale model of the reconstruction of Berlin with the elements of the ancient city, but there are also: a model of the Olympic stadium in Berlin, a model of the German pavilion for the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937, etc. An interesting photograph is where he sits next to the scale model showing the reconstruction of his hometown of Linz in Austria. He was often seen in pictures with his architect, Albert Schaper, in whom he had great confidence, evident by their equal position in those pictures. A particularly interesting photo, in terms of this paper, is from the 1938 Berlin Motor Show (Internationale Automobil-Ausstellung), where Hitler can be seen looking at the model of the Volkswagen factory as the central figure in the picture (Picture 2). Presenting such a scale model in an extremely visited event, such as the motor show and photographing the „Führer” with a model, speaks a lot about the significance and political connotation of this project.

In modern history, almost all political leaders can be seen posing in front of architectural models. Thus, German Chancellor Angela Merkel was photographed standing next to the scale model of the city of Masdar (United Arab Emirates) which, in 2006, has launched a campaign to become the world’s first city with zero CO2 emissions (Picture 3). The German Chancellor thus drew attention to herself and showed she certainly understood and supported the global trends that are for the benefit of humanity. Her Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, can often be seen next to the models of various complexes and plants, and one of the more interesting photographs is of him standing in front of the complex for the



Picture 2 Adolf Hitler, Robert Ley, Ferdinand Porsche and others, Berlin Motor Show in 1938
Scale model of Volkswagen factory



Picture 3 Angela Merkel and Jürgen Hopp from Foster Architects
With a scale model of the city of Masdar in the United Arab Emirates



Picture 4 Vladimir Putin, Vitali Mutko (Deputy Prime Minister), Pavel Kolobkov (Minister of Sport) and others with a model of future complex in Krasnoyarsk for the Universiade to be held in 2019



Picture 5 Barak Obama with a model of future “Obama Presidential Center”

29th Winter Universiade, to be held in 2019 in the Russian city of Krasnoyarsk (Picture 4). After holding the Winter Olympics and the World Football Championship in Russia, the complex that is being built for the Universiade is definitely a project of state importance, and the Russian president clearly shows that Russia is firmly resolved to position itself well on the world stage when the sport is in question, as sport events today draw a lot of attention. The United States do not lag behind in this regard, so former President Barack Obama can be seen with the model of his „Obama Presidential Center” complex, where he actively took part in the design of the complex, and he even said that he felt a desire to someday become an architect (Picture 5).

In our area, one of the most famous examples in the 20th century is the scale model of New Belgrade. It was a brand new city built from scratch. The building of the city started on April 11, 1948 and it was planned that the city will provide a place for the lives of 250,000 people in the area of 640 ha. It was estimated that a total of 100,000 people took part in the construction of the city, including a large number of young people. For a ruined post-war



Picture 6 Josip Broz Tito listen to Toma Devald's presentation in front of the urban scale model of New Belgrade

Yugoslavia, this was definitely a project of national importance. There is a photograph from 1967 where Toma Devald, then Head of the Directorate for the Construction of New Belgrade, is presenting the scale model of New Belgrade to the then President Josif Broz Tito (Picture 6).

The above examples are just some of many, and from them one can see that there is a continuous connection between politics and architectural models, as a means of presenting an architect's idea. The presence of political leaders and their numerous photos with the scale models only confirms the significance of those models, that is, the significance of the projects they represent. Architectural models, obviously because of their nature, capture and hold the attention of politicians, which is the first step in communication between the architect and the politician, so the next inevitable step is to convey the message to the public and obtain their approval.

Populism in the Use of Architectural Scale Models

Populism (*lat. populus – the people*), although it has roots in ancient times, is finally gaining its place in contemporary politics with the development of modern democracy. Simply put, populism in politics appears when a particular group or ideology takes up a certain position on the pretext that it is the will of the people or that it is for the benefit of the people, or takes certain steps on its behalf. If such an attitude is dishonest and serves to deceive or lavish praise upon people with the aim of furthering one's own interests, then this is of course a bad result of populism. Given that every leading political party represents a chosen will of the people, it is easy to prove that there is populism in politics, and the basic question is how much of their political stance is supported by the people and honest. Populist rule is unsustainable in a long term, i.e. populist means are not long-term means, they only give temporary results.

Since populism is simplifying things and adapting them to the majority, then it can be said that architectural models are a populist means of expression because they relay the idea to the majority,

as like it was already mentioned, models are easier to understand than architectural drawings or images. On the other hand, it was said that architectural scale models are at the same time the *most honest* means of expression, because it is difficult to hide certain segments, as opposed to two-dimensional and three-dimensional frames in which it is impossible to display everything, i.e., it is easy to intentionally forget something. From all the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the result of populism as such is not necessarily a negative one.

A very important fact regarding megastructural projects is that they are built exceptionally long, not just a few years, but also for decades. Throughout this time, the projects mature and endure certain changes, so it is very important that the scale models representing them are updated, because as we mentioned before, they present a completion of a certain phase of a project.

Changes in megastructured projects are inevitable and expected, and thus, scale models, although they are presentation models, should be taken with a dose of incompleteness.

Project “Belgrade on Water” and its Introduction to Audience

Project „Belgrade on Water” includes an urban reconstruction of the part of the old city center of Belgrade, near the river Sava, also known as the Sava Amphitheater. This project includes gross 1.8 million m² of construction space, designed for 14,000 inhabitants with 6,000 housing units. The total value of the investment reaches a figure of USD 3 billion. It is obvious that this is currently the most well-known construction site in Serbia (possibly even wider) and a project that has raised many questions and discussions both from experts and general public. Due to its specific context and position in the city matrix, from the very beginning this project has attracted a lot of public attention.

This project includes several types of presentations: three-dimensional and two-dimensional computer displays, animations,



Picture 7 Aleksandar Vučić, Muhamed el Abar, Siniša Mali and others at the opening ceremony of the „Belgrade on Water“ project and promotion of the Master plan

printed catalogs, and even virtual reality. Despite all the above-mentioned content done at a very high level, the scale models have drawn the most attention and are constantly placed in the center of public attention. The opening of this project in June 2014 began with the uncovering of a scale model of the Master Plan of Belgrade on Water, in the presence of then Prime Minister of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić (Picture 7).

The renovated building of the Belgrade Cooperative, where the scale model was displayed, was then opened to the general public and people visited only to see it. It quickly became the most famous scale model in the region, with new scale models being added to the gallery as the project progressed further.

This was a populist attempt to bring the project closer to the broad masses. All those who initially went to see the master plan scale model were able to observe that the environment in which Belgrade on Water project extends is inadequately displayed, leaving out very important complexes such as the Belgrade Fair and the

Sava Center, with access roads inaccurately displayed as well etc. For all the efforts put into creating this model, it was necessary to put in additional 10% of time for all these details to be harmonized, but why it was allowed to be displayed in this form, we can only guess. In this way, by observing the scale model, it can be concluded that its purpose was to serve as a populist means for public display because it has drawn attention away from the essence with its colorful details. The voice of the expert public was also heard soon after, criticizing the error in the steps and claiming that the approach to the project was too elemental, confirmed by the lack and inaccuracy of details of the scale model. As time passed, the master plan was updated following changes in the project, which can be characterized as a positive thing, however the inadequately displayed environment remains the same.

As individual objects were developed, the gallery in the Belgrade Cooperative became richer for new models in a much larger scale: BW Residences, BW Vista and Park View, Magnolia, Belgrade Tower and the „Gallery” shopping center. Since all these scale models show individual objects, we went from question: „How does Belgrade on Water fit into Belgrade” to the question is: „How does this object fit into Belgrade on Water?” Shortly afterwards, these scale models were taken out of the gallery and were exhibited at various fairs, shopping malls, Nikola Tesla airport, and in the various places abroad. This project became even closer to the general public and began to communicate with those who are not interested in the project itself.

Thus, the scale models became a mirror of this project, and the project a mirror the current government. Well-designed scale models with a high level of details have managed to capture attention of observers, who are beginning to look forward to such Belgrade. While the expert public may worry about things such as why the environment is not well represented and whether it was considered at all, the buyers of the individual apartments certainly need not be afraid as they easily comprehend what their future building will look like by observing the scale models.

Conclusion

Megastructural projects have trilateral communication in which architects, political elites and the general public participate. The goal of the architect is certainly to present his own idea more easily and convincingly, the goal of the government is to have it accepted by the public in a seemingly painless manner, and the goal of the public is to satisfy their personal needs, not thinking of course about the collective goal and good, but only their own. Architectural scale models as a project representation tool can equally serve everyone in achieving their goals.

As much as their use is populist and places importance on irrelevant instead of essential, it is quite certain that it does not contain anything hidden and unclear. By giving an unlimited number of observation frames where a person can take unlimited time to observe, architectural scale models reduce the possibility that the audience will not be able to see something or misunderstand it, which makes their use considered as a completely honest one.

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Kristina Norman, *Monument to please everyone* (*Et meeldiks kõigile*) 2011, documentary, 87 min, Beta SP, Digital Betacam, 16:9, Stereo

In an atmosphere ripe with nationalism, two young engineers are commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of Defence to erect the country's most important monument – a statue commemorating the War of Independence. With strong political and social pressure, the main characters of the film find themselves in many tragicomic situations and a constant row of ordeals. All of this paints a colourful and unique picture of the creation of a symbol during a time of financial crisis in Estonia. Monument destruction and monument building throughout Europe are among key policy measures of populist governments that provoked a lot of controversies from Lithuania and Estonia to the Balkan countries (Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia...)

Neda Radulović

*Populism, Nationalism,
Androcentrism: Intersections of Populism
and Nationalism in Appropriating the
Female Body*

Abstract

The present paper offers an analysis of two prominent populist narratives about migrants and about birth ratios in Serbia. First narrative frames migrants as *dangerous rapists*, and the second one frames women who decide not to bear children as *enemies of the people*. Theoretically, this paper deals with the intersections of populism, nationalism and patriarchy, arguing that race/gender/class oppression plays an important part in populist/nationalist narratives. Drawing from scholars dealing with populism and nativism/nationalism (Mudde), and ethno-populism (Laclau), this paper introduces gender oppression as an important one in analyzing populist/nationalistic discourses. Following feminist author Sara Ahmed, I analyze narrative about migrants, arguing that the construction of the *enemy figure* depends on framing the women as *a threatened possession*. Consequently, the *heroic-Serbian male-figure* is opposed to the *dangerous stranger enemy*, both in relation to the appropriated female body. Second narrative is effectively promoted in Serbian public, mostly by minister for *population politics* – Slavica Djukic Dejanovic. Many media outlets along with Minister Djukic Dejanovic follow the same narrative pattern in advocating childbearing as an important ‘Serbian value’, thus persuading women of child-bearing age/ability to have more children. This paper analyzes similarities between these two seemingly very different populist narratives, arguing that both appropriate female bodies as a narrative strategy. Furthermore, the interconnectedness of populism, nationalism and patriarchy is seen as important feature of

these narratives, indicating that populism and nationalism should be analyzed as a form of a discursive race/class/gender oppression as well.

Key words populism, nationalism, androcentrism, patriarchy, migrant crisis, population politics

This paper will look at some differences and intersections between nationalism and populism, especially concerning the female body. If there are some overlapping themes between these two concepts, this paper will aim to show that androcentrism as well as the appropriation and disciplining of female bodies can be seen as important themes in connecting narratives of both nationalism and populism. In order to achieve that, I will firstly give some overview of populism, nationalism and then I will turn to two instances where populist and nationalist narratives overlap.

First case considers reports by various Serbian dailies about the alleged sexual assault involving two Pakistani migrants and fourteen-year-old Serbian girl. Here I will look at this narrative and the way it constructs homogeneity of the people and promotes the idea of national purity by framing migrants as ‘a threat’ and as ‘a dangerous other’.

The second case involves the nationalistic narratives about the decline of Serbian population, further boosted and legitimized by recent policy changes made by the Serbian government, which include a newfound ministry for population politics lead by a Minister without portfolio – Slavica Djukic Dejanovic. Minister Djukic Dejanovic deals primarily with the problem of birth ratios, mostly by advocating childbearing as holding high moral value and voicing an alarmist tone about “worrying” statistics – like high abortion rates and a birth rate that is lower than expected. Statements made by Minister Slavica Djukic Dejanovic sparked polarizing reactions; especially the announcement that introduced an “abortion committee that would include priests”, which received critiques from not only feminist journalists and authors, but from medical professionals and associations. Thus, prompting Minister Djukic Dejanovic to

retract those statements, asserting that the right to abort will not be jeopardized under any circumstances (Djukic Dejanovic, 2016)¹. Although the ministry for population politics hasn't changed or implemented any laws restricting the women's right to make decisions regarding childbirth or abortion yet, it could be argued that frequent statements delivered mostly by Minister Djukic Dejanovic in Serbian media, has created a significant impact on the Serbian public, by generating divisive reactions to the government's policies towards women (Radulović, 2017). However, I will not look at the particular article or statement, but set of arguments that push forward the idea that the threat to the pure and homogenous Serbian people are in fact women, thus generating populist discourse.

The intersections between populism and nationalism/ nativism

Populism is still challenging to define, as often, scholars would have completely different takes on whether populism is a question of content – ideology or communication style/rhetorical strategy. Populism, according to Laclau formally speaking is a structure, an operation that could function within completely different ideological platforms: from the anarchist populist Occupy movement (and its headline “We are the ninety-nine percent”) to alarmist anti-immigrant narratives in Europe and US, characteristic of right wing discourses. However, it would be important to note that understanding populism as a political operation, assumes that the basis of all political organizations, as Carl Schmitt argued was in fact the division of *us* and *them*, that is: “a specifically political distinction reduces political action and motives to a friend and an enemy.” (Schmitt, 1929:26) In that sense, as Laclau argues,

1 <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/drustvo/djukic-dejanovic-za-blic-ne-formiramo-savet-protiv-abortusa-niti-cemo-o-tome-pitati/ycb5gxx>, accessed: 05/05/2018.
<http://novaekonomija.rs/vesti-iz-zemlje/đukić-dejanović-ne-formiramonikakav-savet-za-smanjenje-abortusa>, accessed: 05/05/2018.

populism is not a “fixed constellation, but a series of discursive resources that can be used in different ways” (Laclau, 2005a: 176), or as Francisco Panizza argues, populist narratives appropriate and articulate various myths, symbols and ideological themes – reassuring its audience about their origins, pointing to a genesis and a return to a great past as a socio/cultural remedy and purification (Panizza, 2005: 20).

Populism, following Laclau, does not refer to ideological aspects of the discourse but the “ways of articulating different political or ideological contents” (Laclau, 2005b: 34). Furthermore, Laclau notes that specific to populism is an antagonistic discourse which radically homogenizes the concept of the *people* against the *enemy other*, and that populist narratives speak on behalf of the *majority* that defines itself as opposed to the antagonistic *minority*. The enemy other is the most important factor in the process of constructing/generating the concept of the *people*; the concept of the *enemy* serves as the reference, a point of departure for the defining, constituting, homogenizing and universalizing the concept of the *people*, which is easiest to conceive in the crisis situations when institutions can not adequately respond to certain social demands. In that sense, populist narratives tend to resolve/compensate this lack of institutional responses by constructing universal social problems and offering a simple solution that eliminates the problem by seemingly removing the *enemy/other* – that according to the populist narratives are the cause the problem (e.g. Make America great again by building a wall). If pluralistic discourses allow heterogeneity of the needs, and rely on the *logic of the difference* then, according to Laclau they further generate *democratic subject*, populist discourses on the other hand universalize particular needs and requirements: thus producing a *popular subject*. Laclau further explains this by contrasting logic of the difference in pluralistic discourses to the logic of the equivalence in populist discourses. Whereby all the demands, regardless of their differences tend to equalize by forming what Laclau calls a *chain of equivalence*. That means that every individual demand in populist discourses gets equalized to others, as Laclau explains, the popular subject then consequently results from the equalizing pluralism of the democratic demands. According to

Laclau, popular subject differs then from the democratic subject in the quality/homogenization of the demands generated by the populist discourse. (Laclau, 2005b: 37) Following Laclau, the proposed paper will look into the construction of the populist majority versus foreign minority – where the construction of the people depends on the discourses of nationalism and patriarchy.

It could be argued that, by universalizing the particular demands, populism constructs and creates an apparently homogenous and harmonized concept of the *people* that aims to represent the *majority*. This offers recovery or even salvation to what appears to be the animosity between the constructed *enemy*, who represents both ideological opposition and apparent threat, while at the same time offering a remedy if removed/destroyed.

When it comes to the relationship between populism and nationalism, scholars tend to argue differently. Ernesto Laclau clearly differentiates between the concepts of populism and nationalistic populism, naming second tendency- ethno-populism. According to Laclau, ethno populism differs from general populism because it sets distinct boundaries to the notion of the people. That way, the concept of the people is radically reduced to a certain area, and strictly defined by ethnicity. Thus, the exclusion is more radical and greater, and the enemy is always on the outside, and always foreign. Consequently, the homogenization is more radical too, because the ethnic principle of exclusion would always undoubtedly marginalize and exclude the *foreign* minority as the potential or actual enemy of the people. Furthermore, as Laclau argues, ethno-populism is characterized by very limited signification. That is the direct consequence of the fact that the *people* was already bounded and restricted to certain ethnicity, resulting in antagonistic discourse that has the enemy outside of the border, causing the opposition defined as *domestic-foreign*.

Other important scholars, like Cas Mudde define populism as ideology: “that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ and the corrupt elite”, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonte generale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde, 2017: 26; 2004: 543), and consequently analyse nationalism in relation to

populism connecting it specifically to the rise of charismatic leader. Unlike Laclau, Mudde assigns value judgment to populism arguing that it is ideology, and a specific kind of ideology that he calls thin ideology, claiming that “thin-centred ideologies such as populism have a restricted morphology, which necessarily appears attached to—and sometimes is even assimilated into—other ideologies. In fact, populism almost always appears attached to other ideological elements, which are crucial for the promotion of political projects that are appealing to a broader public” (Mudde, Kaaltwasser Rovira, 2017: 6). Mudde highlights moral judgment as guiding principle of all populisms- it is constituted by the tension and the exclusion between the moral majority against immoral and threatening elite. Mudde argues that besides *populism* and *authoritarianism- nativism* can be found in contemporary far-right discourses:

Nativism entails a combination of nationalism and xenophobia. It is an ideology that holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ('the nation') and that non-native (or 'alien') elements, whether persons or ideas, are fundamentally threatening the homogeneous nation-state (Mudde, 2017: 26).

I will argue that these and other similarities in narratives that merge populist and nationalist rhetoric and/or ideology, and that these can be explored by looking at the treatment of ethnicity but also gender and race/class/gender which, as I hope to show, play an important part in the construction of *the* notion of the *people*.

Case study #1: Framing refugees as 'foreign rapists'

As already mentioned, first case study deals with the series of articles about migrants allegedly raping young girls in Serbia. I will start by giving some background information about the question of refugees in Serbia.

First of all, it should be noted that statements made by Serbian government about refugees are usually welcoming and open. On the other hand, the amount of refugees that actually get the

asylum in Serbia is extremely low. Only 72 people were granted asylum in Serbia out of 1.157 people who have applied for it, whilst 590.816 formally inquired about getting the asylum in Serbia². These low figures for admission, are not largely discussed mainly because the question often gets shut down by general claims that 'refugees themselves would never choose to stay in Serbia'³. Even if that was the case, the fact that this argument is reiterated on behalf of migrants is quite telling. Eventually, the discrepancy between official welcoming narratives about the migrants and facts that reveal extremely low figures when it comes to the actual asylum seekers who get the asylum is also quite manifest and worrisome.

Furthermore, the media reports about violent and criminal nature of the migrants, often contrast these official and benevolent narratives. The story plot accusing migrants of raping or trying to rape young Serbian girls often reappear in Serbian media, creating a fertile ground for the government's actual mistreatment of the refugees. For example, rape rumours caused big demonstrations in one town with an asylum centre, thus prompting the government to place migrants in unsanitary and abandoned building that is even more remote and away from Belgrade and other Serbian cities⁴.

First case study involves series of articles about the alleged migrant rapist, and even though this series is about one particular event, it is often reappearing in the same or very similar form.

The story plot of the articles in question is quite simple:

1. Migrants, in this case two of them, both Pakistani- one older (31 years old), and the other one younger (22 years old) met young Serbian girl (14 year old) near the asylum centre.
2. Some articles claim they met on the road.

2 Pavle Kilibarda, <https://on-off.rs/srbija-i-izbeglice-retrospektiva/>, accessed: 05/05/2018.

3 <http://www.koreni.rs/izbeglice-nece-i-ne-zele-srbiju/>, accessed: 05/05/2018.

4 <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/srbija-migranti-skola-sid/28731742.html>, accessed: 05/05/2018.

3. Others go as far as to claim that the girl was in fact on her way to see her grandmother, and just outside of her grandmother's house when the attack happened (This particular story line seems evoke the Red Riding Hood plot, both in its narrative and metaphorically.).
4. One migrant tried to rape the girl whilst other one recorded it with his mobile phone.
5. Group of 7 other migrants appeared out of nowhere supporting the rapists until a decent Serbian local showed up and chased them away, thus saving a girl.
6. It was this Serbian man who called the police who then managed to find and arrest the migrants in only two hours.
7. With the help of a translator, migrants were able to defend their side of the story, claiming that they never tried to rape the girl. After the proceedings and hearings, the migrants were not convicted of the rape.

I will argue that this populist narrative centres and caters for the white males and assumes androcentric perspective, and that the race, class and gender play a roll in this stereotypical narrative. The heroic white male, gets represented both as individual, as well as the police and/or state defence force- and more importantly get constructed as *hero/s* in opposition to his enemy *other- bestial, uncivilized* migrant.

The process of othering based on paralleling the enemy to the animals is often employed in colonial and imperial discourse in its treatment of cultural difference. Derrida (2008), but also post-colonial authors like Said (1978) and Spivak (1999) were looking at the semiotics of the narratives about the other through exotization and animalisation⁵.

Importantly, the two- white 'heroic' male, and black 'evil' male, meet in the dispute around the 'property', and that property is female. I will now go on and quote Sara Ahmed, who points out the

5 It is worth noting that this type of devaluation by evoking comparisons to the animals directly or metaphorically was often employed in the narratives about the Balkans (think of the narratives about the vampires).

same logic in constructing heroic white male against its bestial/less than human stranger, around the issue of property:

The stranger's presence on the street is a crime (waiting to happen). The proximity of such loitering strangers in the purified space of the good neighbourhood hence requires that the heroic citizen take a specific route: those who are recognisable as strangers, whose lack of purpose conceals the purpose of crime, need to be expelled through purposeful patrolling in order that the value of property can be protected. Such a construction of the good citizen through the figure of the loitering stranger is clearly subject to forms of social differentiation: in one reading, the good citizen is structured around the body of the dominant (white, middle-class) man, who protects the vulnerable bodies of women and children from the threat of marginalised (black, working-class) men (Ahmed, 2000: 31).

If being a migrant means also stripping the identity away from the right to political and social representations, then patriarchal objectification of women serves as a tool in denying humanness to the migrant identities. Women thus become a tool for white nationalistic oppression, creation of 'stranger danger' discourse, and consequently constructing an image of a foreign outside threat to the 'pure and innocent' familiarity of the people⁶. Purity of home is contrasted to the threat from the outside, which inherently denotes

6 Furthermore, Sara Ahmed stresses the importance of the role of a child in constructing the purity and innocence of the people in these types of narratives:

"The figure of the child comes to perform a certain role within the narrative of crime prevention and stranger danger: the innocence of the child is what is most at risk from the proximity of strangers. The child comes to embody, in a narrative that is both nostalgic (returning to an imagined past) and fearful (projecting an unimaginable future), all that could be stolen or lost by the proximity of strangers. The child's innocence and purity becomes a matter of social and national responsibility: through figuring the stranger as too close to the child, the stranger becomes recognisable as an attack on the moral purity of nation space itself. It is over the bodies of children that the moral campaign against strangers is waged." (Ahmed, 2000: 34).

home as homogenous. In ethno-populism in particular this character of purity is tightly connected to the ethnicity- the purity of a nation, colour and race. Populism, along with nativism then, could be assumed as fundamentally connected and entwined with patriarchy- understood as a systemic and structural exploitation and subordination of women. The *inside/outside* as well as the relating *pure/contaminating* dichotomies can be found as most relevant for constructing the patriarchal populist narrative against migrants. Similarly, as the following analysis will show, the populist narratives that frame women as ‘enemies of the people’, use the very same narrative arrangements to structure and establish similar set of nationalistic values.

Case study #2: Framing women as the ‘enemies of the people’

Second case study, as noted above, is a nationalist/populist narrative that aims to discipline women into giving more births. Following arguments were made in different sets of media, but mainly in daily newspapers, by both minister for birth-ratios Slavica Djukic Dejanovic, as well as other media writings about the topic of depopulation in Serbia. The articles that were taken in consideration were mostly written by author Katarina Djordjevic, writing for daily ‘Politika’, but also by other media outlets dealing with the same topic. The main arguments of this narrative and some examples illustrating these are:

1. Serbian people are dying off – these narratives are voicing a concern about the mere survival of the people with the titles such as: “If we continue like this, we will be gone” (Vesti_online), “Serbs, the oldest people, but this is the reality: we are threatened by extinction, average age beyond 40!” (Kurir), “Balkan is boiling again, becoming a high risk site” (Pravda), “This is why we will fit under a plum tree: Serbian women abort 150000 babies per year!” (Alo). This argument undoubtedly

frames the people in ethnic terms, showing alarmist concerns about nation's very survival. Not only that the narrative is framed around the notions of the people and the enemy, but also around t's a life and death situation- as the 'enemy' is endangering the very survival of the 'people'.

2. Serbian women are not giving enough births – “Almost half thirty-years-old-women in Belgrade, don't have a child.” (Djordjevic, 2014) or “Every seventh woman never gave birth to a child” (Djukic Dejanovic, 2016).
3. Hedonistic values are the main cause of delaying birth in women and they are not inherently Serbian- they come from West. “Women see themselves as the only ones who are entitled to think about giving birth and their value system doesn't provide them with awareness of how parenting gives the best feeling” (Djukic Dejanovic, 2016).

These narratives thus successfully frame the concept of the common majority- the people as opposed to the foreign threat by arguing that depopulation is a major problem “in the developed countries of Europe, the demographers concluded that prolonged studies, high aspiration towards material goods, and hedonistic lifestyle bring depopulation” (Djordjevic, 2016).

4. Unlike Serbian women – women of other nationalities are having more children (and the implication is that non Serbian births should be lessened): “Statistics confirm that Roma, Albanian and Muslim women give most childbirths. In our research, we interviewed Roma women who worked as health mediators, arguing that Roma people lived in a very conservative culture that valued childbirth as the most important thing in life of a woman. Second reason for such high childbirth statistics is a lack of knowledge about contraception as well as a lack of material resources for the abortion, and the third reason is the social benefit they receive from the state”. (Djordjevic, 2014)

Throughout this narrative, there is a set of differences implied between women, dividing them into two antagonistic sides: women

as the *people*, women who in their demands and/or needs align with the *people*, and women with a different value system, one that differs from the people, therefore subscribing to other, different, western, *foreign* value system. That way, all the common arguments for low birth rates *i.e.* poverty, immigration, precarious conditions of work as a main character of economic transition, as well as lack of support for women, discrimination and/or economic exploitation get removed from the discussion. Furthermore, this argument generates clear antagonism between *us* and *them*, the *people* and the *enemy*, as well as the division between the moral of the people and foreign one, thus being a prime example of populist formulation. To complete the nationalistic-patriarchal outlook, it should be noted that the children in these narratives are often referred to as sons or male offspring, further perpetuating androcentric and patriarchal outlook, framing women as gender minority, or other than man. Even though, there were no implemented laws restricting women in their decision about giving birth, the way populist narratives framing women, establish a criteria aiming to shame and exclude women based on their ethnicity (privileging Serbian women, excluding non-Serbian/Albanian/Roma women), and the ability to give birth (privileging women who give births and excluding women who don't). That way, this populist narrative appropriates women's bodies for nationalistic/patriarchal objectives.

Concluding remarks: appropriating the female body

The institutional support (e.g. forming a ministry along with/or the state funded media outlets voicing moral panic) enables naturalization of the populist discourse, and helps its installation. Polarizing the constructed opposites, as well homogenizing demands of the people, results in eluding and rejecting differences in particular needs. This consequently generates censorship, which is restriction of the allowed and banned speech, behavior and/or value system. As Judith Butler argued:

Censorship is a productive form of power: it is not merely privative, but formative as well. I propose that censorship seeks to produce subjects according to explicit and implicit norms, and that is the production of the subject that has everything to do with the regulation of speech. The subject's production takes place not only through the regulation of that subject's speech, but through the regulation of the social domain of speakable discourse. The question is not what it is I will be able to say, but what will constitute the domain of the sayable within which I begin to speak at all. To become a subject means to be subjected to a set of implicit and explicit norms that govern the kind of speech that will be legible as the speech of the subject (Butler, 1997: 133).

Reiteration of populist narratives alters them, but also reaffirms them, and that way produces a form of censorship that operates as ideological oppression against the *enemies of the people*. That way, a popular subject gets normatized, with an appropriate value system, while at the same time devalues and brands as a foreign, even a taboo, a constructed opposition to the norm. It could be argued thus, that populism, nationalism/nativism and patriarchy complement each other, install each other and enable each other. Institutionalization of these narratives helps normalization and further perpetuate homogenization of 'the people'. That way, a certain type of popular discourse prevails in general public, censoring/othering different and excluded types of expressions and/or identities.

In this paper I have delineated two seemingly very different populist narratives: one regarding the alleged rape committed by Pakistani migrants near the refugee asylum, and the other one concerning the ministry for population politics, dealing with birth ratios in Serbia. Even though, at first glance, these narratives don't seem very similar in content, they share many common traits that perhaps could be helpful in understanding both populism and nationalism in a more general sense.

First and foremost, both narratives share the structural organization of a populist narrative- clearly differentiating between 'the friend'/'pure people' and 'the enemy of the people'/'foreigner',

'a threat' to the 'purity of the people'. Both narratives, thus generate a sensation, a 'moral panic' based on the same dichotomy. Secondly, both narratives use nativism, a term Cas Mudde defined as combination of nationalism and xenophobia (Mudde, 2017). Nativism supports populism, by helping it frame 'enemy' as a foreign, other than 'people', whilst framing people according to their ethnic group. Ernesto Laclau calls this type of populism- ethno- populism (2005a). First narrative obviously frames refugees as a dangerous stranger, other-than-native, or other-than-Serbian. By taking into account only Serbian potential mothers and 'mothers-to-be', the second narrative also differentiates and excludes women who are not Serbian, especially Albanian and Roma women. Furthermore, it frames women who have decided not to have children as 'foreign' as well, branding them as 'traitors' of the nation, who have embraced 'hedonistic'/'foreign' value system. Finally, the analysis shows that these narratives both use patriarchal appropriation of female bodies. Drawing from Sara Ahmed and her analysis of 'stranger danger' discourse (2000), I have analyzed the narrative about migrants, focusing on the ways it frames women as a 'property' of white Serbian man, that needs to be policed and 'protected' from the 'foreign threat'. Equally important is the consequent construction of male Serbian hero, that is opposed to the migrant/enemy. The second case study narrative, uses female bodies even more evidently. As many feminists pointed out, nationalistic policies commonly oppress women by identifying them with both creation and survival of the nation, therefore

[...] often the pressures on women to have or not to have children relate to them not as individuals, workers and/or wives, but as members of specific national collectivities. According to different national projects, under specific historical circumstances, some or all women of childbearing age groups would be called on, sometimes bribed, and sometimes even forced, to have more, or fewer children (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 23).

This nationalistic strategy thus employs not only populist tools in persuading women to have children, but patriarchal as well. In that

sense it could be argued that the exclusion based on both ethnicity and gender combines together populism, nativism/nationalism and patriarchy in executing their discursive objectives.

Conclusively, in order grasp populism more fully, and especially if it's intersecting with nationalism, the analysis shouldn't be reduced to the Schmidttian friend/enemy antagonism with an ethnicity that differentiates them. Although these characteristics are important in both detecting and exploring populist discourses, also gender, race and class hierarchies and divisions should be considered. These added perspectives can help us in determining if particular populist narrative is inherently anti-pluralist or democratic/ that is the one allowing pluralism.

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АПОЛО



Полска Оро, издање: 1999. Фото: Александар Ристић. Дизајн: Јелена Ристић. Фото: Ристић.

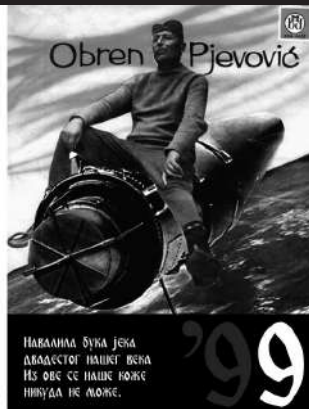
Славам Јадна у дрвени кревет
а мој Миле у Аполло 9
Момци нам се веру на Венери
девојке им киселицу беру.

Субе шљиве и планете
а на Земљи плаче дете
Тражи хлеба и салате
Гладно дете, брате.

Кажу Миле васконски брате
на Месецу има ли салате
Или салате, на пршуте старе
Или су тамо све голе пустаре.

Напредно сам и ја дете
Желим с тобом на планете
На Земљи нас Ђаво преба
све због љубомеба.

Ко ли нашу Земљу шијушира
из аетених нечијих тањира
Да ли су они од Аполла већи
Или су можда неки људи трећи.



Навањана бука једна
длавакост наших жена
Или све се наше коље
никуда не ложе.



Zoran Naskovski: *Mašinka Lukić in a delegated performance*
Apollo 9, BELEF, Belgrade, 7th September 1999, photo courtesy
of Zoran Naskovski

Naskovski's delegated performance *Apollo 9* involved a public performance of the proto-turbo-folk song "Apollo 9" by Mašinka Lukić in front of a McDonald's in downtown Belgrade, while audiences were served a traditional Serbian meal of roasted pig, brandy and beer. When the song was first written and performed, it expressed both the doubt and uncertainty of a future of industrialized Yugoslavia, and the stark contrast between rural peasant life and the modern-day embracing of technology. Its performance thirty years later occurred amid a backdrop marked by the collapse of Yugoslavia, the transition from socialism to capitalism and the repressive Milošević regime.

The song "Apollo 9" premiered on television in 1969 and the 45 vinyl record was released by the two labels ("Sportska knjiga" and "Belgrade disk") merely changing the images of record covers. It became a mega hit when Mašinka Lukić was only 17 years old. Naskovski recognizes relation of Newly Composed Folk Music (NCFM) and turbo-folk, for the national cultural identity in the post-Yugoslav period. Newly Composed Folk Music became popular in the 1970s, as a "postmodern approach to folklore", wherein artists experimented with the introduction of pop elements and with commentary on contemporary events, while turbo-folk rose to prominence in the 1990s, adopting the combination of local folk and electronic pop music. This music was seen as a local form of resistance to globalization and, at the same time, support to nationalism.

Most of the persons who attended the event in front of McDonald's were from the younger generations. Mašinka Lukić said "I couldn't believe that youngsters would be so interested, that they would know about the song. It's a little unusual. Is it because the song depicts the present? Probably."

How to be Popular in Populist Time?

Abstract

Familiar movements and styles that characterised art production prior to the twenty-first century have all vanished. Contemporary artists have extended their vocabulary in mutual directions: by looking back to earlier traditions and by engaging with aspects of modern society. Contemporary art work or projects are no longer something that exists only in a physical space; it also exists in social, political, and ethical spaces. The whole concept of art has been expanded. Art has opened up to a transnational network of producers and audiences, migrating into the sphere of social and distributive systems, whether in the form of “relational aesthetics” or other critical reinventions of practice. Alan Kirby says postmodernism is dead and buried. In its place comes a new paradigm of authority and knowledge formed under the pressure of new technologies and contemporary social forces. Seismic shift started somewhere in the late 1990’s or early 2000’s, with emergence of new technologies which started re-structuring, the nature of the artist/author, and the reader/audience/spectator and the text/work of art, and the relationships between them. Culture we have now fetishises the recipient/audience to the degree that they become a partial or whole author of it. One can see this as the democratisation of culture; or as unbearable banality and emptiness of the cultural products thereby generated. In the course of everyday life we constantly choose between what we find aesthetically pleasing, and what we consider tacky, or ugly. Taste(s) and preference(s) are not neutral or pure. Bourdieu demonstrates that our different aesthetic choices are all distinctions, depending on changing social assumptions.

No judgement of taste is innocent – we are all snobs or people of bad taste for others. We will try to comment and reflect on what makes these three prominent contemporary British artists: Grayson Perry, Antony Gormley and Damien Hirst popular. Their work often combines social commentary with provocation and tackles complex relationships between artist, gallery, critic and audience.

Key words Postmodern condition; distinctions, taste, populism, arts.

Few notes on populism

For a long time being on the fringes of political and theoretical debates became a fashionable concept in comparative social science even though its ambiguity and strong normative connotations are widely recognized. Like most political buzzwords it often floats from one meaning to another when used as academic jargon or in mass media or amongst the general public. Even though the analytical value of the concept is pretty low and despite a consensus about its elusiveness it remains widely used.

Mudde and Kaltwaser position populism within the context of contemporary liberal democracy. "Theoretically, populism is most fundamentally juxtaposed to liberal democracy rather than to democracy per se to any other model of democracy." (Mudde, Kaltwaser, 2017: 1-2).

There is a lack of scholarly agreement on the defining attributes of populism; agreement in general is that all forms of populism include some kind of appeal to 'the people' and a disapproval of 'the elite'. In that sense populism always involves a certain critique of the establishment and a praise of the common people. There is a danger of defining populism too broad as it can potentially apply to all political and social actors. "And there are at least two direct opposites of populism: elitism and pluralism.[...] "Pluralism is the direct opposite of the dualist perspective of both populism and elitism,[...] Within pluralism diversity is seen as a strength rather than a weakness." (Mudde, Kaltwaser, 2017: 7).

How to be contemporary = modern + popular (?)

There is a view commonly held by some art critics and scholars that if interests of ordinary people, who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups, are supported through art and culture it instantly brings a sense of bad taste, 'scent of populous'. The idea that art should be occupied by high, beautiful and sublime is so strongly embedded that any attempt appealing to ordinary people gets negative annotations that it even appears in Online Oxford Dictionary of English as example sentence that states: '*art museums did not gain bigger audiences through a new populism*'¹.

A dilemma to be or not to be popular or recognised is not a real one for most artists. Every artist wants to be if not popular then recognised, aside from a few exceptions of those who choose to stay outside the public eye, or even have seclusion as an artistic concept. Often to be recognised is more about the public, the audience, visitors, art critics, gallerists. Recognition and acceptance also implies a division between 'good art' and 'not good art', or between mainstream and fringe or between avant-garde and kitsch. It is worth noting a disappearance of word kitsch from our every day as scholars' vocabulary.

History of art is full of well known examples of once popular, renowned, recognised artists now barely known. On the other hand art history is also full of post recognition, probably the most notorious is the case and sad life story of Vincent Van Gogh²; or revivals, for example, of Duchamp's Urinal which was initially rejected for the entry to the 1917 first exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists, then lost only to be 're-discovered' half a century later, reappearing in the form of multiple copies, bought by world leading museums. Post recognition is a reflection of a contemporary

1 [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/populism`](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/populism)

2 There are some doubts about it but apparently Van Gogh only sold **one painting** during his lifetime Red Vineyard at Arles. This painting now resides at the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. The rest of Van Gogh's more than **900 paintings** were not sold or made famous until after his death.

taste as we extrapolate today's taste and preferences upon the art from the past.

There are some amazing examples of how very different and opposing works of art were created almost simultaneously in few European capitals. In 1911 Jules Alexander Grüne painted 'Friday at the French Artist's Saloon' in the same year when Kandinsky published his 'Spiritual in art' manifesto booklet for abstract art and he painted a few his early abstract paintings. While in Sankt Petersburg the 'Last futurist exhibition (0,10)' was in full steam preparation and Duchamp was painting his 'Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2' (1912).



Friday at the French Artist's Saloon, Fig. 1, (Jules-Alexandre Grün, 1911)

The idyllic middle class milieu depicted in Grün's painting was a realistic almost photographic depiction of the environment. This was in high contrast to the austere atmosphere of the Last Expressionist exhibition and to the paintings by Kandinsky and Duchamp. This example shows that contemporary art carries both complementary and opposing elements. In reality they can also coexist in peaceful parallelism.

Advancement of modern art was not strictly a linear development where one movement or 'ism' has been replaced by another;

also, some puzzling and provocative works of early modernism are still stimulating debates today.

*Populism in numbers – Is there any scientific evidence
for popular preferences?*

Findings of three surveys will be presented in an attempt to answer the question: How to judge about popularity and public preferences indirectly and preferable choices. Aside different art movements (self) proclamations, fashionable and, critic choices and art awards these surveys attempt to show in objective manner what is really happening.

A well established way to explore popularity is to follow visitor's figures for particular institution or exhibition.

Survey No 1 – Visitors figures

The first survey is using the number of visitors as a measure of popularity of cultural institutions.

Visitor's figures for 2016 released by the British Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) revealed that the 10 most popular attractions in UK are museum or galleries (ALVA, 2017). The British museum was in first place followed by The National Gallery and Tate Modern with an astonishing 5,839,197 visitors exactly up by 24% from the previous year. This leap in the number of visitors can be explained by a long awaited and well advertised new 10 storey extension of Tate Modern which has been consistently among the top 5 visitors' attraction over the last decade.

Here is the list of exhibitions that were on show that particular record year of 2016:

The World Goes Pop, 10 September 2015 – 24 January 2016.
**The Hyundai Commission: Abraham Cruzvillegas, 11 October
2015 – 2 April 2016**

**Alexander Calder: Performing Sculpture, 11 November 2015
– 3 April 2016**

Performing for the Camera, 18 February – 12 June 2016

Mona Hatoum, 4 May – 21 August 2016

Bhutan Khakhar, 1 June – 6 November 2016

Georgia O’Keeffe, 6 July – 30 October 2016

Wilfredo Lam, 14 September 2016 – 8 January 2017

Robert Rauschenberg, 1 December 2016 – 2 April 2017

(ARTUPDATE, 2016)

It seems that the record year has been framed by art works belonging to what is known as pop art, although we don’t think that pop art is more appealing, pleasing or likable to the public than other modern movements.

It is an extraordinary fact that 5, 8 million visitors went to see contemporary art exhibitions at Tate Modern. This figure is higher than the whole population of half of European countries; it is roughly 16,000 visitors per day, every day of the year. In its first year, in 2000, the Tate Modern was the most popular museum in the world, with 5,250,000 visitors and since then has been always among the top 5 UK visitors attractions every year.

What is common denominator for millions of visitors? Do they share common adoration and appreciation for modern art?

*Survey No 2 Art Audit*³

The second survey looks at which art works and artists are preferred by the public (NAO, National Audit Office, Art Audit, 2017).

In this survey 2,000 British adults were tasked with voting for their favourite visual artworks from a shortlist drawn up by a

3 Art Audit was commissioned to mark the launch of The Frame – a new TV from Samsung which blends art and technology. The innovative screen seamlessly becomes a piece of art when not being used, with users able to choose from more than 100 pieces of pre-loaded pieces to suit any tastes.

panel of dedicated arts editors and writers. The results show that contemporary artists are on a par with the old masters reflecting an eclectic national taste that even allows for works which have been mass produced on an industrial scale (Cramer, 2017). The outcome of the survey showed that the street artist Banksy with his *Balloon Girl* ranked the nation's favourite British artwork ahead of the likes of Turner and Constable. Constable's *The Hay Wain*, which hangs in the National Gallery, came second while the *The Singing Butler* by Jack Vettriano took third position. Figs 1, 2 (Banksy, 2002) However, the album artwork owned by millions and now considered fair game as decorative art, among which the record sleeves of The Beatles, Pink Floyd and The Sex Pistols, was highly prized by the nation and were among the top 20. Surprisingly works by the likes of Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin, collectors' favourites despite expectations did not make the top 20.



Right or left? On the right is Banksy's rebellious mural in original street setting and on the left framed and commodified well known poster version. Figs. 2, 3 (Banksy, 2002)

What makes this survey significant, especially with regards to the relationship between popular taste and elitism is that even the pre selection had been prepared by the so called experts from the domain of art. Only half of the top 20 works were traditional

paintings the rest were sculptures, public art and record sleeves. More than half were works created in the 20th or 21st century and nearly 30% of selected works date from just past 25 years. These were heavily reproduced or conveyed to the public via other media or reproduction and some such as record sleeves genuinely appeared as mass produced applied art reproduced in millions of copies.

From this survey one can conclude that contemporary taste is more eclectic than expected with predominant flavour for contemporary art that is balanced with old traditional masters and paintings.

Third survey explores people's preferences in art through in-depth interviews.

Survey No. 3 People's Choice

In December 1993 Komar and Melamid⁴ designed and commissioned a survey interviewing 1,001 adult Americans on their art preferences: Soft curves or sharp angles? Brush strokes or smooth surfaces? "Realistic-looking" or "different-looking"? Serious or festive? Outdoor scenes or indoor? Wild animals or domestic? Famous people or ordinary? ...102 questions about choices.

The project was designed and executed both as a research project and as art project. The interviewees were a statistically representative group, having been selected from all households by a random-probability sampling procedure that included unlisted numbers and was stratified according to state. Komar and Melamid believed that the broad public was an adequate judge of art, contrary to the historical precedence, much in the same way that the broad public in America is entrusted with electing the President. Based on the results Komar and Melamid created "the

4 Russian-born American conceptualist artists Vitaly Komar (1943) and Alexander Melamid (1945). Born in Moscow both immigrated to Israel in 1977 and subsequently to New York in 1978. In an artists' statement they said that "even if only one of us creates some of the projects and works, we usually sign them together. We are not just an artist, we are a movement." The pair's co-authorship of works ceased in 2003–2004.

most wanted” and “least wanted” paintings from 11 countries. They presented findings both in statistical and in a pictorial form. (Dia Art Foundation 1995). They also held presentations and workshops with public discussing outcomes. The overall outcome was not sensational and presented combinations of common features that reflected public taste.

Apart from its scrupulous methodological procedure Komar and Melamid’s research methodology project has its artistic and semi ironical approach and outcome. They were playing with the concept of scientific surveys in a domain of taste and challenged the relativity and futility of the concepts of ‘the unique’, ‘the most or least wanted’ work of art. The whole project was more like a provocation and its contribution was more in the domain of instigation of a discussions and workshops which artists organised afterwards.

Few notes on distinctions and vanity of small differences

I deliberately compounded together titles of two seminal works both depicting issues of taste: One is the influential book by Bourdieu “Distinctions, A social critique of the judgment of taste” and the other is a series of six large-scale tapestries “The Vanity of Small Differences” by the Turner-Prize winning artist Grayson Perry.

De gustibus non est disputandum, maxim meaning “In matters of taste, there can be no disputes”. The implication is that everyone’s personal preferences are merely subjective so they should never be argued about. In contrast to this maxim we will briefly discuss Bourdieu’s theoretical concepts and explorations of taste distinctions.

In the course of everyday life we constantly choose between what we find aesthetically pleasing and what we consider tacky, or ugly. Taste(s) and preference(s) are not neutral or pure. Bourdieu demonstrates that our different aesthetic choices are all distinctions, variations depending on changing social assumptions, beliefs and expectations. No judgement of taste is innocent, we are all potentially perceived by others as snobs or people of bad taste.

He also proposes that our aesthetic choices create *class fractions* (class-based social groups) and actively distance one social class/fraction from the other social classes. Those with a high volume of cultural capital – non-financial social assets such as education which promote social mobility beyond economic means – are most likely to be able to determine what constitutes taste within society. Those with lower volumes of overall capital accept this distinction between high and low culture as legitimate and natural. Those with low overall capital are unable to access a higher volume of cultural capital because they lack the necessary means to do so. This could mean lacking the terminology to describe or methods of understanding classical artwork.

Bourdieu asserts in this respect that ‘working-class people expect objects to fulfil a function’ whilst those free from economic necessities are able to operate a pure gaze separated from everyday life. The acceptance of <dominant> forms of taste is, Bourdieu argues, a form of symbolic violence. Moreover even when the subordinate social classes might seem to have their own ideas about what is and what is not good taste, «the working-class ‘aesthetic’ is a dominated aesthetic, which is constantly obliged to define itself in terms of the dominant aesthetics» of the ruling class. (Bourdieu, 1984: 5-47).

Hence, predispositions to certain kinds of food, music, and art are taught and instilled in children, which specific tastes then guide the children to their appropriate social positions.

Therefore ‘Taste’ is an important example of cultural hegemony, of how class fractions are determined, not only by the possession of social or economic capital, but by the possession of a cultural capital, which is an insidious subtle social mechanism that ensures the social reproduction and the cultural reproduction of the ruling class. Moreover, because a person is taught his or her tastes at an early age, and thus are deeply internalized, such social conditionings are very difficult to change, and thus tend to permanently identify a person as having originated in a certain social class, which then impedes upward social mobility. In that way, the cultural tastes of the dominant (ruling) class tend to dominate the tastes of the other social classes, thus forcing individual men

and women of economically and culturally dominated classes to conform to certain aesthetic preferences, lest they risk societal disapproval by appearing to be crude, vulgar, and tasteless persons (Bourdieu, 1984: 53).

A 100 years of Fortitude

It is a centenary since Duchamp submitted the infamous Fountain/Urinal; fifty years ago Warhol prophetically said that ‘in the future everyone will be world famous for 15 minutes’, Beuys asserted that ‘Every man is an artist’ and it has been twenty years since the famous and notorious exhibition Sensation (Royal Academy, London, 1997) followed by The Apocalypse (Royal Academy, 2000).

It must be said that we got to this moment in the life of contemporary art not only by catchy, flammable or lapidary slogans but with diligence and fortitude.

‘As soon as artists dared to question what art had always been, a whole wealth of possibilities opened up. Modern art was born as artists began to reject the styles of the past in order to create works inspired by modern society. This new art reflected the radical developments in technology, transportation and industry, as well as their unprecedented impact on socio-economic and cultural conditions of the time. Artists of all eras are products of their time and culture, the changing conditions of their surroundings have been instrumental in pushing art to become what it is today.’ (Kyung, Cerasi, 2017: 14).

Familiar movements and styles that characterised art production prior to the twenty-first century have all vanished. Contemporary artists have extended their vocabulary in mutual directions: by looking back to earlier traditions and by engaging with aspects of modern society.

The whole concept of art has been expanded. Contemporary art work or projects are no longer something that exists only in a physical space; it also exists in social, political, and ethical spaces. Art has opened up to a trans-national network of producers and

audiences, migrating into the sphere of social and distributive systems, whether in the form of “relational aesthetics” or other critical reinventions of practice.

Post condition

The modern world died at 3.32 PM in St. Louis, Missouri on the 15 of July in 1972. The dynamiting of the notorious Pruitt Igoe housing scheme was a noise that resonated around the world, according to Charles Jencks the architecture critic as described in *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (1977). We are not sure if that day was a birth of postmodernism but through series of (un)fortunate events postmodern condition has been established through well-known and cited events. We entered in the age of postmodern (D Hebdige use collective noun posts to describe multifaceted nature and proliferation of the term).

We will single out only two phenomenon relevant in understanding and describing postmodern condition. Two expanding phenomena: *expansion of business and corporate culture in art; and expansion of style.*

In 1984, literary theorist Fredric Jameson argued in his essay *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, “that art had been colonised by commerce”. Cultural capital have been seriously reinforced by real capital to extent not known before. This was before Charles Saatchi started buying up Young British Artists and decades before Damien Hirst claimed to have sold a diamond-encrusted skull for 50 million pounds, modernist art sought to redeem the world, he suggested. Postmodern art was made by artists stuck in a world they could scarcely change.

More than before postmodern style or approach invaded other neighbouring arts and became present through design, architecture, advertising, other media, music, television etc. Soon became omnipresent. Design, advertising campaign video clips became legitimate tools for style expression. Postmodernism radically restructured established ideas about style. “It brought a radical

freedom to art and design, through gestures that were often funny, sometimes confrontational and occasionally absurd. Most of all, postmodernism brought a new self-awareness about style itself.” (Adamson, Pavitt 2011a).

Prominent figure of the style musician David Byrne reflects in the V&A catalogue on postmodernism’s heyday “Things could be mixed and matched – or mashed up, as is said today – and anything was fair game for inspiration. That, to me, seemed as it should be. A taste of freedom. At least that’s the way I took it, though one could see another rulebook being written even as we tried to say: ‘No more damned rulebooks!’ Before long, there was, according to some, a postmodern rule book. Time to move on.” (Adamson, Pavitt, 2011b: 287).

Liquid modernity or where are we now?

Even postmodernism had his farewell party in V&A exhibition in 2011/12 *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970-1990*, and what is next? According to Alan Kirby postmodernism is dead and we are in post –postmodern period.

As curators for the exhibition stated for the catalogue “Post-modernism collapsed under the weight of its own success, and the self-regard that came with it.”

Alan Kirby says postmodernism is dead and buried. In its place comes a new paradigm of authority and knowledge formed under the pressure of new technologies and contemporary social forces. Seismic shit started somewhere in the late 1990s or early 2000s, with emergence of new technologies which started re-structuring, the nature of the artist/author, and the reader/audience/spectator and the text/work of art, and the relationships between them.

“Postmodernism, like modernism and romanticism before it, fetishised [ie placed supreme importance on] the author, even when the author chose to indict or pretended to abolish him or herself. But the culture we have now fetishises the *recipient* of the text to the degree that they become a partial or whole author of

it. Optimists may see this as the democratisation of culture; pessimists will point to the excruciating banality and vacuity of the cultural products thereby generated (at least so far)." (Kirby, 2017).

Artists are present

We will comment and reflect on what makes these three prominent contemporary British artists: Grayson Perry, Antony Gormly and Damien Hirst popular. Their work often combines social commentary with provocation and tackles complex relationships between artist, gallery, critic and audience.

They could be put in any of the Ossian Ward's seven categories of contemporary art: entertainment, confrontation, event, message, joke, spectacle and meditation (Ward 2014: 14). If we follow the suggested classification our three artists tick all the boxes and they move comfortably through all appearances of contemporary art as they are: recognisable by artistic style and attitude (handwriting); recognised by art establishment; recognised and accepted by broad public present in the public domain; And they still look for the answers what art is and what means to be artist in this complex and dynamic world.

Antony Gormly ONE & OTHER

One & Other was a live artwork by sculptor Antony Gormley, which took place over 100 days during the summer of 2009. Figs. 4, 5, 6. (Gormly 2009) Two thousand and four hundred participants representing every region of the UK spent an hour alone on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square for 100 days and nights⁵. There were lorry drivers, teachers, Morris dancers, lawyers, students, nudists,

5 Picked at random by computer from nearly 35,000 who applied 1208 men and 1192 women aged between 16 and 84 took part. Gormley himself applied but was unlucky in the draw. But he had just the same chance

they were people from every walk of life and every corner of the UK who have become a part of art history and together created a collective portrait of humanity that is richer than anyone could have imagined. During the 100 day project, the website received over 7 million hits, it became the subject of photos, blogs, tweets and newspaper articles. As it provoked plaudits and vitriol, it became a part of the cultural fabric of the UK.

The project will continue to live on as a TV documentary by a distinguished film-maker Mike Figgis which is due to be screened on Sky Arts; a book is being produced by Random House and the Wellcome Library will store all the photos, videos and interviews with all the participants for future historians and academics.

In Antony Gormley's own words:

The idea is very simple. Through putting a person onto the plinth, the body becomes a metaphor, a symbol. In the context of Trafalgar Square with its military, valedictory, and male historical statues, this elevation of everyday life to the position formerly occupied by monumental art allows us to reflect on the diversity, vulnerability, and particularity of the individual in contemporary society. It's about people coming together to do something extraordinary and unpredictable. It could be tragic but it could also be funny. (Gormly, 2009).

Gormley's work helped the Fourth Plinth to become a household name. It garnered attention across the world. It even spawned a storyline in BBC Radio 4 drama *The Archers* and coined a new term, 'plinthier' – name for numerous members of the public who took turns to occupy the plinth⁶.

as any other London entrant, he pointed out. "It is completely randomly selected by computer. I applied and I didn't get picked." *Guardian*

6 Information about project *One&Other* was collated from couple web sites: Gormly's site, Mayor of London and London assembly; British Library Webarchive: <http://www.antonygormley.com/show/item-view/id/2277>, <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/art-and-design/fourth-plinth-past-commissions>, <https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20100223121732/http://www.oneandother.co.uk>



Versions of the poster for the project *One & Other*, Figs. 4, 5 (Gormly, 2009)



One and Other, project proposal, Fig. 6 (Antony Gormly and Tristan Simmonds 2009)



Plinther, Fig. 7 (Gormly, 2009)

Damian Hirst Spin paintings

As one of the smooth, populist operators of the art world Hirst combines business shrewdness, almost shameless self-promotion with art that aims to shock. By being the richest British even world living artist, having the most visited exhibition of contemporary art (460.000 visitors came to see his exhibition at Tate Modern in 2012); staging the auction of his own art, avoiding the usual chain of dealers; having his own gallery, he confirms the well earned reputation of a being populist artist.

Ossian Ward discussed Hirst, in his classification, as Art as Joke and illustrated it with Hirst's seminal work 'For the love of God' the infamous platinum cast of human skull set with 8,601 flawless pavé-set diamonds. Sold allegedly for incredible 50 million pounds.

"For the love of God was not simply another amusing or arresting visual one- liner, but a troubling effigy of everything that

had gone wrong with the art business – from the moral of bankers to the tasteless bling surrounding the very the world of show business. The diamond skull was thus very epitome of art in the age of luxury [...] it is shallow world ruled by mad markets and wealthy tyrants, the skull is telling me, but if you can't beat 'em join 'em. (Ward, 2014: 122-123).

Following unprecedented visitor figures for a solo show, Chris Dercon, Director of the Tate Modern commented: 'We are delighted that so many people came to see and discuss the Damien Hirst exhibition [...] It was wonderful to see such iconic works brought together in one place and to offer our visitors a chance to experience them first-hand.' (Hirst, 2012).

Hirst experimented with spin⁷ art in 1992 at his studio in Brixton, London. The following year he set up a spin art stall and



Monumental spin artwork in spectacular display at Olympics 2012 Closing Ceremony Fig. 8 (Hirst 2012)

7 If someone puts a certain spin on an event or situation, they interpret it and try to present it in a particular way. In politics, **spin** is the way in which political parties try to present everything they do in a positive way to the public and the media. Spin doctor person employed as by a politician to use spin in interpreting information or events so as to present them in a favourable light.

invited visitors to pay £1 to create their own spin paintings to be signed and another £1 to drop their trousers and reveal their painted cocks and bollocks!

Twenty years later Hirst's importance as a British artist was recognised with the inclusion of his Union Jack spin painting in the Olympics 2012 Closing Ceremony.

Grayson Perry "The Most Popular Art exhibition Ever!"

With this intriguing, self-proclaiming marketing statement it is Perry's ambition to "widen the audience for art without dumbing it down." (Perry, 2017c).

That was a deliberate but playful provocation to challenge the very notion of popularity. This is how Perry executes his work either as a painter, ceramicist, writer, lecturer, TV and film maker or cross-dresser Claire. His work is also deeply autobiographical and personal without avoiding to address relevant social issues: i. e. the class system, Brexit and the art establishment as shown in *The Vanity of Small Differences*, a series of six large-scale tapestries, which explore the British fascination with taste and class. A three-part documentary, all in the *Best Possible Taste with Grayson Perry*, accompanies the exhibition.

It is his caustic satire of every sphere of life from his own art world status, about religion and politics that gets represented in his vases and tapestries. For example his Waltham stow tapestry accomplishes more than just kicking a blow at consumer culture, because beneath the grinning mask of humour, are some much deeper enquires into the very foundation of our culture.

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Matching Pair, Fig. 9 (Grayson Perry, 2017)



Reclining Artist woodcut, Serpentine Gallery, London, 8 June – 10 September 2017, Fig. 10 (Grayson Perry, 2017)



Long Pig at “Most Popular Art Exhibition Ever”, Serpentine Gallery, London, 8 June – 10 September 2017, Fig. 11 (Grayson Perry, 2017)



Exhibition *Vanity of Small Differences*, Ukraine, Kyiv, Izolyatsia Platform for Cultural Initiatives, Feb-March 2017, Fig. 12 (Grayson Perry, 2012).

Be careful who you call populist, be very careful

It is a centenary since Duchamp submitted infamous Fountain/Urinal. 50 years ago A. Warhol prophetically said that “in the future everyone will be world famous for 15 minutes” ... It has been 20 years since the famous and notorious exhibition Sensation, followed two years later with (what else) The Apocalypse. Familiar movements and styles that characterised art production prior to the twenty-first century have all vanished. Contemporary artists have extended their vocabulary in mutual directions: by looking back to earlier traditions and by engaging with aspects of modern society

A dilemma for a contemporary artist often presents itself in the form of a question: How (not) to play to the gallery⁸ in the age of extreme present⁹ or how to be popular in populist times? They show pluralism and diversity and above all conciseness about role and position of artist in the contemporary society.

What makes an artist and an art exhibition popular? Is it because the artist is famous? Why is one artist more popular or famous than other(s). Do they confirm to a popular perception of what an artist should be? Was he/she well reviewed? Do they share your political opinions, and do you find their work surprising, funny or disturbing?

Artist must be present both thematically, and socially. We have singled out some main players at the art scene (state agencies, corporate capital, experts, museums, media, social media), but what is new now in the era of ultimate presence is the simultaneousness instantaneousness plus instructiveness that creates a completely different environment with multiple examples of instant ways to stardom from home made video clip on You tube to lavish contracts.

8 play to the gallery”. idiom.- To act, behave, or perform in such a way as to receive as much approval from an audience or spectators of less sophisticated tastes or gain approval by crude or obvious means.

9 “extreme present “it is a concept used to explain and explore expanding and entangling our modern digital life. Introduced by Basar, S, Coup-land, D, Obrist, H. U. in “The Age of Earthquakes” A guide to extreme present, (2015), London, Penguin Books.



Scan the art, uncover the story!

Advert announcing Smartify for London gallery “Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art”

To celebrate the 20th anniversary works from our collection are now live on Smartify (Fig. 13, Estorick Collection 2018).

Artists exist through their avatars in different domains of art world and productions as in both social and virtual worlds. These three artists through their work and presence demonstrate the multifaceted reality of contemporary art world. They are popular and recognised, questioned and disliked, socially engaged and active and ruthless self-promoters, rich and poor. Their work is at once deadly serious, funny, jokey and provocative. They could be put in any of the Ossian Ward’s seven categories of contemporary art: entertainment, confrontation, event, message, joke, spectacle and meditation. (Ward 2014). If we follow the suggested classification our three artists tick all the boxes and they move comfortably through all appearances of contemporary art as they are: recognisable by artistic style and attitude (hand-writing); recognised by art establishment; recognised and accepted by broad public; present in the public domain. Contemporary artists are, like never before, exposed to the unpredictable market forces, fierce critics, stringent gallerists, demanding public and following biannual cycle of trend setters.

For these three artists the question still remains how to play to the gallery and not to betray ethos and artistic norms. And they still look for the answers what art is and what means to be artist

in this complex and dynamic world. With excitement and curiosity we wait for their answers.

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- Fig. 9 Grayson Perry (2017) *Matching Pair*, pair of glazed ceramic vases, viewed 9 July 2017, <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/grayson-perry-most-popular-art-exhibition-ever>
- Fig. 10 Grayson Perry (2017) *Reclining Artist*, woodcut, viewed 10 July 2017, <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/grayson-perry-most-popular-art-exhibition-ever>
- Fig. 11 Grayson Perry (2017) *Long Pig*, glazed ceramic, viewed 10 July 2017, <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/grayson-perry-most-popular-art-exhibition-ever>
- Fig. 12 Grayson Perry (2012), *Vanity of Small Differences*, six tapestries, viewed 20 September 2017, <http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/exhibitions/touring/grayson-perry-the-vanity-of-small-differences>
- Fig. 13 Estorick Collection (2018) *Scan the art, uncover the story*, Smartify, digital image, accessed 14 February 2018, <https://www.estorickcollection.com/events/family-art-day-art-collectors>



HORKEŠKART, street singing action: Bit pazar, Skopje, Macedonia, 2004. (photo courtesy of ŠKART)



HORKEŠKART on tour: Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany, 2006. (photo courtesy of ŠKART)



HORKESTAR on tour: Festival of self-organized choirs, Zagreb, Croatia, 2018. (photo courtesy of HORKESTAR)

Strahinja Savić

***Populism and Medievalization
of Memory***

Abstract

The paper discusses instrumentalisation of past narratives, specifically, the media portrayal of collective memory of the medieval Serbian state in the TV series “Nemanjići”; so it would serve the contemporary political moment – of the distinct populist political currents. Comparative analysis of several TV series, foreign as well as domestic, shows different aspects of forming national and cultural identity. Based on the theoretical musings of Aleida Assmann and Todor Kuljić, who notes that history is “always creation (...), organizing chaotic events by turning them into narrations” (Kuljić 2006: 324), the paper examines how the TV series positions the period of Nemanjić’s reign as a founding myth (mythomoteur, Assmann 2011; Smith 2010).

Key words: Nemanjići, TV series, populism, mythomoteur, memory

Introduction

The objective of the paper is the analysis of the way collective memory of the medieval Serbian state was constructed in the TV series “Nemanjići”, with regard to current political moment, in which, according to a number of political analysts, populism is omnipresent. In early 2016, a competition for the scenario for the TV series was announced. Gordan Mihić was chosen as the winner.

The first big budget season was filmed in 2017, and premiered in 2018. The airing of the first episodes of “Nemanjići” immediately caused an outburst of criticism in the media and social networks. Much of the criticism and outrage were directed at unconvincing portrayal of the medieval theme, the dramatic narratives were incomplete, and the directing inadequate and error-ridden. However, the viewers’ outrage largely focused on poor attempts to create, or more precisely, redefine the national identity through the sphere of medievalism, particularly by creation of the Nemanjići’s state.

Populism in the artistic representation of memory

The media today is an ineluctable playground for toying with the memory and identity of a nation. However, when analyzing the media programmes, it is necessary to reveal the driving force behind the existing need to revive past in a particular creation. Aleida Assmann, in the study “The Long Shadow of Past” (2011), quotes Susan Sontag: “What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds” (Sontag in Assmann 2011: 31). Assmann’s book is mostly concerned with creation of collective memory, whose features are reduction of original historical narrative, (re)semiotization, or giving meaning, creation of unambiguous, compelling images that invoke powerful emotions (Assmann 2011: 43). Re-establishment of collective memory, as discussed above, is often determined by requirements of a particular political moment. The duration of collective memory pictures “is not limited by the bearers’ passing, but with them becoming dysfunctional and replaced by others” (same: 43). The lasting, established images are called myths: it is eternally accepted, effectively relevant history. A myth enables “past always to exist in a society’s present, from that society draws its direction for the future” (Assmann 2011: 44). Todor Kuljić agrees that “History is, nonetheless, always creation, thus, to an extent solely arranging chaotic events by compiling them into narratives or causation-related connections from the point of view of existing

requirements” (Kuljić 2006: 324). It might seem romantic, “pure” past, as well as “pure” memory do not exist: we always observe them from a group or individual point of view, coloured by a certain ideological need. The mindset that is turning to past is thus either “rooted in present or open to a new future” (Kuljić 2006: 325).

Consequently, the question of need for the memory narrative should be mostly sought in the domain of ideology, or in a certain political climate. The Serbian culture politics in the past decades was not spared of turbulent political events.

From the 1990s in Serbia, the quest and struggle for “return” to the national roots and identity, signified, most importantly, the revival of Slavic and Orthodox spiritual ties, and the constant references to the Byzantine tradition and the Orthodox Spirituality (...) In the first decade of the 21st century, several orientations were changed based the ideology of ruling parties, especially by those who managed the departments of education and culture (Dragičević Šešić 2012: 106).

The TV series “Nemanjići” comes at a time of the expansion of populist ideas not only in our country, but worldwide as well. In populism, a specific attitude towards the building of collective memory is fostered: “Each populist will aim to unite *his own* people – the only authentic nation – and for that matter will confront those who, in his opinion, are not part of *true* America, *true* Turkey, etc.” (Miller 2017: 8).

The populist theorists unanimously agree on one thing: the populists are the enemy of the establishment (same, 10), furious at the elites and those who build their own happiness on the backs of, seemingly, miserable people. Additionally: the populists believe they are only true representatives of people. Essentially, the populists claim everyone else act against the people, making them the only real “chosen” ones who not only understand their own people, but also act in their best interest. Hence, the people are perceived as “righteous and morally pure” (Miller 2017: 15), and anyone who does not support them, the populists perceive as the enemy of the people (same), the dangerous “other”. Thus, the populist leader

actually is an instant dictator, although he hides behind the veil of democracy: “The populists suppress pluralism, critical thinking, limit media freedom, regard the institutions as their own service, and not as common good – there is no correction of the deficiencies of the political system, quite the opposite, their correction is suspended” (Lutovac 2017: 62).

For populists, the issue of national identity is the key emotional issue which is both directly and indirectly invoked by means of direct and indirect political communication. The main features of national identity, according to Anthony D. Smith, are: “1. Historic territory or homeland, 2. Common myths and historical memories, 3. a common mass, public culture, 4. Common legal rights and duties for all members of the nation, 5. Common economy, with the territorial mobility for members of the nation” (Smith 2010: 29-30). Surely, common myths, and especially a founding (*mythomoteur*), can be reworked, (re)elected and even recreated. As mentioned above, the myth is pre-narrative, cathartic (pre) history of past, which “recurs (...), repeats” (Assmann 2011: 258). The historical event on the other hand “can linearize the time” (same). Assmann points out two roles of turning to past in such a construction: the first, founding, it creates a sensible and necessary (hi)story from the past (Assmann 2011: 79), while the other, counterpoint, by calling on the past gives it “the character of heroic times” (80). Such narratives aim to replace “what is missing, what is vanished, lost, hidden” (Assmann 2011: 81). Hence, a *mythomoteur* is a power of (historical) narrative created by specific labeling or uploading of present content.

Naturally, a *mythomoteur* plays a major role at a time when it is required to call upon the heroic (pre)history of a nation. Displaying the unity and integrity of a nation and its heroic past is an essential tool of the populist discourse, therefore, a TV series such as “Nemanjići” has adequately complemented the general political, as well as cultural climate in Serbia. The TV series creates the myth of a unique nation, which, despite poverty and inconsequential economic and human potential (the courts are made from wood, armies are small), tribal system, pagan culture, adopts Christianity and creates their own state, which is able to rival great powers like

Byzantium. The religious and church element is quintessential in invoking the Nemanjić's past. In the series' premiere, the power of St. George, conjured by Nemanja's prayers, "frees" Nemanja from captivity. That is the moment when his closeness to God and spirituality starts to grow. The proto-Serbian state identifies with the church: the national *mythomoteur* is thus inextricably linked to faith. However, by simplifying characters' relations in the dramatic sense, undeveloped director's procedures, and bordering on a contemporary linguistic discourse, a strong connection is made to the present, time when the relationship with church is significantly weaker.

On the opposite specter of the strategy is the TV series "Vuk Karadžić" (1987-1988), also produced by RTS, directed by Đorđe Kadijević, screenplay by Milovan Vitezović. Vuk Karadžić was portrayed as a messiah, someone who will bring literacy and sober as well as rational thinking to a superstition-ridden nation. Consequently, the scriptwriter's focus was on the folk beliefs, in addition to detailed character development and their relationships, it is basis of historically accurate and authentic representation of events. Certainly, the TV series was made in 1987, at the time of redefinition of national identity, in the climate of general confusion and a sense of impending conflict in the Balkans. Here, as in the "Nemanjići", we have an implementation of a founding myth idea of one (or more) figures who had a huge impact on unifying the Serbian people, with one difference, the world of the TV series "Vuk Karadžić" is to a lesser extent "black and white"(with more accomplished performances, among other things, it is less populist orientated) than the one in "Nemanjići". Vuk faces numerous obstacles and there is no "easy way" for him to solve his problems: dramatic tension is more acute, adequately implemented; relationships between characters are realistic. The authors of the series wanted the authentic reconstruction of the age of Vuk Karadžić, in which Serbia of the Uprising is not idealized, and its dark sides are also shown¹. The mastery of Đorđe Kadijević, opens the door

1 This is how Vuk Karadžić wrote about the days of the Uprising, not withholding the claims that the rebels were robbers or that some leaders'

for sublimation of both historical and artistic content, it would not succumb to demands of political moment. The narrative of Kadjević's series is presented as a struggle of one man for national identity by reforming of common alphabet. The series shows that Vuk introduced Europe to results of the Serbian Revolution (the struggle against the Turks) and the beautiful Serbian folk poetry. Along with Dositej, he brought Europe closer to Serbia. In the series, the emphases is on Vuk's criticism of government supported by the rebel leaders.

However, an additional myth-driver for the Serbs is the battle against the Turks in Kosovo in 1389, in which the Serbian army suffered a loss, but the loss, in the myth that later emerged, was transformed into victory: Prince Lazar chose "heavenly", "eternal" kingdom, not the earthly, decrepit, "transient". Assmann (2011) notes that foundations of a *mythomoteur* do not necessarily have to be a victory or a positive example for the nation. Defeats can be myths-drivers as well. This is the case with the Serbian people, who used the loss in a battle, the symbol of the loss freedom and the start of slavery under the Turks, to adopt the ideals of courage, tenacity and unity. The idea was also used by Zdravko Šotra in a film marking six hundred year of anniversary of the Kosovo battle, the "Battle of Kosovo". By means of visual biblical references, emotional display of the martyrdom of the deaths of Serbian heroes, the Kosovo myth was revived in 1989, not coincidentally, in the wake of breakup of Yugoslavia and rapid creation of national states from the constituent republics. It should be noted that the screenplay for "Battle of Kosovo" was based on the drama written by the prominent poet Ljubomir Simović, who, although his poetics is not populist, still somewhat succumbed to "calling" of the political moment, as confirmed by the fact that he later wrote another version, "cleansed" of superficial, "political" elements. It might be said that the TV series "Vuk Karadzic" defines not only the national but also the cultural identity of a nation in step with the reformation of the

sole goal was to attain Turkish properties and houses. See in Popović, Miodrag (1970), *History of Serbian Literature: Romanticism*, Belgrade: Nolit.

alphabet and folk oral heritage; the film “Battle of Kosovo” focuses on the loss for the Serbs; “Nemanjići” as the central theme has the birth of the state (kingdom). The Kosovo battle ends the life of the royal (non-partisan) Serbia, and this is also the *mythomotheur* suggested by the TV series “Nemanjići”.

Melodrama of past

If the first dramatic step when working on a project- TV series- is the re-definition of a national, founding myth-driver – what follows is deciding on genre. The definition of the term is difficult: it is a specific feature that “the world of film [...] has inherited from classifying the works into classes, literary origin (comedy, tragedy, melodrama) or strictly cinematographic” (Stam 2000: 14). “Nemanjići” is a historical melodrama. The elements of historic spectacle are in fact mixture of elements of the Turkish series “Sulejman the Great” (“Muhtesem Yuzyil”, 2011-2014) and epic / historic fantasies such as the “Game of Thrones”, 2011-2019, David Benioff & DB Weiss). Overwhelming ambivalence in the script and directing make defining genres problematic. The TV series “Sulejman” is akin to a TV-drama when it comes to directing, being mostly filmed in interior. The focus is on melodramatic relations and to a lesser extent on battles, historical scenes. When it comes to genre, the “Game of Thrones” is epic spectacle and a melodrama. Following the thread of analysis, we note that in the TV series “Nemanjići” melodrama elements and historical spectacle were just touched. For example, throughout the entire season one of “Nemanjići” the specific melodramatic moment is the relationship between a young ruler Stefan the First-Crowned (Miloš Đurović / Vojin Ćetković) and a girl named Raška (Jovana Gavrilović / Nada Šargin). As far as the historical spectacle is concerned, the scenes were filmed predominately with narrow optics (teleobjectives) with only a handful of extras and they are, sadly, just a shot at spectacle.

Melodrama is a “sneaky” genre because it functions on multiple levels. At first glance it is “designed” to appeal strongly to

emotions, but in fact it is a net for “catching” viewers who initially get attached to the characters and their emotions, and eventually adopt ideological views, in this case the populist idea of repositioning the founding myth of the Serbian state.

The characters in a melodrama are the center of the identification process with the world of film, which evidently happens by viewing the characters as the spectator’s alter ego, the desired and never-accomplished form and world of film as parallel to us. Everyday life is depicted in pictures of extraordinary “madness” through the film as a series of madness, images that become harmless and absolutely free life extension. Unlike standing in front of a mirror, the spectator on the film screen will not see their own face, but will identify with the portrayed character who incorporates characteristics of their personality. In the portrayed character, the spectator and actor alternate, but in certain moments the spectator identifies as much with the idol, as the actor with the character, and the complex of doubles closes the circle. Real satisfaction has been replaced by imaginary, and the film works through a film discourse modified by the viewer’s disposition. (Daković 1994: 147).

This is how the above mentioned “capture net” melodrama works: true love must be forbidden or impossible. Stefan the First-Crowned and Raška are perfect match, however, they are not meant to be: the ruler is obliged to marry a woman respecting state interests. Raška’s tragedy is deepened by her little-known origin. She is a foundling, a foster sister to the brothers. Stefan’s inevitable rejection of Raška, symbolically, sends her back to her childhood, when her encounter with the court guards gave her a (new) identity. Her name, the unambiguous symbol of the nucleus of Serbian state, appears to drive the girl’s need (and search) for her identity: Raška has no personal identity, she can only have a national identity. Since Stefan’s and Raška’s relationship is not in the state interest, the girl must be “dismissed”. A powerful foreigner will take the place Raška desires, which is a common practice in marriages in the Middle Ages that have largely been forged from state interests (notably, King Milutin married the Greek Princess Simonida, who was at a time only five years old). Such a melodramatic setting could

easily turn into tragedy (Raška's character is susceptible to tragic life perception), but the intended message of the text would have been lost. The conflict would shift to (Raška's or Stefan's) moral dilemma (notably, in the case of Raška's death), which would inevitably become backbone of the story.

It could be said, that melodrama² is a fitting genre for spreading different propaganda (populist) ideas: by identifying with emotions, twists, and heroes, the spectators succumb to and absorb the often hidden, "sugarcoated", ideological or politically coloured messages of the film or TV series. In the subject of our analysis, as mentioned previously, this is the case of populist repositioning of the founding myth from Kosovo to medieval, Nemanjići's myth. But this does not sever the connection with Kosovo's myth: the story of a powerful Nemanjići's state, which will experience a defeat in Kosovo, reinforces the drama and tragedy of the Battle for Kosovo. Without a story about the mighty Nemanjići the myth about the Battle of Kosovo would not be complete.

2 The melodramatic elements appear in modern series with a similar historical context: "Medici: Masters of Florence" (2016, Nicholas Meyer & Frank Spotnitz), "The Tudors" (2007-2010, Michael Hirst) and even the "Game of Thrones". The additional part of the "Medici" narrative is about the relationship of Lorenzo and his mistress in Rome, by involving his wife a love triangle is made. "The Tudors" is equally concerned with the indulgent love life of the young English ruler as much as his rule. The series was criticized for being historically inaccurate. In the "Game of Thrones" thin lines are separating politics or governing and (perverse). The series, although based on an epic fantasy, is also a good example for the study of creation of fictitious national identity with medieval elements. Sex and violence are singled out as two crucial, indispensable elements, this time in the construction of a *historical* national identity, which is evidently a strategy for introducing the narrative to the viewers. "Nemanjići" in this regard, can be commended for not including these two elements, although this was not intentional, but lack of inspiration.

Visual medievalism

The creation of such a *mythomoteur* is propped by visual means. The pictorial compositions of the series, achieved with a scenography that implies the simple and modest court life in Serbia in time of Nemanjići and especially the frontal lightening of the hero, remind us of ecclesiastical frescoes from the time of Nemanjići. These frescoes, the most renowned exhibits of church wall painting from these regions, were primarily influenced by the Byzantine and the Western (or Romanesque) traditions³:

In the countries situated between the West and South Morava, on one side, to the sea between the rivers Neretva and Bojana, on the other, the power of the two churches, Orthodox and Catholic Church (...) was growing. At the meeting point of the two religions – that often had contradicting traditions, church service rituals and different church languages – the art in the Serbian state did not merely produce works belonging to separate subdivisions, but, usually, accomplishments that incorporated the beliefs of Byzantium and Western Europe (Đurić & Babić-Đorđević 1997: 50).

Untypically two-dimensional, “ideal”, invisible light source that equally illuminates all figures, Serbian wall frescoes served as a reference to visual identity of TV series “Nemanjići”. Referencing wall painting of the Serbian medieval scene, the series reinforces the connection to historical period it portrays respecting present needs. An example of a similar strategy can be seen in the Italian series “Medici” which finds visual references in the late Renaissance, particularly in Caravaggio’s paintings. The series depicts the turbulent events in Florence during the reign of Medici family. Italian filmmakers, especially photographers, such as Vittorio Storaro, often emphasize the importance and impact of renaissance and baroque paintings on the perception and especially portrayal

3 See Mandel, Massimiliano (2006), *La Serbia: tra Roma e Bisanzio*, u *La storia dell’arte: l’arte bizantina e russa (volume 8)*, Zuffi, Stefano (ed.), Milano: Mondadori Electa, pp. 761-729.

(in films) of the period. The Renaissance and the Baroque brought novel treatment of light to the forefront, while Caravaggio is famous for his use of *chiaroscuro*, i.e. lightening that has a clear, concrete source and reaches the lateral side of the painting, or comes from the depths:

If we set aside symbolism and religious significance, the main hero of the picture is the light. The light defines and accentuates the figures; they are removed from monotone shadow of space and formed in all their details. (...) The light is simultaneously realistic and ideal (Cricco, Giorgio & Paolo di Teodoro 2004: 550).

The TV series “Medici” was filmed so that the light usually comes laterally or from the depths, through the window, if it is an interior setting. Thus, on one side, the reality (i.e. the stability) of the figure is drawn up, and on the other, the “ideal” light reflects the future “ideal” state. The battle scenes are picturesque, three-dimensional, resembling epic fantasy, which is in line with the struggle for an ideal or epic state. A similar tendency could be felt in “Nemanjići”, but it fails (lack of extras, directing that is lacking, mise-en-scene, and so on). Both series, therefore, heavily rely on painting: “Nemanjići” on Serbian medieval wall painting, and “Medici” on Renaissance, Italian paintings and frescoes. In both series, the specific composition of frescoes and paintings is also noticeable in framing. In “Nemanjići” two-dimensional, front-lighted images dominate, and in “Medici” a three-dimensional deep-lighted composition.

Thus, the “reading of light” in both series, compared to corresponding painting traditions, can be used for the purpose of “reading ideology”, or deeper message – modesty and realism in “Nemanjići”, and luxury and idealism⁴ in “Medici”. In the later, on the whole, the path of the family’s rise to power is described as a common good used to create image of Italian national identity. Italy has a long and big tradition in making television shows (RAI), so

4 This is also the difference between the Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism.

the series is another example of a purposefully successful narrative about the most famous part of the Late Middleage-Renaissance of Italian history. *The Mythomoteur* of a subsequently united Italian state (1861) was created as a struggle of the righteous for the just government and at the same time as an action field for rational, talented people who saw the future of the country in political, aesthetic and ethical terms. Both rulers (Cosimo Medici, played by Dustin Hoffman and the Great Prefect Stefan Nemanja, played by Mladen Nelević) built their edifices: Nemanja his church and Cosimo the Cathedral Santa Maria del Fiore, whose construction symbolically equals Brunelleschi's impressive dome. It is unnecessary to explain the differences in the scale and technical and artistic resources of the Renaissance-Italian and Medieval-Serbian architecture. Nevertheless, portraying the nucleus of the Serbian state through the (visually) modest life of the pre-nation (Medievalism is a myth-driver, for the TV Series, and therefore the pre-narrative) in every sense it is the author's choice *par excellence*.

The "Medici" introduces the narrative to the audience using familiar directing and dramatic techniques (precise framing, classical, well-executed narration), but it does not resort to violence, sexual content or other blatant seductive means to lure the audience. It results in a warm family TV series that draws a parallel between private relationships of a distinguished, prominent and powerful family and the tiny state (Florence), i.e. the future state (Italy), visually assisted by late-Renaissance and Baroque paintings by Tintoretto or Caravaggio. The "Nemanjići", on the other hand, (re)position a *mythomoteur* in the Serbian medieval state, whose modesty is deemed a uniqueness. The idea of visual modesty was inspired by Serbian wall painting, church frescoes, close to the Byzantine and Western Romanesque paintings.

The Serbian state may have risen from poverty, but the monasteries and wall paintings it produced are precious, an invaluable gift for the world's cultural heritage. If the "Nemanjići" failed, using their film actions, to make the spectators see the greatness and importance of Serbian culture, as well as the figures of medieval history, then what they tried to do, literally, filming famous Serbian frescoes within certain frames. The mis-en-scene portrayal of the

character of St. Sava in front of his own fresco can be seen as a blunder, but also as a postmodernist “stunt” that tries to note (or quote) not only the historical and spiritual importance of St. Sava but also the artistic value of the saint’s fresco.

Summary

Founding myths usually find a fertile soil to flourish in a politically volatile, unstable regions like ours. Kuljić writes, “If there is no corresponding past, it can always be invented” (2006: 190). In cultural climate of Yugoslavia and Serbia, there are many examples of (mis)use of past, i.e. its application if needed. Kuljić goes on to note that the Balkans’ past, in particular, during the 20th century was reconstructed with the aim of “separation of related nations so it would be presented to the the world in exclusively missionary light” (2006: 191). The purpose of this kind of use of past is to separate one’s own peoples from others, to create an image, to paint their own country as the chosen one. Bearing in mind that one of the populist methods is to leave the impression of “the only power in a particular country” (Mikucka-Wojtowicz 2017: 110), the only one who has the right to represent the people (same), populists need the the memory control politics: “Politics establishes a link between the past and the present. This meaningful construction is a coherent story of past and present, which seeks to explain how the present is past’s extension”(Kuljić 2006: 202).

Re-establishing relationship with past creates a new narrative, that is, a new and specifically “television” memory. For Gutierrez Lozano television is an “emotional concept, linked to a mixture of personal experience and fragments of historical recollection” (2013: 136). Lozano, like Kuljić, insists that “memory” filmed (or shown on TV) is not past, it only refers to past. In the midst of an emotional reaction of viewers to the reconstruction of past, used by “the producers to attract attention” (Lozano 2013: 138), viewers create memory of the remembrance, i.e, television memory of history representation. Hence, the iconic images are removed not only

from history but also from collective memory, and thus become exclusively singular images. The Lozano's theory shows the dangers of diverse past semiotics. Aiming to create a market-based product that will maximize the use of the consumer, creators sometimes do not consider memory of remembering, i. e, remembering the TV series.

Kuljić criticizes the need of small nations to deal exclusively with victories, even if they are only moral victories, as well as their inability to objectively observe their own "size" or realistically find their place in history: "Converting a long vassal subservient past into an unbroken monumental past is a typical source and mirrors the distorted mindset of small nations" (Kuljić 2006: 198). Founding myths are important for establishment of unique collective identity, however, each of the narratives analyzed in this paper can be seen from the perspective of the present's need for past: "When necessary, certain historical periods are skipped, so today, Serbia returns to founding medieval practice, the 19th century tradition of building foundations is completely suppressed" (Dragičević Šešić 2012: 111).

The TV Series "Nemanjići" certainly fulfills the didactic function of memory, substituting the basic, textbook knowledge of the period of Serbian history. The series follows a particular melodramatic formula of many popular series and, by using one of the important myths of the Serbian people, (re) formulates a history outlook corresponding the populist discourse of the ruling ideology. The public opinion was shocked after an episode of "Nemanjići" in which the Belgrade street jargon was repeatedly heard. The poorly developed melodrama, a historic spectacle that just started, was spiced with at times unconvincing directing and dramatist techniques, halted the positive, cathartic television memory of the Serbian audience, an auditorium that, in a historical sense, appeared hungry for the TV narratives. Those who wrote about populism clearly and unambiguously note problems it causes, and unanimously claim: that it is a *digest* politics, an ideology (if we can talk about populism as a complete ideology) that it will quickly and easily bring quick, but not necessarily good solutions. Within such a discussion, it is no surprise that similar *digest* techniques are

found in art, or, in this case, TV series with numerous omissions, addressed to a wide population. With the words of Kuljić: “The instrumentalization of past is unthinkable without creation, the different accentuation, the selective choice of the drama pattern and the mandatory emotionalization of the selected past” (2006: 192). Through the use of cultural images of Serbian medievalism, the populist discourse reveals the idea of a unique, powerful nation with long, heroic and mythic past.

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VCS (Vocal Curatorial Syndrome): ~~TELL ME LIES, TELL ME SWEET LITTLE uncensored LIES~~, performance in three acts / mystery / dialog practice / cross-examination, conference *Media, Democracy, Populism*, 10 November 2017, Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade, photo: Šejma Fere

In the focus of the latest performance of the VCS were the mechanisms of fabrication of lies within the Serbian media space. The demolition in Savamala, the event that never revealed who were the initiators of the destruction of buildings in Hercegovačka street that cleaned the area for the new investment urban project Belgrade Waterfront inspired VCS for the performance exhibition *Uncensored Lies* had included articles written by fictitious authors published in the *Politika*, well-respected Serbian daily newspaper; these were the very best examples of media manipulation and instrumentalization. VCS has noticed that the current political nomenclature establishes a specific practice of programming of oblivion, aiming to completely blur the demarcation line between what is true and what is not. Therefore, they decided to simulate a dialogue in which they were participating both as examiners and examinees, in order to deconstruct this already normalized principle of deception. Above all, they wanted to call attention to the total absurdity of the media reality in which the society collectively participates every day.

List of artistic contributions

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SITUATING POPULIST POLITICS: ARTS & MEDIA NEXUS

Edited by

Milena Dragičević Šešić & Mirjana Nikolić

Series

CULTURE * ARTS * MEDIA

Book no. 31

Publishers

Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television

Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade

Clio publishing house, Belgrade

For Publishers

prof. Miloš Pavlović, Dean

Zoran Hamović, Director

Series editor

Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović

Preprint

Dejan Tasić

ISBN 978-86-82101-73-4

Print

No-kači

Belgrade

CIP - Каталогизација у публикацији
Народна библиотека Србије, Београд

7.038.54(497.11)(082)
323(497.11)"19/20"(082)
316.48:73/76(497.11)"19/20"(082)

SITUATING populist politics : arts & media nexus / edited by Milena Dragičević Šešić and Mirjana Nikolić. - Belgrade : Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television, Faculty of Dramatic Arts : Clio, 2019 (Belgrade : No-kači). - 297 str. : ilustr. ; 24 cm. - (Series Culture, Arts, Media ; book no. 31)

"This publication is partly result of the research on the project no. 178012 Identity and memory: trans-cultural texts of dramatic arts and media of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts that is funded by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia, and research within the COST Action IS1308 Populist Political Communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics." --> str. 2. - Tiraž 300. - Str. 11-12: Acknowledgment / Milena Dragičević Šešić and Mirjana Nikolić. - Contributors: str. 13-18. - Artistic contributors: str. 19-28. - Napomene i bibliografske reference uz radove. - Bibliografija uz svaki rad.

ISBN 978-86-82101-73-4

1. Dragičević Šešić, Milena, 1954- [уредник] [аутор додатног текста] 2. Nikolić, Mirjana, 1966- [уредник] [аутор додатног текста]
а) Концептуална уметност - Србија - Зборници б) Србија - Политичке прилике - 20в-21в - Зборници
COBISS.SR-ID 274712332