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THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE – PRAGMATIC ALLIANCE-BUILDING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA[1]

ABSTRACT

Protests among citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are becoming more frequent. Most often, their aim is to decry the dysfunctionality and opacity of the government, which are the result of the ethno-political structure created by the Dayton Agreement, but also a trend towards democratic regression and autocracy. A number of authors have tackled the "JMBG" protests of 2013 and the Plenums that emerged from the February 2014 protests, from their particular disciplines. The focus of this paper is the social movement "Justice for Dženan," organized by the Memić family upon the tragic death of Dženan Memić in Sarajevo in February 2016. An in-depth study was conducted with key actors of the movement, as well as those who follow or in some way support the protests. Particular emphasis in the research was paid to the pragmatic symbiosis of the social movement and one political party. We argue that it is possible to identify a pragmatic symbiosis as a novel form (democratic innovation) of socio-political cooperation that can impede rising autocratization. Through the quest for accountability, social movements are introducing new strategic practices of mobilization and a novel type of alliance-building with external factors (new political parties as well as other social movements). The goal of the paper is to explore how the social movement "Justice for Dženan" interacts with political parties and approach the political sphere in BiH. Also, the idea is to examine the possibilities and functionality of this kind of cooperation with the framework of contentious politics.

KEYWORDS

accountability, autocratization, democratic backsliding, democratic innovation, illiberal politics, justice, "Justice for Dženan" Movement, social movements, pragmatic symbiosis

1 The paper is based on research conducted within the framework of the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Network: Active Citizenship: Promoting and Advancing Innovative Democratic Practices in the Western Balkans.

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Introduction

In early 2014, unrest erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), in which citizens set fire to government buildings in several cities. In addition to the violence, the protesters also established bottom-up deliberative forums to voice their concerns about corruption and other socio-economic issues. However, only a few months in, the movement, articulated through these so-called deliberative plenums (Murtagh 2016; Milan 2017) seemed to fizzle out, as the popular energy that drove the activism turned into dispiritedness. Was the broadly advocated systemic change too far out of reach, or were the popular means to achieve it in post-conflict BiH too limited? Or else, were the plenums and other protests in the early 2010s only a precursor to a new form of relationship between citizens and politics? According to Kurtović and Hromadžić (2017), these protests signaled the "emergence of a new kind of prefigurative politics", which we believe to have since continued.[2] They are a new form of expression through movements for justice and accountability. We argue that it is possible to identify a pragmatic symbiosis of emerging social movements with new political parties, as a novel form (innovation) of socio-political cooperation. Through their quest for accountability, social movements are introducing new strategic practices of mobilization and a novel type of alliance-building with external factors (with new political parties or other social movements), while relying on contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow 2010). To illustrate our argument, this article looks at the "Justice for Dženan" Movement in Sarajevo, which has gained a broad following and become one of the two most prominent movements in BiH.

The emergence of both new political and social movements is a reaction to a combination of democratic backsliding and state capture by ruling elites. In most southeastern European countries, elected parties and leaders make use of their political power to shape state institutions and create an electoral advantage for themselves (Bieber 2020; Kapidžić, Stojarova 2022). At the same time, they enact social and economic policies that benefit them and their allies, leading to state capture. A synergy between emerging political and social movements is needed to overcome systemic disadvantages in competitive authoritarian regimes perpetuated by illiberal politics (Pudar Draško et al. 2020).

To test our argument, among several movements for justice and accountability in southeastern Europe, we have identified the "Justice for Dženan" Movement in BiH as representative. It is one of the few movements that has gathered extensive popular support and was able to sustain a high popular turnout over a long period of time. The movement has also not faced violent oppression, which has allowed it to express its goals and motivations openly and repeatedly. Finally, political parties have engaged in dialogue with the movement. Of particular interest is pragmatic (and personnel) symbiosis of movement and party that has contributed to producing tangible policy outcomes. Our argument is that pragmatic symbiosis between social movements

2 See also Milan, Chiara 2017.

and political parties has produced new forms of socio-political cooperation that can impede rising autocratization. To probe this reasoning, we rely on process-tracing and semi-structured interviews with key figures, as well as supporters of the "Justice for Dženan Movement", which we conducted from November 2021 until January 2022.

The paper is structured in the following way. The second section provides a theoretical overview of the role of social movements and political parties with the framework of contentious politics. The third section describes methods used in the research. The fourth section provides background and a procedural analysis of the "Justice for Dženan" Movement. The fifth section reflects on forms of political interaction, innovation and pragmatic symbiosis between the movement and political party. The sixth section is the conclusion.

Theoretical Background

The political and institutional landscape in BiH can best be described as complex, and accountability is both unintentionally and deliberately lost in this complexity. Established through the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995, the political system of the country balances territorial and ethnic representation in a way that emphasizes the relevance of subnational units. The central level of government functions along principles of power-sharing among political parties representing the three main ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Croats, Serbs), but has only weak competencies (Bose 2002). This emphasizes accountability towards one's own group, and not towards national institutions. BiH is divided into two subnational entities, the Serb dominated Republic of Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), a mixed Croat and Bosniak entity where Bosniaks are the majority, plus the District of Brčko, which functions as an independent unit at the national level. Further, the FBiH is divided into 10 cantons. These subnational units, largely dominated by a single ethnic group, are the main arenas for political contest (Kapidžić 2020b). The Sarajevo Cantonal Assembly is a central legislative institution in the Canton of Sarajevo. Therefore, it is crucial for our research regarding the "Justice for Dženan" Movement case.

Elections are held regularly, and contest is usually between different parties representing the same ethnic group. Cross-ethnic voting is almost nonexistent and therefore political parties cater to votes coming from the ethnic group they represent. Electoral turnover does occur from time to time, but is infrequent and electoral integrity is plagued by deficiencies in civil rights and rule of law.[3] All these structural factors combine to make BiH a case of a weak

3 Conceptually, BiH is a clear case of autocratization where democracy is undermined but the electoral process is kept intact (Lührmann et al. 2018: 896). It is currently undergoing democratic backsliding whereby gradual non-democratic policy changes "are legitimated through the very institutions that democracy promoters have prioritized", although still do not amount to regime change (Bermeo 2016: 6). These policies are best

and unconsolidated consociational democracy, with strong asymmetric federalism and subnational competitive authoritarianism. Popular protests and social movements that call for justice and accountability largely target politics at these subnational levels. Marked by ethnic homogeneity and clear institutional responsibility, it makes for an easier target than national, complex multi-ethnic power-sharing institutions. In a way, social movements aim to change the unaccountable politics of the post-communist transition and the parties that perpetuate them. Their aim is to change political rule, but not the political system itself. It is under such circumstances that we advance our argument of a pragmatic symbiosis between movements and parties that is kept alive through a contentious political approach. In our article, pragmatic symbiosis means two separate groups with the same goals, but also with tension, unlike the concept of synergy, where we see ideological overlaps between two groups.

Interest in social movements, and especially in their connection to political parties and elections, has gained renewed attention. This is true both from a theoretical perspective, largely with a focus on Western democracies (Kriesi et al. 2012; Della Porta 2015), as well as research that looks more specifically at southeastern Europe (Fagan, Sircar 2017; Bieber, Brentin 2018; Pudar Draško et al. 2020). In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, the subsequent European debt crisis, the 2015 European migrant crisis, and more recently the COVID crisis, popular protests and sustained social movements have had an outsized role in shaping political contestation (Zarić, Mladenović 2021; Hasanović, Adilović 2021). They have been transformative for both left- and right-wing politics, across the communitarian–cosmopolitan divide. Several agendas have been formulated based on research in Western democracies, that is, in systems of free and fair political contestation. According to Hutter et al. (2019),

described as illiberal politics, which are "policies that are enacted (or proposed) by political parties in government with the aim to remain in power indefinitely while maintaining competitive elections" (Kapidžić 2020a). While in power, political parties and their leaders engage in various forms of state capture that serve to perpetuate clientelist governance and patronage (Keil 2018; Günay, Džihić 2016). These forms of illiberal politics, however, have their roots in socialist governance practices aimed at preserving one party rule. According to Zakošek (1997) and Dolenec (2013), we can identify three processes of post-communist power mutation that have preserved unaccountable governance despite the democratic transition. A concentration of power in the executive served to avoid accountability, a conversion of political into economic power strengthened clientelist relations, and power dispersion into informal, party-controlled networks instrumentalized and weakened state capacity. Most BiH political parties of all ethnicities have used executive party dominance, clientelist linkages, and institutionalized informality to avoid accountability while remaining in power. In recent years, autocratization has incrementally increased, as political leaders have eroded accountability and checks and balances to their rule. This is most noticeable in subnational units where a single ethnic party enjoys a parliamentary majority and uses their position to avoid political accountability. However, consociational power-sharing at higher levels in BiH also has the effect of containing autocratization within ethnic and territorial boundaries, as it introduces institutionalized, multilevel, and ethnic checks and balances that constrain such illiberal politics (Kapidžić 2020b).

these include the "contentious politics approach" (McAdam, Tarrow 2010) in addition to a focus on "movement parties", where the focus is on movements contesting elections (Kitschelt 2006; Della Porta et al. 2017), and "social movement partyism", where parties try to emulate movement tactics (Almeida 2010).

While there has been a blurring of boundaries between political parties and social movements, the two are still very different. Parties are organizations that aggregate popular interests and institutionally represent them through (competitive) elections with the aim to govern a polity. Movements can be described as a network of many individuals and groups built around regular interactions based on shared goals, values, or identity (Diani, 1992). Social movements can, and sometimes do, become political parties, while parties can also act like, and become, social movements. The distinction between social movements and political parties is clearly fuzzy, as is highlighted by Kitschelt who points out the role of political entrepreneurs and activists that emanate from social movements. The movement parties they create "try to apply the organizational and strategic practices of social movements in the arena of party competition" (2006: 280). Stronger uncertainty within a political system, such as increased autocratization, blurs the boundary between the two but it is still possible and desirable to keep them analytically separate.

Analytical distinction is also necessary to explore interactions between social movements and electoral politics. McAdam and Tarrow (2010) identify the relation of social movements and electoral campaigns in particular through linkage mechanisms. Most of the linkage mechanisms they identify can be applied to countries where there is a deficit of representativeness in the party system, despite a free and fair electoral contest. In these cases, movements capitalize on citizens' desire for change and are able to influence the electoral arena. We argue that under conditions of autocratization, as in BiH, movements and parties in opposition (Lai 2019) need to go beyond basic electoral linkages. As the electoral contest becomes heavily skewed towards ruling parties, there is a need to establish an organizational symbiosis built on pragmatic linkages that combine mobilization and policy agendas. This form of alliance building that is at the core of the interaction relies on strategic considerations of political parties (Hutter et al. 2019), largely those in opposition. Previous research on social movements in southeastern Europe has highlighted instances where alliances between movements, parties, and other societal actors were necessary to bring about profound political change in autocratic systems. In North Macedonia "a variety of movements at one period of time, synergistically streamed into a single movement against Gruevski's regime", ultimately defeating the authoritarian leader (Pudar Draško et al. 2020: 214). At the same time, movements and actors need to remain independent from each other in order to mobilize different support groups. This is achieved through a contentious politics approach. Therefore, we cannot speak of a clear alliance or merger but rather a complex and dynamic symbiosis that evolves in light of ongoing autocratization, and is based on pragmatic linkages.

Previous protests and attempts of deliberation, whether outside the institutional structures (as in 2013) or in parallel with them (2014, Kurtović 2018; Mujkić 2016; Jansen 2018), failed to result in any notable, short-term social change. While they did manage to reintroduce socioeconomic frames into popular mobilization (Milan 2017), previous protests also highlighted that the sole energy of collective hope was not mobilizing enough across a broad spectrum of the population. Achieving the presupposed and desired neutrality as a precondition for deliberation is always marked by the social and political playground. The social movement demands are being addressed to mono-ethnically-based political institutions, meaning that, in addressing government institutions across all levels, the social movements largely reflect their own (the dominant) ethnic group (Milan 2021). More inclusive social demands, at the same time, are being vulnerable to extreme responses of the ethno-territorial regimes, labeling them as alien. Perceiving the spread of unrest as a threat, the protests are being criminalized, along with the citizens who either participate or even just support them.

The "Justice for Dženan" Movement addresses the whole system of state institutions to call to account for omissions and the cover-up by the prosecution, the judiciary, the police, and the health system. In other words, on all those state instruments that should be in the service of the people. The gap between being represented and (the feeling of) being excluded rests on a personal, subjective sense of injustice, transformed into political demand for accountability. On the other hand, pointing out the background of the attempts to achieve accountability opens a space where democratic institutions play an essential role. They not only serve to revive theoretical concepts, but to enrich current institutional capacities, allowing actors to see themselves as belonging to a single political association within which existing power structures and institutions should be transformed. Democratic innovation in the pragmatic symbiosis of movements with institutions, finally, provides the space for political change to be performed within the democratic process.[4]

Methods

Our research was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews to find more about the activities and goals of the "Justice for Dženan" Movement. This provided us a range of possible responses on the changes this movement has already brought. Finally, the data collected in this way allowed us the necessary insights into the synergy between the Movement and People and Justice Party (NiP) questioning whether it produced new forms of socio-political cooperation that can impede rising autocratization. The semi-structured in-depth interviews focused both on those actually within the Movement and supporters who are not a part of it. Interviews with eleven individuals were

4 See Fiket, Irena; Đorđević, Biljana (2022), "Promises and Challenges of Deliberative and Participatory Innovations in Hybrid Regimes: The Case of Two Citizens' Assemblies in Serbia", *Philosophy and Society* 33 (1): 3–25.

conducted during the autumn and winter of 2021-22, in person or via email. Questions about their involvement, their views on the goals of the Movement, and its way of functioning, helped us to identify the level of the pragmatic symbiosis of emerging social movements with new political parties, as a novel form of socio-political cooperation. We selected supporters based on our primary contacts and snowball sampling. The first group consisted of five active Movement participants, either closely connected to Dženan Memić himself or were the logistical part of the Movement in particular. Next to his sister Arijana, interviews encompassed some of the closest family members of Dženan Memić, including his father Muriz, together with their lawyer Ifet Feraget. Immediate members of the Memić family also forwarded us contacts from other, direct participants in the Movement.

The second group were Movement *supporters*: six supporters in the broadest sense, who physically attended the protests, as well as engaged virtually and through (social) media. Due to the sensitive topic and safety and privacy concerns, we informed all interviewees about the research, sought their consent, and offered complete anonymity to those who had not revealed their identity to that point. Key interviews that gave us detailed insights were the ones we conducted with members of the Memić family, father Muriz, sister Arijana, and a family lawyer, Ifet Feraget. We also got a helpful perspective from a PR and social media manager, diaspora organization representative, and a journalist who followed the story from day one. The journalist attended all the hearings, protests, press conferences, and wrote hundreds of articles on the case of Dženan Memić. Other participants of the research who contributed through written interviews were people from academic and public life, young people/students who provided support, actively followed the case, or participated in protests.

As researchers, we were familiar with the case before writing this paper. In advance of compiling the interview questionnaires, we reviewed most of the crucial interviews and statements by the Movement's initiators given to the media, followed their Facebook page, and listened to the views of some outside protesters in available videos. The information we gathered in the preparation process helped us formulate better and more concrete questions. Also, this secondary research allowed for filtering out aspects of the Movement issues not covered in this paper. We divided the questions of research interviews into two groups; general and partially specific. This division depended on the respondents' role, occupation, and position.

The "Justice for Dženan" Movement – Timeline of the Protests

Dženan Memić passed away in Sarajevo in February 2016, a few days after sustaining injuries in an alleged traffic accident when out walking with his girlfriend. Due to the complex circumstances of the alleged accident, the family of the young man suspected intentional and violent action. The family expressed doubts about the thoroughness of the police investigation. Soon, Dženan's father

and sister presented specific facts to the public that indicated the accident might have been murder. Thanks to Dženan's father, Muriz, the Sarajevo Canton Prosecutor's Office got involved, seeking to find the truth about what happened to Dženan. Shortly afterwards, a citizen group was formed via social networks (Facebook), "Justice for Dženan", supporting the demand for investigation. Thanks to the activities of the group, the painful and lengthy trial with numerous changes of prosecutors received a good deal of media attention, especially in Sarajevo and in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The process justifiably stoked public suspicion of the transparency of the prosecution's work.

Parallel to the trial, the group "Justice for Dženan" organized protests in front of government institutions. However, time passed, and the family did not receive adequate and precise answers. The demonstrations became more frequent and massive, and many Sarajevo residents joined the demands for official accountability. Protests gradually revealed the connection between politics and the judiciary. Previously, there had been many rumors and claims about corruption and non-transparency, public scandals, and acquittals. However, the Memić case was the first to show the complexity and deep intertwinement of numerous individuals with political, juridical, and economic power. It showed that system in BiH had attributes of a captured state. The findings that Ljubo and Bekrija Seferović caused a collision that killed Dženan and then fled the scene, were quashed twice at the cantonal level. The Supreme Court of the Federation of BiH also rejected the guilty verdict. Nevertheless, the family persisted in its struggle.

In 2018, Dženan's sister became a member of the Sarajevo Canton Assembly. She accepted the offer to run as a non-party member candidate on the list of the center right political party, Narod i Pravda (People and Justice). Since then, Arijana Memić has been continuously addressing this legislative body with this issue. It was this articulation of civic activism in a parliamentary setting that contributed to a turn in the case. Still, to this date, the issue has not been resolved. The tremendous pressure of citizens, other MPs from the Cantonal Assembly, and the broader political support of the left parties persists. Some progress has been made, though. The international community, as well as regional and international media reacted and reported on this case. In 2021, the State Prosecutor's Office of BiH opened an investigation into the case at the highest level. It led to arrests and a completely new trial ("investigation of the investigation") of the Dženan's girlfriend, her father, and the police officers who conducted the preliminary inquiry. The suspicion is that they organized a criminal group that obstructed the investigation and planted evidence.

The first interaction of civic activism that crossed BiH entity borders – the cooperation between "Justice for Dženan" and "Justice for David" – provoked the authorities' reactions. As a result, we witnessed a response, especially in the Republic of Srpska, where protests were banned and the square where they took place literally "cleaned" (Milan, 2021). Also, the reaction in the media under the influence of the ruling parties aimed to smear the issue by spreading false information about the families, organizers, and participants in the protests.

Main Findings

a. The goals of the Movement

The "Justice for Dženan" Movement started as an independent, family initiative, primarily through Facebook, and gained mass support in Sarajevo and BiH. The goals of the Movement have not changed all these years: to identify and prosecute those responsible for the death of Dženan Memić. The journalist who followed the process from the beginning says: "These are always identical messages, and what is good about the Memić family, they have demanded truth and justice from day one, dismissal of those responsible, prosecution of those responsible, which is why the media respected them".[5] Self-organization, independence, continuity, and patience seem to be crucial elements of the Movement. All the interviews, both in-depth and written, gave us the same answer about the goals of the Movement. Dženan's sister, Arijana Memić answers that question in the same way as their intended addressee: "The goal is to find out the truth about Dženan's death; who killed him, how it all happened, and in addition, to punish the culprits and to never happen again. Through our struggle we have seen what kind of system we live in. Those who are supposed to protect us have done everything to protect the killers".[6] The family lawyer, Ifet Feraget stated that in directly addressing state institutions, they are also indirectly addressing its citizens, without whom that state would not exist. The goals, requirements, and addresses (state institutions, ruling political parties, and elites) have not changed in the past six years.

The process itself changed course from an investigation about the incident and determining those responsible, to an "investigation of the investigation". Verdicts were rendered and rejected until the case was moved from the local (cantonal) level through the federal to the highest state level, where it remains today. From the participants' answers in the questionnaire, we learned to what extent they consider the judiciary's work problematic. Individuals from the ruling political parties, people close to political elites, the police, even healthcare employees appear to have been involved in this mosaic of concealment of evidence and obstruction of investigation. Difficulties in proving what happened, non-transparency, numerous procedural obstacles, and mistakes favor established corruption and nepotism in all spheres of government and institutions in BiH. "We addressed primarily the people from the judiciary who are responsible; chief prosecutors, the prosecutor's offices, inspectors in the Ministry of the Interior, all embassies based in Sarajevo, OHR, OSCE. So, we knocked on all the doors and asked for help. Many doors were closed to us, but we never gave up".[7] It speaks to popular perceptions of Bosnia being a captured state; it serves as a confirmation of at waning legitimacy of the state in the eyes of many ordinary citizens.

5 Personal interview with journalist, Sarajevo, 29 November 2021.
6 Personal interview with Arijana Memić, Sarajevo, 15 November 2021.
7 Personal interview with Muriz Memić, Sarajevo, 15 November 2021.

Key respondents call this phenomenon a "weird system"; thus, Arijana Memić says: "We see that the case of Dženan Memić is not the only case like this. Many have contacted us with the same or a similar problem. They did not have the strength or ability to fight against these people. They may not have received as much support from the people as we have. That gave us the strength to go further, to fight and seek the truth ... Maybe no one would have dared to kill if we had an organized system as we should have".[8] The lawyer for the Memić family also confirms the non-functioning and lack of responsibility of state institutions. "So here the system is covering up. The entire system is responsible, except perhaps the Prosecutor's Office of BiH and the Court of BiH, because they only recently accepted jurisdiction of the case. The guilt lies with the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office and the Federal Prosecutor's Office ...".[9] Behind the Movement's clearly defined goals and demands lies a general question of accountability, missing from the clientelist system of political elites and their officials.

b. The Movement and the public

We should emphasize that the peaceful mass protests led by the Memić family did not remain within one ethnic group. A similar case to Dženan's happened in March 2018 in the city of Banja Luka in the Republic of Srpska. The disappearance of young David Dragičević also resulted in the family organizing a movement. The two movements, "Justice for Dženan" and "Justice for David"[10], were united under the slogan *Truth and Justice for All Our Children* and opened the possibility of reintegration in Bosnian society. Interestingly, neither movement expressed the demand or vision of changing a complex socio-political system. Instead, they indicated gaps in the system as it is that need to be addressed and corrected. The solidarity with the "Justice for David" Movement raised the struggle of the citizens to a higher level. In a written answer, one of the respondents states: "The most important thing is that the Movement is not local and shows that the problem is not local; rather, it is an epidemic that is equally widespread across the triumvirate, i.e., the triple regime in this country".[11]

8 Personal interview with Arijana Memić, Sarajevo, 15 November 2021.
9 Personal interview with Ifet Feraget, Sarajevo, 24 November 2021.
10 "In 2018, the movement "Justice for David" hit the international headlines. In March of the same year, David Dragičević, a 21-year-old graduate student of Banja Luka, had been found dead under suspicious circumstances. The alleged cover-up of David's death by the local police triggered long-running protests and a campaign demanding truth and justice for the young student. The 2018 protests started in Banja Luka, the capital of Republika Srpska, and from there they spread to the Federation of BiH (FBiH). Until then, the opposite had occurred: protests that were sparked in Sarajevo or Tuzla (therefore, in FBiH) had received support from some citizens of the Republika Srpska, usually by means of small-scale solidarity rallies". (Milan 2021: 6). On the trajectory of a similar movement, "Justice for David", see Milan 2021: 1–14.
11 Written interview via e-mail, Sarajevo, 7 December 2021.

The Memić family has constantly communicated with the public and international organizations. They held meetings with representatives of European Union institutions, the OHR, and embassies informed about the case and the problems the family encountered. As a result, the Movement gained international attention. Perhaps the most significant is the so-called "Priebe's report" from December 2019 (Expert Report 2019), in which a famous German legal expert analyzed the complex and unfavorable situation in the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina, giving an example of the unresolved Memić case. Furthermore, the respondent who manages communication pointed out that there are few countries in Europe in which the Memić case was not reported. The case is mainly monitored, however, in the local media, especially those from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sarajevo Canton. Regarding them, the manager of the Movement Facebook page told us: "We had noticed that the media have been broadcasting our communication from the site for years, which on the one hand helped us, especially when it came to organizing protests, writing petitions, emails, etc.... On the other hand, I tried and wanted in conversations with media representatives and messages through the site to encourage them to explore this direction, not just to convey what we are writing".[12]

The determination and continuity in demands of the "Justice for Dženan" Movement have gained significant public support. People of all ages, public figures, even politicians (mostly from opposition parties) have participated in the protests. Twenty protests have been held in six years. They became increasingly massive over time.[13] It is important to emphasize that they were all peaceful and without violence. Considering that only a single family was financially and logistically behind the organization, there was a risk of misinterpretation and speculation about shadow money being involved. But we learned about the organization conducted by the family and a small circle of supporters from respondents who helped communicate with the public through social networks, provided logistical support, printing posters, banners, T-shirts, etc. "In six years, we paid for advertising three times: when we organized protests to make the event more visible on social media."[14] Thanks to compatriots from the diaspora, donations, volunteers, the last protests held in Sarajevo in September 2021 gathered participants from other parts of BiH.

12 Online interview with the manager of the Facebook page, Zoom platform, 19 November 2021.

13 Muriz Memić told us that he could not talk about precise numbers of citizens at the protests. As for the last, the most massive ones, which were held in September 2021, he explains: "The Ministry of the Interior came out with a statement that there were 3,500 people, but the commissioner later admitted that he was wrong. It suits them when the number is significantly reduced because there is not much support. It is now possible that there were over 10,000, the streets around the plateau were full, and the march was very long" (Personal interview with Muriz Memić, Sarajevo 15 November 2021).

14 Online interview with the manager of the Facebook page, Zoom platform, 19 November 2021.

c. The pragmatic symbiosis

In the fall of 2018, Arijana Memić received an offer to run for Sarajevo Canton Assembly on the People and Justice Party list, as an independent candidate. We should note that this relatively new center-right party consists mainly of former members of one of the three ruling, nationalist parties: they are dissidents from the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), which has been in power for thirty years and has contributed significantly to creating the captured state.[15] In leaving the SDA and establishing the People and Justice party, they cited involvement in corruption, nepotism, and clientelism. When Arijana Memić talks about her decision to get involved in politics, she says that the president of NiP is "the only one from the SDA who supported us previously".[16] The party's very name, which contains the term "justice," speaks of the party's goals and commitment, building and strengthening the rule of law. The youngest political party, People and Justice (Narod i pravda), was established in March 2018 (only six months before the 2018 general elections) by former SDA officials after parting with the SDA leadership due to its staff politics at the local (cantonal) level. In their presentation, the leader and management of the party underlined their dedication to the ideological basis of their parent party, SDA. They took the position of an articulated populist actor of the so-called vertical opposition within the Bosniak nationalist agenda. Its suggestive name, People and Justice, is reflected in its program (Programska orijentacija – Narod i pravda, 2018). The main objective is "to return rights to the people and citizens" with the focus on their anti-corruption and anti-elitist agenda (Džananović, Repovac Nikšić 2020).

Similar programmatic terms were the reasons for the cooperation between the "Justice for Dženan" Movement and this political organization. However, through our research, we have learned that this does not necessarily mean a similar or the same ideological orientation. The focus of our argument on the accountability of institutions and individuals working in institutions proved to be justified. All respondents spontaneously and repeatedly emphasized this "chronic" problem. However, we received ambivalent answers related to the questions on cooperation between the Movement and the political party People and Justice. First, we learned some new information, not clearly articulated in public. For example, Arijana Memić never became a member of that political organization. Her engagement in the Assembly focuses exclusively on implementing the Movement's goals, which is obvious to those who follow

15 The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) is still dominant in the Bosniak and Croat entity called Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the help of "counterparties", the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) also from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD which is miles away from this ideology) from the Republika Srpska (RS), the SDA managed to influence the election committees by changing the composition of the election committees one day before elections (Džananović and Repovac Nikšić 2020).

16 Personal interview with Arijana Memić, Sarajevo, 15 November 2021.

the public broadcasting of the Assembly sessions. Although there was great support from representatives of other (civic) parties, NiP was the only one to offer the opportunity to run for office in the legislative body of Sarajevo Canton, which Arijana Memić won.

Some respondents justify the political engagement as a possible field of action: "Arijana did not go into politics to be a politician but to have another option, a path we can take if others fail."[17] Others fear that the political party could harm the Movement or "profit" from the popularity of the Movement. Muriz Memić characterizes the latest protests, seen in public as protests of the People and Justice Party: "We have organized and financed all previous demonstrations. After the verdict of the Supreme Court, I decided to go to several cities in BiH and call on citizens to protest, and I visited many places. We had nineteen buses from other cities, and for the first time, we called people from the diaspora. They have offered help before, although they could not come, they wanted to participate, and now we made it happen for the first time".[18]

Some respondents also believe that Arijana's entry into politics was "urgently needed," even though it did not bring about the desired results. "Involvement in politics alone has not changed the course of the case much, but it has allowed us to examine the evidence further. I would have preferred her to go as an independent candidate. Still, I understand that it is undoubtedly a more straightforward situation when she has a political party behind her".[19] Ifet Feraget believes that Arijana's decision to be included in the list of People and Justice in 2018 did not harm the Movement. On the contrary, a "new channel" was opened up, a platform to communicate the Movement's demands. According to him, it is not politicization but a public thing. "Here, they tried to present it as Arijana entering politics exclusively for the sake of achieving a particular benefit, which is not the case. She positively understood this as an opportunity, a platform to express her views and ask questions as a member of the Cantonal Assembly. It was helpful that we asked the Canton and the Ministry of the Interior for a statement on various issues related to the case".[20]

Puljek-Shank and Fritsch (2019) show how the 2014 protest wave mainly reproduced anti-politics[21] (especially anti-partisanship or non-partisanship).

17 Online interview with the respondent from bh diaspora, Zoom platform, 23 November 2021.

18 Personal interview with Ifet Feraget, Sarajevo, 24 November 2021.

19 Online interview with the manager of the Facebook page, Zoom platform, 19 November 2021.

20 Personal interview with Ifet Feraget, Sarajevo, 24 November 2021.

21 "Anti-political actions by the plenums also included restricting participation by those with experience in local government and international organizations which limited potential constituencies. The persistence of anti-politics isolated the activists from developing ideological alliances and from engaging in political substance with parties and institutions. Thus, despite contesting ideational power by demands challenging post-war economic arrangements focused on social justice and practicing new forms of social organization, the activists and plenums also reproduced the persistent anti-politics of the post-Dayton period" (Puljek-Shank, Fritsch 2019: 137).

But, how do justice movements refer to the issue of anti-politics? This question is significant concerning our findings, according to which there are diverging opinions on Arijana Memić's decision to engage in electoral politics. We came across different opinions in one in-depth conversation and some written answers. In them, the impression was that the Party has become the "patron of the Movement" or that this cooperation (pragmatic symbiosis of the Movement and the party) is unsuitable for civic movements, the ideological orientation notwithstanding. In a written answer, one participant further states: "Parties should stay away from civil movements if they wish them well. Party branding of the Movement is not good unless the Movement decides to grow into its own political organization."[22] This view, opposed to Arijana's or her family's lawyer's, is an excellent example of the pragmatic symbiotic relationship between two organizations. It is important to emphasize that the confrontational address mostly comes from the Movement, less from the Party (due to an imbalance of power: the party has more resources, but the Movement has more substantial public support and therefore operates through public discourse). Our research supports the hypothesis that the pragmatic symbiosis of the Movement and political organizations is desirable and can yield constructive results, assuming that cooperation is based on the same or similar program principles.

Interestingly, these protests do not want to change the system as a whole. Instead, they point out the weak spots within it. According to respondents, the fight against corruption and for the rule of law is the first step towards recovery. And it is society as a whole that can contribute to the correction of non-transparent procedures and institutions by relentless public criticism, seeking responsibility, and permanently challenging a given "bad situation". In that sense, one of the respondents wrote: "In our case, we have a party parastate that has its parallel system of government, its people, its institutions. For the most part, the legal system and the legal order do not need to be changed as much as they need to be applied. Applying the legal system and order would be a change of the system and order, i.e., it would mean the automatic overthrow of the parallel party system and order. Therefore, prosecutors and judges should not be changed but should be forced to apply the law, the legal system, and the rule of law. And people need to be changed in the legislative body, that is, we need to vote for those who will pass laws in line with European standards".[23]

The six years of the Movement for a "new form of politics" that began during the "JMBG" protest, or Plenum in 2014, are significant in that they have created a new context and atmosphere. The protests contributed to raising citizens' awareness and recognizing their needs and power to use and influence politics in various ways. The question is whether the pragmatic symbiosis between the Movement and the political organization was successful; or has it only contributed to disrupting the authoritarian tendencies of existing political elites? Recently, the rejection of horizontal movements, such as the

22 Written interview via e-mail, Sarajevo, 7 December 2021.
23 Written interview via e-mail, Sarajevo, 7 December 2021.

so-called "Movements in the squares", to get involved in political institutions are being criticized. This, as Chantal Mouffe believes, diminishes their influence, saying: "... without some form of articulation with institutional politics, the movements soon began to lose momentum. Although such protest movements certainly played a role in the transformation of political consciousness, only when well-organized political movements emerged from them, ready to get in touch with political institutions, could significant results be achieved" (Mouffe 2019: 31).

Conclusion

In BiH, questioning the assurance of accountability through the pragmatic symbiosis between social movements and political parties with and within institutions operates under the predominant, ethnically determined social and political framework. Within such institutions, not only does the problem of accountability function in the absence of other social groups, but it often does so in relation to its own. Reducing the electorate to homogeneous, mono-ethnic particularities, rather than represent them, it subjectivizes (Hasanović 2020) and prevents from engaging with others. This also results in discouraging diversity of opinion and social plurality. The subject is disengaged, alienated from the political process. In addition, this ensures only the representation of one's own ethnic group, fails to accept the diversity of opinions and demands coming from outside the ethnic territory.

The focus of our research is on the turning point of pragmatic symbiosis between the social movement and political option: both of whom insisted on seeking accountability and calling for the rule of law. The described sequence of events, protests, and shedding of light on the case confirm the need and effectiveness of such a symbiosis. However, when it comes to whether pragmatic symbiosis between social movement and political party has produced new forms of socio-political interaction that can impede rising autocratization, we have an ambivalent situation. On the one hand, while recognizing official political institutions as an influential tool of acting and addressing requests, the realization of the Movement's demands through the pragmatic symbiosis had a minor impact on the whole case. Moreover, given the divided views on Arijana's entry into politics, it may turn out that her entry benefits the People and Justice Party more than the "Justice for Dženan" Movement. Nevertheless, the pragmatic symbiosis was created within the momentum of the plurality of interests of two separate groups that ultimately cannot reconcile their views. At the same time, they share common goals and institutional arrangement, which are articulated through the quest(s) for accountability. The mobilization through the desire for truth and justice encourages new collective forms of identification in the background and seeks more democracy.

In this paper, therefore, we underlined how movements and parties in opposition, in parallel, need to go beyond the heavily skewed electoral contest to establish an organizational symbiosis and pragmatic linkages that combine

mobilization and policy agendas. Criticism is limited to institutions considered in respondents' answers, such as the prosecution, the judiciary, the police, and the health system. It is not directed towards the executive and representative institutions that have captured specific segments of society, crucial by their very constitutional design. Although interlocutors from within the Movement often consider the problem to be centered on the individual, it can be difficult to separate personal actions from the institutional structures in which they are embedded. The question is how much influence illiberal politics and the complex multilevel system of institutionalized ethnic checks and balances have in limiting the profound political change in BiH. Thus, the Assembly of the Sarajevo Canton is the only podium where Arijana has a voice.

However, underneath the demands for accountability, such a symbiosis represents the driving force of political action. It implies a two-level, vertical and horizontal effort through representative institutions and associations, i.e., social movements. It further recognizes the need for existing democratic institutions to become effective for as many social relations as possible. With such a symbiosis, civil society can establish new forms of engagement. By expanding the political space within which they engage in political conflict, movements, such as "Justice for Dženan", are able to express their demands within the democratic process against existing authoritarian policies and practices. What is put forward instead of the principles of power-sharing among the three main ethnic groups, is an emphasis on accountability towards one's own and confronting incompatible values, thus imagining the possibility of a democracy without exclusion. The confrontation that takes place should be perceived as between political rivals, and not enemies, especially not while the political subjects are being reduced to essentialist identities like the ethnic ones. Democratic institutions need to have the important role in this process, within which the confrontation has to take place.

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Društveni pokret za istinu i pravdu – Pragmatično stvaranje saveza sa političkim strankama u Bosni i Hercegovini

Sažetak

Protesti građana Bosne i Hercegovine su sve prisutniji. Najčešće im je cilj osuditi nefunkcionalnost i netransparentnost vlasti, koji su rezultat etnopolitičke strukture stvorene Dejtonskim mirovnim sporazumom, ali i trenda demokratskog nazadovanja i autokratije. Određeni broj autora bavio se protestima "JMBG" 2013. i plenumima koji su proizašli iz protesta u februaru 2014. godine, iz ugla svojih disciplina. U fokusu ovog rada je društveni pokret "Pravda za Dženana" koji je organizovala porodica Memić nakon tragične smrti Dženana Memića u Sarajevu u februaru 2016. godine. Provedeno je dubinsko istraživanje s ključnim akterima pokreta, kao i onima koji prate ili na neki način podržavaju proteste. Poseban naglasak istraživanja stavljen je na pragmatičnu simbiozu društvenog pokreta i jedne političke stranke. Tvrdimo da je pragmatičnu simbiozu moguće identifikovati kao novi oblik (demokratske inovacije) društveno-političke saradnje koji može sprečiti rastuću autokratizaciju. Kroz potragu za odgovornošću, društveni pokreti uvode nove strateške prakse mobilizacije i novu vrstu izgradnje saveza s vanjskim faktorima (nove političke stranke kao i drugi društveni pokreti). Cilj rada je istražiti kako društveni pokret "Pravda za Dženana" stupa u interakciju s političkom strankom i pristupa političkoj sferi u BiH. Takođe, ideja je ispitati mogućnosti i funkcionalnost ovakve saradnje u teorijskim okvirima politike osporavanja.

Ključne reči: odgovornost, autokratizacija, demokratsko nazadovanje, demokratske inovacije, neliberalna politika, pravda, Pokret "Pravda za Dženana", društveni pokreti, pragmatična simbioza