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PARTICIPATORY INNOVATIONS IN HYBRID REGIMES
PARTICIPATIVNE INOVACIJE U HIBRIDNIM REŽIMIMA

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PROMISES AND CHALLENGES OF DELIBERATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY INNOVATIONS IN HYBRIDE REGIMES: THE CASE OF TWO CITIZENS' ASSEMBLIES IN SERBIA[1]

ABSTRACT

A worrying trend of autocratization that has been spreading globally in recent years, has thrust forward a new wave of appeals for deliberative and participatory democracy as a remedy for the crisis. With a few exceptions, the majority of participatory and deliberative institutions were implemented in stable democracies. The efforts to institutionalize participatory and deliberative models are almost completely absent in Serbia and other Western Balkan countries. Yet, there has been a trend of citizen mobilization in the form of social movements and local civic initiatives, which are both a symptom of unresponsive and quite openly authoritarian institutions, as well as a potential pathway to democratization. The pace and scope of these developments in the undemocratic societies of the Western Balkan region, in terms of both bottom up and top-down democratic experimentation, call for a better understanding of their internal dynamics, and their social and political impact. Responding to this need, the articles in the special issue focus on social movement mobilizations and deliberative experimentation.

To begin with, our introductory article focuses particularly on understanding the possible role deliberative institutions could have in hybrid regimes. It looks at the first two cases of deliberative mini publics (DMPs) ever organized in Serbia, analyzing their rationale, specific design, implementation, as well as considering the possible role deliberative institutions could play in the hybrid regime of Serbia.

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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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1. Introduction

A worrying trend of autocratization that has been spreading globally in recent years brought forward the newest wave of appeals for deliberative and participatory democracy as a remedy for the crisis (Suteu 2019). This phenomenon has been covered extensively in scholarly literature; recent works, both empirical and theoretical, often include theoretical debates with the mainstream theories of democratization, as well as discussions on the misconceptions of the very concept of deliberative democracy. Challenges to political elites, from the labor movement to the *indignados* – have traditionally nurtured a participatory and deliberative vision, extending the forms of legitimate political involvement well beyond voting (Della Porta 2020). Challenging the liberal conception of democracy from the perspective of participation beyond voting has become the backbone of the rising tension between traditional liberal understandings of democracy and the wave of more participatory democratic thinking.

On the one hand, social movements continue to engage in democratic innovations as a means to increase participation of citizens, responding to the crisis of representative democracy. They experiment with new ideas in their internal organization, and they spread these ideas into institutions (Della Porta, Doerr 2018; Fiket et al. 2019). Democratic experiments within civil society and social movements have been inspired by the same principles of participation, deliberation and empowerment. Aside from engaging in internal practices of democratic innovation, social movements are institutional innovators, executing this role in a variety of ways and with different results. As self-reflexive actors, they experiment with new ideas of democracy that can become the basis for proposed changes in democratic governance, especially relevant in undemocratic societies. They do not only transform states through struggles for policy change, but also produce innovative ideas and alternative knowledge and express a fundamental critique of conventional politics, experimenting with participatory and deliberative ideas (Della Porta, Diani, 2006).

On the other hand, the growing lack of interest of European societies' citizens in participating in political life through traditional instruments of representative democracy has caused a renewed concern in the EU and its member states for the promotion and encouragement of deliberative institutions (Reuchamps, Suiter 2016). This has resulted in a process of democratic engineering inspired by the principles of participatory and deliberative conceptions of democracy. Democratic experimentation along these lines, which can be observed in many EU countries, gave rise to the promotion and institutionalization of deliberative institutions (town meetings, citizen assemblies, neighborhood councils, citizen juries, participatory budgets, etc.).

Democratizing effects of deliberation have, however, been not only a matter of intense political but also academic debate for over 20 years. Still, with a few exceptions the majority of deliberative institutions were implemented in stable democracies.

Efforts to institutionalize deliberative institutions are almost completely absent in Serbia and other Western Balkan countries. Yet, while deliberative institutions and other participatory democratic innovations are generally unknown in Serbia and the region (aside from worker self-management in Yugoslavia; see Pateman 1970; Unkovski-Korica 2013), public and political representation in Western Balkan countries has been growing in the last couple of years: there has been a trend of citizen mobilization in the form of social movements and local civic initiatives, which are both a symptom of unresponsive and more openly authoritarian institutions and the potential pathway to democratization (Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021).

The pace and scope of these developments in the undemocratic societies of the Western Balkan region, in terms of both bottom up and top-down democratic experimentation, call for a deeper understanding of their internal dynamics, and their social and political impact as both individual cases and parts of a greater cycle of social movement mobilizations and institutional experimentation. Responding to this need, the research team gathered within the framework of the Jean Monnet network "Active citizenship: promoting and advancing innovative democratic practices in the Western Balkans" defined two sets of research goals. The first regards the organization of deliberative mini publics (DMPs) within an undemocratic institutional setting, while the other is directed towards strengthening dialogue between conceptual perspectives, approaches and fields around deliberative and participatory forms of democracy in an authoritarian setting. This special issue aims to present the findings of the research done within this JM network. However, these studies will approach social movement mobilizations and deliberative experimentation from different angles.

To begin with, our introductory article will respond to the overall framework of the special issue outlined above, but it will particularly focus on understanding the possible role deliberative institutions could have in hybrid regimes. It will focus on the first two cases of deliberative institutions (DMPs) ever organized in Serbia and will analyze their rationale, implementation, and possible effects. The three articles that follow focus on one of the DMPs held in Serbia. Namely, in her article Janković analyzes the content of the discussion between citizens and shows that ordinary citizens use articulated arguments and reasons when expressing their opinions in group deliberation and that they can make reasonable and informed choices. Fiket, Ilić and Pudar Draško compare attitudinal data before and after the Belgrade DMP in order to analyze the effects of public deliberation on citizens' political capacities and attitudes regarding political participation in hybrid regimes while Đorđević and Vasiljević, using a similar method of analysis, explore the effects of public deliberation on the participants' knowledge, attitudes and preferences.

The fifth article, written by Šoć, theoretically examines the view according to which the more citizens deliberate about politics, the less likely they are to participate in the realm of the political, providing to this special issue much-needed theoretical reflections on deliberation and participation.

The three articles that follows will focus on the case studies of the social movements in Serbia (Iguman, Mijatović, Nikolić), Bosnia (Nikšić, Hasanović, Adilović, Kapidžić) and Macedonia (Markovikj and Damjanovski). Those contributions will allow us to better understand the role, goals, mobilization capacities and possible democratization effects of the civic initiatives and social movements in Western Balkan countries.

In the rest of our introductory paper, however, we will focus on the understanding of the possible role deliberative institutions could play in the hybrid regime of Serbia. The first part of our paper will discuss the relevant theoretical arguments followed by the discussion about the level of development of citizen participation within Serbian institutional and extra-institutional contexts. The third part of our paper will discuss the design and implementation of the first two deliberative mini publics ever held in Western Balkans while in the final part we will draw some conclusions regarding the role deliberative institutions could play in hybrid regimes.

2. Understanding Hybrid Regimes and the Role of Deliberation in Democratization Process

Hybrid regimes are those composed of both democratic and authoritarian elements, and although the term has been specifically articulated in the 1990s (Karl 1995), it has become an umbrella term for concepts that have since emerged for non-democracies such as "delegative democracy" (O'Donnel 1994), "illiberal democracy" (Zakaria 2003), "pseudo-democracy (Volpi 2004), "defective democracy" (Merkel 2004), "competitive authoritarianism" (Levitsky, Way 2002), "semi-authoritarianism" (Ottaway 2003), or "electoral authoritarianism" (Schedler 2006). One of the central disagreements among the democratization scholars about transition from authoritarianism to democracy (Schmitter, Karl 1994) is precisely regarding these different conceptualizations of regimes on the continuum between authoritarianism and democracy. We do not deal with these differences, rather focusing on how different government institutions in hybrid regimes behave as conflict management structures. We look at how they organize the struggle for "access to and the distribution of political resources, authority, and legitimacy" through different kinds of political participation, be it by individuals or collective agents (Jayasuriya, Rodan 2007: 775), and whether DMPs can be the engine of democratization in such conflict management structures. The role of conflict within studies of democratization is especially important in resistance to authoritarian regimes, so we also wished to stress both the role of democratic innovations in taming the conflict, but also the role of conflict in the design of new democratic innovative institutions.

Democratization studies (Huntington 1993) have been prioritizing elections and electoral institutions, neglecting deliberation as an important aspect of democracy, despite the latter being unavoidable in the mainstream

deliberative democracy theory and practice. Like various development agencies invested in democracy promotion (Burnell 2007), we can similarly observe how some DMPs and other forms of democratic innovations, such as participatory budgeting, have been promoted globally by the World Bank as part of good governance in many countries around the world, including non-democracies (Pateman 2012). Furthermore, as formal instruments that aim to solve problems of democratic deficit, above all visible in a lack of civic commitment and engagement in political life, a wide variety of DMPs and other models of democratic innovations have been institutionalized at local, national, but also supranational level (Fiket 2019).

According to John Dryzek, who introduced the idea of deliberative democratization, the central element of such democratization is a deliberative capacity that does not have to be sought solely in electoral institutions, but rather in many different forums and means. He defines deliberative capacity as "the extent to which a political system possesses structures to host deliberation that is authentic, inclusive, and consequential" (Dryzek 2009: 1382). Authentic deliberation stands for the inducement of non-coercive reflection, linking particular claims to general principles, and embodying reciprocity; inclusive deliberation assumes the presence of various interests and discourses, with the risk that people are not motivated to participate if that means hearing the other side (Mutz 2006); finally, consequential deliberation entails a direct or indirect impact of deliberation upon collective decisions, or social outcomes. Dryzek contributed to what has later become known as deliberative system theory (Parkinson, Mansbridge 2012), which does not prioritize particular arenas for deliberation (parliaments, governments, constitutional courts or specially designed forums such as mini-publics), thus allowing for the appearance of deliberative capacity even in countries that are not liberal democracies. Deliberative systems theory tends to link spaces where deliberation occurs with the overall political system, that is, to assess how DMPs as deliberative institutions can scale up and improve the deliberative capacity of the entire political system. In other words, the way in which different deliberative spaces relate to each other and then to non-deliberative spaces may be a prism through which one can observe both democracies and non-democracies.

Dryzek's view is that deliberative democratization does not have to come just as a top-down reform of central state institutions. It is possible that a non-democratic regime may develop some deliberative capacity, and that in a situation of regime crisis "those schooled in it may be more likely to talk to rather than repress opponents as crisis looms." There is the possibility that deliberative capacity "may also develop within society at a distance from state power, not clearly oppositional but not part of the administrative structure" (Dryzek 2009: 1383).

For instance, participatory budgeting was first invented by social movements in Porto Alegre in Brazil, at a time when this country was not considered a fully consolidated democracy. From Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting travelled the world in various shapes and forms, although losing much

of its radicalness or original transformative idea (Pateman 2012: 14). This is an example of a democratic innovation that originated in the oppositional public sphere and has become institutionalized due to electoral results of a progressive mayor and the Workers' Party of Brazil. The curious case of China and its development of deliberative capacity at the local level is tied with the top-down approach sponsored by the Communist Party of China with the aim to address the adverse side effects of rapid economic growth (He, Warren 2011). As our main goal is to discuss the role of DMPs in non-democracies, in a country with democratic backsliding and, according to some assessments, a country witnessing one of the fastest rates of autocratization (Alizada et al. 2021: 19), neither the Brazilian nor the Chinese case is directly translatable to Serbia, though perhaps the latter could be more instructive, as there were applications of DMPs there. It is still a matter of controversy whether these institutional innovations in authoritarian contexts can be labelled as democratic (Hinck et al. 2018). The debate is whether participatory and deliberative practices in an authoritarian context are a genuine opportunity for democratization or merely an attempt to legitimize the authoritarian government.

The literature on DMPs in authoritarian contexts is dominated by the curious case of the People's Republic of China (Jayasuriya, Rodan 2007). This authoritarian deliberation (He, Warren 2011; 2017; He 2014) contains a mix of democratic and authoritarian elements: deliberation, participation, and some restrained citizen empowerment does takes place in an environment of command rule, despotism, mistreatment of dissident groups, and violations of human rights. In other words, it is happening within an authoritarian state that has no obvious intention at overall democratization. Still, He and Warren (2017) do not think this practice is an oxymoron but a theoretical possibility. They assess deliberative authoritarianism as functionally driven, as a practice serving as a solution for the problems of governance and that can "provide the kinds of proximate and specific responsiveness that co-opt popular organizing and substitute for democratic empowerments" (He, Warren 2017: 156). It can also serve to regulate social conflicts emerging from economic, political, and social developments, as well as facilitate the complex governance that must follow such developments in China (He, Wagenaar 2018: 623).

For Chinese political elites, that is, in authoritarian deliberation, deliberative processes are used for carefully selected governance problems and with a clear idea to prevent the spillover from the controlled deliberative arenas to other non-selected arenas and topics (He, Warren 2017: 161). The real issue is whether another political development is possible, that is, whether democratization can spring from authoritarian deliberation. While He and Warren think that deliberation in this authoritarian deliberation serves to secure legitimacy and stability for authoritarianism, they nevertheless see democratization as a second possibility for political development that is not "likely at the moment" but not impossible in the future (He, Warren 2017: 161).

Both authoritarian and democratic regimes need legitimacy, the question is only what type of legitimacy is generated by different practices. There seems to

be a convergence of, on the one hand, the governance-driven impetus of democratic innovations in authoritarian regimes for regime survival (Woo, Kübler 2020), and on the other, a similar motivation for securing legitimacy and stability of representative democratic institutions (Warren 2014), when these are designed top down. This does not exclude the possibility of unintended innovations potentially leading to democratization or deepening democracy (Woo, Kübler 2020: 349). "Highlighting the governance-driven aims of participatory innovations, i.e. to improve the quality and acceptability of public policies in a quest for output legitimacy – a goal that can be common to democratic and non-democratic regimes alike – suddenly makes them less 'unlikely' phenomena in authoritarian contexts" (Woo, Kübler 2020: 350). Woo and Kübler in fact see a pragmatic logic in adopting democratic innovations by governments, authoritarian and democratic alike, as they are instrumental for good governance and ultimately obtain the acquiescence of their populations and secure the stability of the regime, whether democratic or not (Woo, Kübler 2020: 351). This conclusion may seem cynical against the backdrop of the normative pathos of deliberative democracy that wishes to generate democratic legitimacy, rather than mere stability and security of the political order, but it is of utmost importance nevertheless, as non-democracies tend to more and more include either pseudo-participatory institutions or ineffective projects of information and communication technology innovations (see Damjanović 2019), as well as in light of the findings that "no institution, technology, or discourses is inherently democratic" (Pepinsky 2020).

We contribute to this literature with the specific case of Serbia, which has once again ended up a hybrid regime. Previously the country had been classified this way during the rule of Slobodan Milošević, with the initial transition from a communist into capitalist society and the introduction of a multiparty system when elections were not free and fair. Following the "democratic transition" in 2000, there was a period of classification of Serbia as a semi-consolidated democracy, reverting by 2019 to a hybrid regime and by 2020 even to autocracy.

3. Serbia: Institutional Context and Citizen Participation

While the literature about democratization used to take into account the process of transition from authoritarian to democratic societies, and this has been a framework for much political science work on Serbia of the past three decades (Pavlović, Antonić 2010; Vladisavljević 2011; Zurnić 2019), we are writing in a period of not only democratic backsliding, but rapid autocratization of the country (Alizada et al. 2021), that is, during a reverse process of de-democratization. In our view, Serbia is, to use Woo and Kübler's words, a softer case of authoritarianism (Woo, Kübler 2020): it still allows for democratic innovation, such as DMPs, to emerge from the academia or civil society (rather than exclusively top-down, as in a hard authoritarian state such as China).

Although the quality of democracy in Serbia has been deficient in the 2010s, democratic backsliding could be observed with the first electoral triumph of the Serbian Progressive Party and its influence in eroding "political rights and civil liberties, putting pressure on independent media, the political opposition, and civil society organization," which was explicitly cited as the reason for downgrading Serbia's classification from partly free (Freedom House 2020) to a hybrid regime. Elections in hybrid regimes exist and are to some extent competitive, but are not free nor fair: there is misuse of public resources and institutions, voter blackmail (threat of job loss in both the public and the private sector), unequal access to national media, while private media serve as official broadcasters of the ruling party. Indeed, due to a boycott by the opposition, parliamentary elections in 2020 have been assessed as "noncompetitive parliamentary elections" (Damjanović 2021). On the other hand, political and social mobilization of citizens[2] is impeded by the political opportunity structure (Tarrow 2005) formed within hybrid regimes characterized by competitive authoritarianism. The basic logic of political opportunity structure approach is as follows: citizens mobilization and social movements are influenced by the political environment that through constraints, possibilities, and threats affects the citizens and social movements capacity for mobilization and its possibility to reach collective goals (Koopmans 1999).

Serbian citizens are in fact described as passive and apathetic, distrustful of democratic institutions and political representatives (Todosijević, Pavlović 2017), and disappointed by the difficulty of influencing political decisions (Greenberg 2010). The sense of political efficacy, that is, the perception that own political actions can have an effect, of Serbian citizens is very low (Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021); the average turnout for parliamentary elections in the last 20 years has been declining (Jovanović, Vučićević 2020) and there is also a decline of civic engagement at the local level (Fiket et al. 2017). The dominant form of political participation in Serbia is still institutional participation, while non-institutional political participation is practiced only by a minority (Pešić et al. 2021; Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021). At the same time, recent studies have shown that in the last five years, there has been an increase in the use of non-institutional channels of political participation, such as protests and civic mobilization within the framework of the new social movements (Pešić 2017; Delibašić et al. 2019; Pudar Draško et al. 2019, Fiket et al. 2019, Pešić, Petrović 2020).

It is precisely due to the fact that as institutional citizen participation has been declining, there has been a growing number of extra-institutional civic initiatives and local movements, so that citizens can express their views and needs. We acknowledged this reality when designing our DMPs and made a choice to include grassroot movement representatives as participants alongside ordinary citizens in DMPs. But not just that – the topics that we selected as those to be discussed by participants in DMPs have been previously put

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2   For more on this issue, see Fiket, Ilić, Pudar Draško in this volume.

on the agenda by grassroot movements. These topics – urban mobility and air pollution – have been topics around which these initiatives and movements organized as groups making public claims, formulating opinions and discourses. Finally, our design was not meant to be merely institutional empowerment of extra-institutional civic participation, but instead an attempt to avoid locking deliberation at the micro level which would then make it especially difficult in an authoritarian setting to scale up to the macro level. The next section of our paper deals precisely with the design and implementation of DMPs in Serbian context.

4. Design and Implementation of Deliberative Mini Publics in Serbia

Deliberative mini publics are citizen forums in which a sample of citizens, selected from the population affected by some public issue, deliberate on that issue (Goodin, Dryzek 2006; Gastil, Black, Moscovitz 2008; Warren 2009; Smith, Ryan 2012). The design of DMPs is inspired by key principles of deliberative democracy: inclusiveness, exposure to different opinions, reasoned opinion expression, and the production of a collective decision. Although deliberative theorists disagree on the type of inclusivity necessary for deliberation (Thompson 2008), they all consider it as a vital element (Habermas 1984; Cohen 1997). The main idea that stands behind the principle of equality is that differences between participants should not influence equal participation of all. Each participant should equally and freely contribute to the discussion so that all the various perspectives could be heard. This is strongly linked to the principle of exposure to different opinions that, in turn, presupposes some amount of disagreement on the topic of deliberation. Exposure to different opinions is recognized as a necessary requirement of deliberation by a majority of deliberative scholars, although they sometimes use different definitions and terms, such as 'diversity of opinions' (Barabas 2004), 'cross-cutting exposure' (Mutz 2006), and 'state of disagreement' (Thompson 2008). Exposure to different arguments is considered to be a cure for the self-selectivity of sources, which occurs when citizens discuss public issues with like-minded fellows (Mutz 2006; Fishkin 2009), selecting information that supports the views they already hold (Sunstein 2001). Discussion in which alternative opinions are suggested is a necessary condition not only for individual transformation but also for expression of reasoned opinion, given that in heterogeneous settings individuals are incentivized to base their arguments on justifications that could be 'universally' accepted (Habermas 1984; Cohen 1989; Mendelberg 2002; Gutmann, Thompson 2004; Thompson 2008). The actual design, setting, and purpose of DMPs may vary from one to another but they all share some common basic features, aimed at ensuring the achievement of the ideals of deliberative democracy (see Janković in this special issue). They involve a sample of the population that should be representative of a plurality of opinions and positions on the issue

(some of them, like deliberative polling, are based on random samples). The free and equal expression of all opinions within DMPs is further guaranteed by professional moderators ensuring a balanced participation and respectful environment in small group discussion. Further, the balanced panel of experts and politicians make sure the participants are exposed to different opinions and preferences, policy alternatives, but also values.

In an attempt to test, for the first time, the possibility of conducting DMPs in Serbian society, two citizen assemblies were organized by the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory (University of Belgrade)[3] in Belgrade and Valjevo on 21 and 28 November 2021.

In order to make the official names of the DMPs more familiar to citizens at first glance, the research team chose to use the term citizen assembly, since deliberative mini-publics, as well as the concept of deliberation, are generally unknown to both Serbian citizens and political representatives. The citizen assemblies followed the "standard design" of DMPs, with one significant innovation, however: inclusion of active citizens, representatives of local initiatives or organizations who expressed publicly their attitudes and proposals regarding the issues under discussion. The justification for this variation in design was in response to the agonistic critique of deliberative democracy, i.e., the argument about the inadequate treatment of deep disagreement and conflict by the deliberativists who aim to rationally resolve and overcome it (Mouffe 2000; Connolly 2004; Tully 2008). Specifically, the agonistic critique of DMPs with randomly selected citizens is that they may easily end up as top-down technocratic applications that displace conflict, do not sufficiently include actors already involved in social conflicts and may have depoliticizing consequences (Westphal 2019). While it is often argued that agonism is better suited for theoretical analysis of protests, social movements or anti-systemic political actors, there are proposals to agonize institutions by way of suffusing them with agonistic principles of valuing conflict and allowing for the expression of differences, contingency and interdependence (Lowndes, Paxton 2018). This is what we have done by modifying DMPs against the background of agonistic principles and inclusion of a conflict-oriented mode of selection of participants. In other words, in addition to ordinary citizens, representatives descriptive of various socio-demographic categories of citizens of relevance for deliberation around particular topics, we included representatives

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3   This project was carried out in cooperation with the European Jean Monnet Network ACT WB - Active Citizenship in the Western Balkans (https://act-wb.net/?lang=sr), coordinated by the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade (IFDT), together with four more European universities and the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence. The planning and implementation of citizen assemblies took place through the cooperation of the Scientific Committee, comprising the following members: Irena Fiket (IFDT), Ana Đorđević (IFDT), Biljana Đorđević (Faculty of Political Science), Ivana Janković (Faculty of Philosophy), Gazela Pudar Draško (IFDT) and Jelena Vasiljević (IFDT), and the Executive Organization Committee (Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence and MASMI).

of the "parties who are involved in the particular conflict in need of solutions" (Westphal 2019: 201). Active citizens were included within small groups as participants and at plenary sessions as speakers.

In the following we describe and discuss the implementation of the citizen assemblies, focusing on the key phases: issue identification and framing, selection of participants, and deliberative discussions.

Phase 1: Identification and Framing of the Issues

The first citizen assembly centered around the issue of expanding the pedestrian zone and rerouting traffic in the Belgrade city centre. The second was held on the topic of air pollution in the city of Valjevo. Those topics were chosen by the research team for three reasons. First, they prompt strong opinions among citizens, as they are highly relevant in daily life, and local citizen initiatives had already organized different public actions aiming to raise public awareness and influence the decision-making process. Second, they are very different issues in terms of knowledge: air pollution is a highly technical issue on which one might expect information to produce changes in attitude due to knowledge gain and exposure to competing arguments presented in the document briefing and plenary sessions; on the other hand, expanding the pedestrian zone is an issue in which citizens could be considered experts. Third, while rerouting traffic in the city centre is an issue that could be entirely addressed at the local level, air pollution is a more complex issue, as it also encompasses national competences.

The main goal of this phase is to present the issues to the citizens in an inclusive and balanced way. To achieve this, it is necessary to identify stakeholders (politicians and experts) who will participate in the production of the briefing materials and the plenary discussions of DMPs. The way the issue is framed in briefing materials inevitably determines how the issue is discussed and understood; therefore, all relevant opinions, information, arguments and values regarding the issue must be presented in the briefing materials, and all the relevant, credible, competent, and, as far as possible, politically diverse stakeholders should be invited to comment on the briefing materials (Fiket 2019).

The first draft of briefing materials for the two DMPs was prepared by the research team and then sent to the stakeholders: representatives of citizen initiatives, experts, and decision-makers. All comments that arrived were accepted and included in the final version. The main problem encountered in this phase was a lack of interest from the majority of the politicians invited to comment. Therefore, their opinions and positions regarding the issues were represented in the briefing materials through the statements made to the media. On the other hand, the majority of experts contacted showed a high level of interest to contribute to the briefing materials and participate in the plenary sessions. Some of them reacted very positively to the whole idea of DMPs, underlining the necessity to organize similar initiatives on a regular basis.

Phase 2: Selection of Participants

The initial research plan was to gather 40 participants for each citizens assembly, but due to the unfavorable epidemiological situation, both events were held online and the targeted number of participants was lowered to 32 for each. The purposive sampling procedure was applied in selecting citizens in order to include not only persons who represent the population living in the affected areas in socio-demographic terms, but also citizens in some way affected by the public issues under discussion. In the case of Belgrade, those were city residents with physical disabilities; senior residents; parents of small children (up to 12 years old); local business owners and those whose place of employment was in the area. Activists who participated in group discussions in Belgrade were members of the following civic initiatives: "Pedestrians are not Marathon Runners" (*Pešaci nisu maratonci*), "The Ministry of Space" (*Ministarstvo prostora*) and "Streets for Cyclists" (*Ulice za bicikliste*). In the case of Valjevo, the invited participants were parents of small children (up to 12 years old); members of households with individual heating using either pellets, coal or wood, or else electricity, or who are on the public heating grid (from a heating plant); members of households from the outskirts of Valjevo, members of low-income households; employees of Krušik (the major polluter in the city of Valjevo). Activists who participated in group discussions were recruited from among members of the following civic initiatives: "Local Front Valjevo" (*Lokalni front Valjevo*), "Local Response" (*Lokalni odgovor*), "Eco Guerilla" (*Eko Gerila*).

Participants were assigned to one of the 4 moderated small groups for each assembly, seeking maximum variation in each group. Namely, each group comprised approximately 8 individuals, including at least one from the various categories and two persons from civic initiatives.

Once selected and invited, the participants were administered, through CATI, a questionnaire approximately 20 minutes long about their general attitudes, policy preferences, level of knowledge on the two policy issues selected for DMP, their general political orientation, participation and interest in politics and finally their standard socio-demographic data. In order to collect data that would allow the measuring of the effects of deliberation, the same questionnaire was administered once again, after the event (for findings on opinion changes, that took place as an effect of deliberation in Citizens Assemblies, see Đorđević and Vasiljević in this special issue). A week before the citizen assemblies took place, all invited participants were supplied with the briefing material, as well as information about the process of deliberation and DMPs design. All recruited participants were regularly followed up on from the recruitment stage to their presentation at the online citizen assembly. The impression of the recruitment team was that the selected and contacted citizens reacted very positively to the invitation and were eager to participate. In fact, there were only two last minute dropouts for each assembly. However, it should be noted that all the recruited citizens received a voucher for their participation, as is usual for DMPs that are not based on self-selection, that is, which aim to motivate those usually less interested or with poorer access to such events.

Phase 3: Deliberative Discussions

Once participants gathered in the online space, the deliberative event was structured as presented in table 1. This is the agenda for the citizen assembly held in Belgrade, but the one in Valjevo followed the same structure.

Agenda for the citizen assembly in Belgrade – Expansion of the pedestrian zone and rerouting traffic in the city core
(Online event, November 2, 2021)
9:40 - 10:00 **Virtual Gathering of Participants**
10:00 - 10:15 **Introductory Speeches**
representative, EU delegation to the Republic of Serbia representative, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory
10:15 - 11:30 **Group Discussion I**
Description: Separate small groups discuss independently with the help of a moderator. These discussions take place simultaneously in separate virtual rooms. The focus of the discussion is on the formulation of the questions and suggestions related to the topic, which will be directed to the experts in the next session.
11:30 - 11:40 Coffee Break
11:40 - 12:40 **Plenary Session with Experts and Representatives of Civic Initiatives**
Description: The plenary session with experts and representatives of citizen initiatives, where representatives of groups present their questions and proposals. Clarifying questions about the feasibility of the proposal (policy, solutions), as well as additional information participants asked for.
12:40 - 13:10 Coffee Break and Lunch
13:10 - 14:25 **Group discussion II**
Description: Separate small groups discuss independently with the help of a moderator. These discussions take place simultaneously in separate virtual rooms. Discussions are supported by additional information, with proposals (policies and solutions) formulated in the last portion, which are then presented to the plenary session with decision-makers.
14:25 - 14:35 Coffee Break
14:35 - 15:35 **Plenary Session with Political Decision-makers**
Description: Plenary session with political decision-makers, where representatives of groups present proposals with arguments, and political representatives comment on these policy proposals.
15:35 - 16:00 **Formulation of Final Proposals and Voting**
Description: Participants briefly return to small groups to eventually modify the proposals they have put forward in the plenary sessions (10 minutes). A poll is prepared based on the final proposals (5 minutes). Online voting for several proposals (with preferential voting) (10 minutes). Results announced at the end (5 minutes).

Table 1. Agenda for the citizen assembly in Belgrade

The citizen assemblies gathered 31 participants in Belgrade and 33 in Valjevo, both divided into 4 small groups. A moderator and facilitator were assigned to each group. The role of the moderator in the deliberation process within the DMP must be clearly defined, as there is a risk that the moderator's own views and opinions can influence the discussion or that they could become involved in internal dynamics created among the participants. The research team therefore defined the approach to moderation as minimalist. This means that moderators were not allowed to intervene in discussions with comments or new arguments, but only regarding the strictly formal rules of discussion (time constraints, sequence of topics, etc.), or in the case of the violation of the principle of equality of participation in the discussion. Therefore, the discussions within the small groups were free of interventions by moderators, except towards the end when moderators helped formulate questions for the panels of experts and politicians. The team of moderators was expressly recruited and trained for the event. MASMI, the organization in charge of the recruitment and training of group moderators, selected and trained 4 moderators, all with previous experience in managing and leading group discussions in focus groups. The discussions in the groups went as planned and the participants showed that they can hold reasonable and respectful discussions with fellow citizens. What was also noticeable was the mutual encouragement and respect displayed by the participants within groups, as it provided an opportunity for almost every personal voice to be appreciated and publicly communicated through the group representative at the plenary session.

And while the group discussions went as expected (see Janković in this special issue for more details about small group discussions), we encountered major problems within the plenary sessions with politicians.

In the Belgrade case, only Marko Stojčić (Director of City Planning of the City of Belgrade), Radoslav Marjanović (President of the Stari Grad Municipality), Đorđe Miketić (Municipal Assembly Member) and Marko Bastać, (former President of the Stari Grad Municipality) attended the plenary sessions. The other invited politicians did not come, with the majority not even replying to the invitation, although it was sent several times and they were also contacted by telephone as a reminder.[4] Those who did not attend the citizen assembly were the crucial decision makers in the issue under discussion. Therefore, the lack of their comments and responses to citizens' questions and proposals significantly undermined the quality of deliberation in the Belgrade Assembly.

The situation was similar in Valjevo, with the majority of invited politicians not showing any interest in participation, despite the research team's

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4   The politicians who did not attend were: Goran Vesić (Deputy Mayor of Belgrade), Dušan Rafailović (Department of Transport), Ognjen Petar Todorović (Department of Transport), Gordana Marković (Department of Transport), Miloš Vulović (Department of Urban Planning and Construction), Jovica Vasiljević (Department of Transport).

effort to reach out to them. Invitations were sent to seven decision makers,[5] but only Milica Spasenić, (Occupational Safety and Health Service at Krušik, the factory considered the main polluter in the region) and Ljubomir Radović (Representative of the opposition Local Front Valjevo in the City Assembly) attended the plenary session.

Even more relevant for the quality of deliberation in the DMPs and citizen perception of politicians' responsiveness is that even those decision makers representing the Assembly majority who did attend the Belgrade DMP (since none attended in Valjevo), did not even attempt to answer questions or give feedback to the group participants. The participants' disappointment with politicians after the plenary sessions, either with their arrogant stance in disregarding citizen questions and proposals (Belgrade), or with the fact they did not attend (Valjevo) was, in fact, articulated in the group discussions that followed the plenary with politicians. The data elaborated in the papers by Fiket, Ilić and Pudar Draško and Janković in this volume confirms those findings in a more systematic way.

At the plenary sessions, the experts expressed the same interest they had in the phase of drafting briefing materials. All the invited experts, both in Belgrade[6] and in Valjevo,[7] participated at the plenary sessions, making every effort to help citizens better understand the issues and related policies. Consequently, the participants evaluated the discussion with the experts very positively.

Overall, more than 80% of the participants were very satisfied with the experience of the assemblies. They claimed that their participation in the

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5   The invitations for the assembly were sent to Aleksandar Purić (Department for Urbanism, Civil Engineering, Traffic and Environmental Protection), a representative of the Serbian Environmental Protection Agency, and Zoran Stepanović (Public Services Company JKP Toplana), but they did not even respond. The invitation was accepted by Đorđe Pavlović (City Assembly Member from the Socialist Party of Serbia) and Branka Antić (Department of Health of the City of Valjevo), although they ended up not attending.
6   Experts and representatives of the civic initiatives that participated in the plenaries in Belgrade event were: Zoran Rubinjoni, (Centre for Urban Development Planning), Milena Vukmirović (Faculty of Forestry), Vladimir Đorić (Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering), Marija Maruna (Faculty of Architecture), Aleksandar Stanojlović (Architect), Ana Mitić Radulović (Center for Experiments in Urban Studies), Dubravka Lukić (Pedestrians are not Marathon Runners), Iva Čukić (The Ministry of Space), Zoran Bukvić, (Streets for Cyclists), Nevena Tarlanović (Association of the People with Disabilities)
7   Experts and representatives of the civic initiatives that participated in the plenaries in Belgrade event were: Vladimir Đurđević (Faculty of Physics, University of Belgrade), Dragana Đorđević (Institute of Chemistry, Technology & Metallurgy), Jelena Đuričić (Institute of Chemistry, Technology & Metallurgy), Aleksandar Jovović (Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade), Marija Petrović Marković (journalist of Valjevska posla focused on air pollution), Jovan Grujić (Organizations „Eko Gerila Valjevo") and Ognjan Pantić (Belgrade Open School). An invitation was also sent to Andrija Petrović from the organization „Da Valjevo prodiše" (Let Valjevo Breathe), but he did not attend.

assemblies greatly deepened their understanding of the problem at hand, approximately 85% of the participants said that the expert comments helped them gain a better understanding of the problem, and approximately 77% that after the discussion they better understood those they disagreed with. Unfortunately, the comments given by the decision-makers, according to more than 50% of the participants, helped little or not at all to better understand the problem. This was surely a consequence of the absence of response to the citizens' questions in the plenary sessions.

Although the plenary sessions with the politicians were the most disappointing segment of both citizen assemblies, there is a small difference between the behavior of decision makers that should be mentioned. In both Belgrade (capital of Serbia) and Valjevo (a smaller city in western Serbia), as well as in almost all local governments across Serbia (after 2020), key positions are held by the Serbian Progressive Party, which bears the greatest responsibility for democratic backsliding. There is a parallelism between centralization of the state and the ruling party centralization, thus it is commonly understood that many important decisions about local issues are made top down, not just by local political elites, but also by central party-political elites, based in Belgrade. This, along with the feeling that residents of Belgrade have more freedom to express their views and protest against detrimental policies compared to residents of smaller towns, leads us to say that Belgrade politicians possibly had greater freedom to join the citizen assembly in Belgrade, compared to their colleagues from Valjevo. Similarly, although DMPs as a format were unfamiliar to almost everyone, decision makers from Belgrade probably understood the importance of at least attending, precisely because there are more citizen initiatives and contentious issues in Belgrade than in Valjevo, where politicians chose to simply ignore the event, just like they tried to ignore the problem of air pollution for several years. In addition, the performance of those who took the opportunity to be in direct contact with citizens, outside the control of the local authorities or party, demonstrates their unfamiliarity and lack of experience in communicating with citizens as equals. It is not just that such forums in which citizens and representatives stand face to face do not exist, but representatives have for so long been alienated from non-staged communication that they failed to amend their approach and at least try to be sufficiently respectful.

While the online format of DMPs has probably made them less attractive for the media, journalists were to a certain extent similarly positioned as politicians – not interested in following the plenary sessions and most likely misunderstanding the purpose and potential of citizen assemblies. In authoritarian settings, with lack of media freedom, DMPs may have the potential to somewhat counter authoritarian manipulative and false information strategies (Richards 2018). To do this they must catch the attention of the rare independent media outlets, to scale up the influence of deliberation as a different type of civic communication.

6. Concluding Remarks

Is it worthwhile making DMPs in hybrid regimes, in countries that are neither leaders nor good students of deliberation? This question is especially pertinent when asked in some of the worst times of democratic recession and autocratization in Serbia (Alizada et al. 2021), when the regime controls a media landscape saturated with non-deliberative practices and the citizens mistrust not just institutions but one another (Stojiljković 2016; Stojiljković, Mihelj 2020). We have shown that politicians, especially those from the ruling parties, were not interested in participation in DMPs, while experts and citizens have been very receptive. Experts were keen to comment on briefing materials, take part in plenary sessions and respond to citizens' questions. We also received their feedback and greetings for months after the DMPs. Citizens have been very interested and almost all expressed that they have enjoyed the assemblies much more than they initially anticipated. Activists, representatives of civic initiatives, were glad to take up an opportunity to present their experience and acquired knowledge at a new venue. In a toxic media environment and very polarized public opinion (Kleut, Milojević 2021), respectful deliberation in group discussions about relevant public problems have resonated well with all citizen participants. Activists that have been part of the conflict either around different solutions for urban mobility in Belgrade or different priority measures to tackle air pollution showed to ordinary citizens both why the conflict at hand is not always rationally resolvable and negotiable (Westphal 2019) and how to lift up their democratic faith in the meaningfulness of public deliberation and activism which turn out to be needed after disappointing plenary sessions with politicians (see paper by Fiket, Ilić, Pudar Draško in this volume).

As Dryzek (2009: 1389) stresses, the best chance to find deliberative capacity in authoritarian regimes is in the oppositional public sphere or in parts of society that may not be clearly oppositional, but that also do not belong to the administrative structure. Our experience supports this view: these DMPs were organized by an academic institution that draws strongly on bottom-up civic initiatives in the selection of topics and design of citizen assemblies. Just as the majority of democratic innovations are in the domain of policy-making and administration (Warren 2014: 38), one aim of our research project is policy oriented – for decision makers to take recommendations of the citizen assemblies into account and start using DMPs as an institutionalized practice of inclusion of those affected by decisions. How are we to understand the lack of interest from decision makers to meaningfully participate in these quasi-experiments that they themselves can claim as their own contribution to deliberative democratization? It is again useful to compare authoritarian systems with democratic ones. Authoritarian deliberation is situated within policy processes with the idea of reducing social conflicts arising from complex governing issues (He, Wagenaar 2018: 628). In China, as there are no multiparty elections, the Communist Party has more incentives to implement top-down authoritarian deliberation that may improve policies and thus enhance overall legitimacy

without much risk to the status quo. What if DMPs in non-democracies are designed and function according to a similar logic and motivation as those in democracies, which ultimately just wish to "preserve the legitimacy of established political processes through elements of reform and innovation that will ultimately ensure the political survival of the regime" (Woo, Kübler 2020: 348)? The crucial distinction in the way different regime types use top-down organized DMPs is in the connection they try to establish between electoral legitimacy and policy-specific legitimacy. China does not have this rationale – the Communist Party needs an additional source of legitimacy to ideology. Liberal democracies have been criticized that electoral legitimacy does not merely translate into legitimacy of every single policy, and their attempt to tackle the crisis of representative democracy is to integrate democratization of policy-making into representative institutions. What about competitive authoritarian regimes, where elections are not free and fair, but are sometimes more, sometimes less competitive? The dominant narrative of the Serbian ruling political elite is that if one party wins elections, it is entitled to implement any policy it deems justified. In Serbia, for the DMPs to have policy effect, it seems that they must be organized top-down, as state-supported DMPs instead of civil-society-led DMPs (Courant 2021) – bottom-up citizen initiatives in Serbia are rarely accepted by policy makers. At the same time, it would be reasonable to expect that the function of the state-supported DMPs in a hybrid regime would solely be to legitimize the authoritarian status quo. Everything else – giving an official mandate, funding, and media space for non-staged deliberation – is risky for the authoritarian regime, as it opens up a space for contestation of their final authority on all policy processes.

When DMPs are civil-society-led, they tend to lack institutional support, state funding, and sufficient time for deliberation, and this is especially the case in hybrid regimes. Being organized by academia or civil society, the response of the hybrid regime is to ignore them, thus making them politically ineffective. This response for a hybrid regime is rational because an authentic opportunity for democratization, in our view, can credibly come from critical civil society (social movements or civil society organizations, in this particular case from DMPs created by academic institutions and civil society actors). In a polarized hybrid regime, it might even be necessary that organizers have a clear stance of independence, so that they are not accused of being captured by the state or serving as its administrative staff with bad design and poor implementation. Otherwise, there is a risk of the widespread public distrust in authoritarian political institutions spilling over into the institutions of DMPs. This comes at a cost – DMPs would not be directly politically influential in terms of implementation of policies but may lead towards incremental advances in the deliberative capacity of the oppositional public that may one day scale up. If they cannot affect immediate policies, why organize them? One may wonder whether such micro-deliberative experiments can at all tackle macro-level discontent and whether they do this "sufficiently quickly and robustly so as to trigger visible change in democratic practices before populists

completely erode democratic institutions" (Suteu 2019: 490–491)? DMPs are certainly not a panacea for all the problems of hybrid regimes, and even if they turn out to be useful, they will not be sufficient remedies. Regardless of that, a critical oppositional public sphere experimenting with institutional innovations such as DMPs can enhance public trust, citizens' sense of understanding of politics and attitudes towards the need for civic participation, politically articulate bottom-up led deliberative democratization that may one day have an official mandate by a more democratic government. DMPs designed as citizen assemblies in Belgrade and Valjevo can bridge the gap between apathetic citizens and local activists, and connect with the rest of the political system through a spillover into other non-approved arenas[8].

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8   Our citizen assemblies, in fact, inspired a civil society organisation Ministarstvo prostora (Ministry of Space) to organize three participatory forums in Belgrade a year later, https://ministarstvoprostora.org/2021/11/10/odrzan-prvi-participativni-forum/

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Irena Fiket i Biljana Đorđević

Obećanja i izazovi deliberativnih i participativnih inovacija u hibridnim režimima: slučaj dve Građanske skupštine u Srbiji

Apstrakt

Zabrinjavajući trend autokratizacije koja se širi svetom poslednjih godina je pokrenuo novi talas poziva na deliberativnu i participativnu demokratiju kao lek za krizu. Uz nekoliko izuzetaka, većina participativnih i deliberativnih institucija je uspostavljana i sprovođena u stabilnim demokratijama. Napori da se participativni i deliberativni modeli institucionalizuju skoro u potpunosti izostaju u Srbiji i drugim zemljama Zapadnog Balkana. Ipak, ono što je prisutno je mobilizacija građana u okviru društvenih pokreta i lokalnih građanskih inicijativa, koja je istovremeno simptom neodgovornih i sve očiglednije autoritarnih institucija, kao i potencijalni put ka demokratizaciji. Tempo i obim ovakvog razvoja demokratskih eksperimenata, kako onih odozdo nagore tako i onih odozgo nadole, u nedemokratskim društvima regiona Zapadnog Balkana, zahtevaju bolje razumevanje njihove unutrašnje dinamike i njihovog društvenog i političkog uticaja. Kao odgovor na ovu potrebu, članci u ovom tematu stavljaju naglasak na mobilizaciju društvenih pokreta i deliberativno eksperimentisanje.

Na samom početku, naš uvodni članak se posebno fokusira na razumevanje moguće uloge koju bi deliberativne institucije mogle da imaju u hibridnim režimima. Razmatraju se prva dva slučaja deliberativnih mini javnosti (DMJ) ikada organizovanih u Srbiji, uz analizu obrazloženja, specifičnog dizajna, sprovođenja DMJ, kao i sagledavanje moguće uloge koju bi deliberativne institucije mogle da imaju u hibridnom režimu Srbije.

Ključne reči: deliberacija, deliberativne mini javnosti, građanska participacija, Građanske skupštine, društveni pokreti, hibridni režimi, autokratizacija

Ivana Janković

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY – THEORY AND PRACTICE: THE CASE OF THE BELGRADE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY[1]

ABSTRACT
In this paper, we examine whether it is possible to improve democracy by encouraging ordinary citizens to participate in political decision-making and if participation in deliberative institutions can make citizens more competent decision-makers. By using qualitative data, we analyze the discussion from the Belgrade citizens' assembly (CA) focused on the topic of expanding the pedestrian zone in the city center. The CA was organized in Serbia for the first time, as part of a research project aimed at promoting and advancing innovative democratic practices in the Western Balkans. The goal was to encourage the involvement of citizens in discussions of public interest. Our hypothesis was that, through the process of participation and deliberation in CA, ordinary citizens can make reasonable and informed choices, increase their knowledge of the issue discussed, and become more motivated to participate in political decision-making on the local level. Our qualitative content analysis suggests that deliberation had a positive impact on participants' knowledge of the chosen topic of the assembly. It also shows that citizens used exhaustive explanations rather than brief statements, could differentiate the good arguments from the bad, and more often appealed to general rather than private interests. Participants in the assembly reported a significant increase in interest in political decision-making that affects their lives, as well as a sense of being informed about politics. Finally, we wanted to draw attention to the challenges and open questions that remain, namely those that concern the impact of a deliberative body on political decision-making in the real world.

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Introduction

Democracy is expanding across the world, and yet its principles and institutions are becoming increasingly detached from their original *raison d'être* – "rule of the people, by the people, for the people", as defined by US President Abraham Lincoln in one of the best-known speeches in human history. Even when political leaders are chosen by the people, they sometimes transform democracy into its polar opposite. Inconsiderate actions of political elites and media manipulation support each other and undermine the very idea of "rule of the people". Democracies, especially those with authoritarian and populist leaders and governments, have become places where ordinary citizens are almost entirely alienated from the process of political decision-making. Consequently, there is a decreased voter turnout (Solijonov 2016), a lack of citizens' interest in political decision-making and democratic institutions (Brennan 2016), apathy among the population (Greenberg 2010), and a sense of disconnection with decisions made by elected representatives (Parvin 2018). This seriously undermines the effective functioning of democracy and calls into question the very legitimacy of democratic outcomes.

Advocates of theory known as *deliberative democracy* (Bohman 1998; Cohen 1989; Dryzek 2000; Gutmann, Thompson 1996; Habermas 1996; Manin 1987) claim that this approach offers solutions for the democratic crisis. Although the content of deliberative ideals has developed during the years, there is a general understanding that "deliberative democracy is grounded in an ideal in which people, of equal status and mutual respect, come together to discuss the political issues they face and, based on those discussions, decide on the policies that will then affect their lives" (Bächtiger et al., eds., 2018: 21). Deliberative approach supporters are optimistic about citizens' capacity to make sound decisions and argue that citizens can become more competent, more interested, and more active through the process of deliberation (Landemore 2012; List et al. 2012; Fishkin 2009; Fishkin, Luskin 2005). They claim that if citizens are given the chance to be involved in genuine forms of public high-quality deliberation, they will be enforced to be more involved in the political life of the community and thus significantly contribute to the value and legitimacy of democratic outcomes (Manin 1987; Cohen 1989; Bohman 1998). This position requires the absence of coercive power in the discussion, that citizens have a voice in political decision-making, equal freedom to express their opinion, mutual respect for each other (for different arguments and claims), and an argumentative explanation of their positions (good reason-giving). Additionally, citizens should form their opinion while taking into account the opinions of others and the general interest (Bächtiger et al. 2018; Cohen, 1989; Mansbridge et al. 2017; Steenbergen et al. 2003).

This paper aims to examine the possibility of practical realization of deliberative democracy expectation through deliberative *mini-publics DPM* (Elstub 2014, Fishkin et al. 2000, 2005, Gerber et al. 2018). They serve as a sample of the population that can represent the existing diversity of opinions and

attitudes about policy issues under discussion that can be found in society as a whole. In order to include various socio-demographic categories, this group of citizens can be selected randomly or through selective sampling - to additionally secure the representation of those people who are particularly influenced by the issues under discussion. Various DPM, such as deliberative polls, citizen assemblies, citizens juries, town meetings, are conducted around the world. DMP serves as a mechanism that enables citizens to participate in the process of collective decision-making. Although they can differ in design, they are all motivated by the deliberative democracy ideal of inclusive participation in the political life of the community.

We analyze the first CA held in Belgrade in November 2020[2]. This is done through our process observations, which we personally attended, and through the audio recording of the group discussion in the CA. This was a particularly challenging experiment for the deliberative practice, since in Serbia vast majority of people hardly have any understanding of the possibility of civic participation through non-partisan forums, and thus have underdeveloped political motivation and competence for participation in political life (Fiket et al. 2017; Đorđević, Fiket 2022; Fiket,Ilić, Pudar Draško 2022)[3]. The aim is to examine the efficacy of CA and its capacity to support good deliberation and encourage citizens to participate in political decision-making in given conditions.

To do so, we will first discuss the central claims of deliberative democracy, as opposed to the economic theory of democracy and its empirical findings. Then we will present the possibility of empirical realization of certain deliberative ideals listed in the literature, and their evolution in light of practical concerns of today's democratic societies, characterized by deep disagreement and complexity of social problems and political decision making. We will then focus our examination on the question of whether the assumptions about the benefits of public deliberation have been supported by our findings from this specific CA. We will describe how the assembly affected the empowerment, participation, and deliberation of the assembly's participants. We used the qualitative method because we were interested in the content of the discussion.[4] Using the speech analysis we will investigate whether the participants were respectful to each other, especially to those with whom they disagree; if they were giving brief, simple, and loosely associated statements about certain issues (or used more argumentative and reasoned claims); if their ability to make judgments and weigh arguments and reasons was high or low and prone to making errors, which would, in turn, diminish their ability to be self-critical and to impartially consider the interests of others. We also wanted to see

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2   For the exhaustive and precise information on the design and choice of the term citizens' assembly for Belgrade DMP see Fiket, Đorđević in this volume.

3   For a more detailed description of the hybrid regimes and context in which the first CA in Serbia took place see Fiket, Đorđević in this volume.

4   For the result of quantitative data collected in Belgrade CA see a paper by Đorđević, Vasiljević (see Fiket,Ilić, Pudar Draško, and Đorđević,Vasiljević in this volume).

if the decisions made by participants of CA were adopted by majority vote or unanimously. Finally, we will present our opinion on the possibility of deliberative practice to bring the solution to the problems of civic incompetence, lack of interest, and knowledge about political decision-making.

Deliberative Democracy as a Remedy for the Democratic Deficit?

There is a growing challenge of political polarization that undermines democracies' foundations across the world (Carothers, O'Donohue, eds., 2019; McCoy et al. 2018). Ideologically extreme political parties and interests use public disposition and willingness to be polarized and exploited through demagoguery and powerful media manipulation for the sake of partisan interest. Considering all possible benefits that political elites can have from the current state of affairs, it seems that our best hope can be found on the other side – with the ordinary citizens. (Dryzek *et al.* 2019). But the question is if ordinary citizens are competent enough to use that power adequately.

For a very long time, research in political science yields quite pessimistic conclusions about citizens' knowledge, competence, motivation, and tolerance for different opinions – all of which are needed to participate in tenable democratic decision-making (Achen, Bartels 2016; Caplan 2011; Carpini, Keeter 1996; Downs 1957; McCoy et al. 2018; Sunstein 1999; Zaller 1992). Claims that peoples' votes are arbitrary and meaningless (Riker 1982), that citizens are uninformed, biased and disinterested, blind to reasons for or against any alternatives (Ahlstrom-Vij 2019), can feed arguments that the elitist approach to democracy is best we can hope for. The elitist view rest on a small number of people who possess the intellectual abilities and education necessary to engage in public policies (Lipset 1960; Meyer 1974; Schumpeter 1942). Democracy is thus a mere mechanism, with no intrinsic value, that allows peaceful competition among elites for the formal positions of leadership within the system. They dictate their views and are not controlled by the citizens. Being a class of passive followers, citizens' only role is to avoid serious disasters when they see that politicians act in a problematic way (Schumpeter 1942).

The historical successor to this approach, usually labeled as "economic" theory of democracy (cf. Downs 1957) due to its intercorrelation with social choice theory, puts the expression of one's preferences as both the methodological starting point and the ultimate output of one's democratic participation (Riker 1982). Given this rather limited viewpoint, and empirical findings on citizens' bounded capacities, it is no wonder that various theorists became pessimistic regarding democracy's long-term benefits and its tendency to produce sound decisions. In the second part of the 20th century, however, this approach was theoretically dominant, and its central institution of democracy – voting – is still the prevailing practice in contemporary societies.

But over the past half-century, a silent revolution in democratic theory and practice has been occurring over the past half-century – the emergence of a new approach to democracy called deliberative democracy. In the early formation

of the deliberative ideal in the 1980s, deliberation was always contrasted with democratic models that have traditionally relied on the idea of competing elites, private interest maximization, aggregation, and the strategic practice supported by voting and bargaining (Cohen 1989; Gutmann, Thompson 1996; Knight, Johnson 1997; Habermas 1984, 1996). It is a form of democracy where public deliberation, rather than occasional voting, is central to the process of justification of the laws, decisions, and principles that apply to the community. Here, deliberation is conceived as an ideal form of discussion in which participants gather and discuss their problems and disagreements, give reasons to their views, listen and show respect to each other, motivated by the desire to make the best collective decisions (Bächtiger et al. 2018; Benhabib 1996; Besson, Marti 2006; Bohman, Rehg 1997; Elster 1998; Macedo 1999). Although deliberative democracy involves a broad spectrum of ideas, we can say that its ultimate aim is to give legitimacy to political decisions, by creating procedures that allow the said decisions to be a result of enlarged civic inclusion, publicly expressed reason, mutual understanding, and tolerance.

In other words, whereas traditional models of democracy concentrate on the aggregation of individual preferences, made by individuals or political elites, deliberative democracy focuses on creating a sense of public reason (Rawls 1993, 1997). This form of democracy puts communication that involves evaluating and reflecting on reasons, values, and interests (i.e. careful considerations of alternatives) regarding matters of common concern, at the center of politics and political decision-making. During the process of deliberation, participants value the opinions of the persons in the group with superior arguments rather than those with superior status (Polleta, Gardner 2018: 69). By doing so, deliberative democrats seek to transform current systems of governance – which are often associated with power asymmetries, social exclusion, and mutual distrust – and develop the greater trust of citizens in political institutions, enabling them to understand political issues more fully and making them more willing to participate in the political life of their community (Bohman 1996; Dryzek 2000; Fishkin 1995; Habermas 1996). In that way, political decisions are best created, and are thus more legitimate, through a process of public deliberation, which will decrease the democratic deficits that are currently experienced in most democracies.

The first generation of deliberative democracy theorists had a highly idealized understanding of the process of deliberation that ends in a rationally motivated consensus to which everyone can agree on (Rawls 1993, 1997; Habermas 1995, 1996; Cohen 1989, 1997). The question is then if this deliberative ideal – which presupposes ideal equality, mutual respect, purely rational arguments, thoughtful and informed decision-making, and calls upon the general will and a common interest (rather than a private and selfish one) – is just a utopian notion that has nothing to do with real-world politics?

Although the word "utopia", etymologically speaking, means "a place that does not exist", we can think about it another way – as a "world of possibilities". Thus, the theory and practice of deliberative democracy can be seen as

a possibility to come up with more legitimate and more informed democratic decisions. It can be perceived as a way to improve our democracies and make them work better. Deliberative experiments can show us the benefits of collective decision-making and ordinary citizens' participation in political life, but also the capacities and shortcomings of democratic practices, citizens, and political experts' decision-making.

But Is Deliberative Democracy Really Working?

Those who advance the theory of deliberative democracy (Cohen 1989; Bohman, Rehg 1997; Bohman 1998; Elster 1998, Macedo 1999; Freeman 2000) believe that power belongs to all citizens and should be exercised equally over everyone. Therefore, it is necessary for all people to strive to find the conditions by which they can live together, based on arguments reasoning, and mutual respect. And yet, it seems that wide disparities in wealth and power, education and abilities, available free time and personal interests for certain issues, as well as the diversity of opinions and perspectives, are at odds with the basic tenets of deliberative democracy. This is not, however, a reason to completely reject the idea of deliberative democracy. Theorists of deliberative democracy see it as a goal to which we aspire, an ideal that will probably never be achieved; it is, nevertheless, an ideal that can and should serve as a guiding principle (Fishkin, Luskin 2005; Landemore 2012; Mansbridge et al. 2017).

The highly idealized understanding of the process of deliberation advocated by the first theorists of deliberative democracy faces practical challenges on different fronts. Can we really demand the use of strictly "rational" arguments in the deliberation process? Or we should expand the idea of what counts as communication rationality, in order to be more inclusive for diverse citizens and their diverse perspectives, value pluralism, identities, conflicting interest, biases, and imperfections? Is there room in the public sphere for appropriately limited self-interest? Is it possible for all citizens to participate? Theorists of the second generation of deliberative democracy strived to solve the difficulties that the utopian model brought with it, taking a more realistic approach to deliberative democracy and stressing plurality as an ideal (Bohman 1996; Gutmann, Thompson 1996, 2004; Young 1996, 1999; Dryzek 2000; Goodin 2008; Mansbridge et al. 2017; Parkinson, Bächtiger 2019).

Second-generation theorists of deliberative democracy acknowledged the complexity of contemporary societies, value pluralism, the failure to reach consensus, and the need for voting after the deliberation process[5]. They also recognized and took into account various forms of communication and private preferences, the number of people in political communities, and socio-economic inequalities, thus adapting the original deliberative position to real political circumstances and demands. By going beyond a strictly normative theory,

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5   Not only because of mere practical urgency to make political decisions at some finite time but also because not all (moral) disputes can be solved by agreement.

deliberative democracy entered the field of empirical examination and tried to solve the difficulties that the traditional and utopian model had brought for practical possibilities of deliberation. For example, an ideal of equality that presupposes that each participant has an equal effect on the deliberative outcome, later theorists interpret as simply "equal opportunity of political influence" (Knight, Johnson 1997: 292). The idea of using exclusively rational argument is seen as too demanding and reserved for a small group of people. There are many important forms of human communication other than reason-giving, more usable to members of relatively marginalized groups and people with less formal education. Story-telling that involves personal experience rather than abstract arguments and rhetoric that can involve humor are some of the most relevant ones (Young 2000). Emotions can also be a significant element of good reasoning in matters of public concern, as is the emotion of compassion (Nussbaum 2001) or empathy (Neblo 2015).

The request for consensus was also mitigated or abandoned. Later theorists found that agreement is often impossible, even under strictly constructed principles (Bohman 1995, 1996; Gutmann, Thompson 1996, 2004). Some have gone a step further, arguing that the full consensus, where everyone accepts the same outcome for the same reasons, is unnecessary and even undesirable (Dryzek 2000). And if consensus cannot be reached, the deliberative procedure needs to be supplemented by a voting procedure (Cohen 1997). This time, however, the input information for the aggregation mechanism are not preferences based solely on particular, selfish interests (as in the free-market economy). Instead, they are formed during active public deliberation, by taking into account the interests and needs of other members of society (Bohman, Rehg, eds., 1997).

Later theorists of deliberative democracy aimed to show that deliberation should not be reserved for a small circle of privileged or educated, who can meet the strictly prescribed conditions set by first-generation theorists, but that deliberative practice should encompass various forms of communication and be part of a wider democratic life. They wanted to emphasize the role that public discourse plays in a democracy and to restore citizens' trust and motivation to participate in political decision-making. This has been described as an "empirical turn" in the era of deliberative democracy (Dryzek 2001).

The findings from numerous empirical studies of deliberation are different or rather inconclusive (Carpini et al. 2004; Fishkin, Luskin 2005; Janssen, Kies 2005; List et al. 2012; Ryfe 2005). Some findings of deliberative practice, embodied in various deliberative institutions, reveal empathetic listening more than persuasion, story-telling more than making formal arguments, and focusing on the personal dimension of issues more than on common good (Dryzek 2007; Polletta, Chen 2013). Participants tend to make (and find persuasive) simple statements of fact or opinion, using more informal form of argument that is less complex than formal, logical models described by the first theorists (Meyers, Brashers 1998). Some findings support deliberative group's ability to reach a decision, arrive at recommendations, or identify areas of agreement and disagreement (Mansbridge et al. 2006), while others claim that exchange

of reasons occurs only after deliberation participants get to know and trust each other, by sharing personal stories about how the specific problem affects them (McCoy, Scully 2002). At the same time, deliberation is claimed to increase knowledge and level of information (Fishkin, Luskin 2005; List et al. 2012), preference structuration (List et al. 2012), and efficacy (Min 2007) which leads to increased political engagement (Harder, Krosnick 2008); and to decrease group polarization under certain conditions (Sunstein 2002) and biases in individual reasoning (Mercier, Landemore 2012). Despite the listed ambivalence of empirical results from deliberative practice, these findings are not as nearly as pessimistic as those obtained outside of deliberative institutions (through polls and questionnaires).

The (non)possession of factual knowledge is very different from citizens' competence to solve political problems, once that information and knowledge are presented to them[6]. Most of the existing studies (e.g. Luskin 1987; Delli Carpini, Keeter 1996; Caplan 2011) cannot show a causal link between the inability of people to answer certain types of political questions and their alleged political incompetence, namely the inability to make the sound choices about issues that affect their lives. This is in part because the design of factual political questionnaires mirror elitism, measuring a type of knowledge relevant for political commentators, but not necessarily the only one suitable to good political choices (Lupia 2006). It is precisely the process of public deliberation that is crucial for citizens to gain new information, revise their views, assume different viewpoints, and collectively develop new ways to comprehend the issues they discuss. The mentioned research does not affect deliberative democracy at all, because they were "measured" in a different way and under different circumstances. Many deliberative institutions work as intended by their designers. They promote carefully organized and scientifically constructed conditions, supportive institutional features, such as balanced information materials, experts on multiple sides available for questioning, facilitation, and sessions with different actors, as well as necessary deliberative norms. Deliberative institutions that are well-designed and well-supported are proving conducive to surprisingly high levels of deliberative quality as well as to opinion change driven by argument rather than by undesirable group dynamics (see e.g. Gerber et al. 2016; Siu 2009, 2017; Warren, Pearse 2008). Various examples with deliberative experiments show that ordinary citizens can contribute to finding solutions to political problems, even those specifically technical (Fishkin, Luskin 2005). This is achieved by implementing institutional designs that compensate for well-known cognitive and emotional biases and give effects that are in line with theory assumptions, as intended by their designers (Warren, Pearse 2008; Siu 2009; Mercier, Landemore 2012; Fishkin et al. 2012; Gerber et al. 2018).

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6   There is a clear difference in citizens' competence in the pre-deliberative and post-deliberative phases (Fishkin, Luskin 2005; Fishkin 2009)

The most promising approach for empirical research would therefore seem to be to continue trying to discover the conditions in which deliberative democracy does and does not work well while paying more attention to the question of to what extent the unfavorable conditions could change.

There are various institutional bodies and practices through which we can exercise democratic deliberation. Citizens Assembly (CA) is just one of them. A CA is a body formed by a random selection of citizens, who would not otherwise interact, to deliberate on important issues of public concern. Robert Dahl foresaw the potential of such institutions when he proposed "restoring that ancient democratic device and use it for selecting advisory councils for every elected official of the giant polyarchy – mayors of large cities, state governors, members of the US House and Senate, and even the president" (Dahl 1990: 123).

Experimental Design – Belgrade Citizens' Assembly

Belgrade has been under intensive reconstruction for years. One of the many things that this reconstruction includes is the expansion of the pedestrian zone in Belgrade city center. It has been announced that the anticipated expansion will include about twenty streets around an area already closed to motorized traffic. In the public sphere, different arguments *for* and *against* this project could be heard from various activists and experts. City officials have already announced a plan to reconstruct the city center, despite the various actions, meetings, and protests of unsatisfied citizens, who opposed the expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city center. There was no clear, detailed, and transparent official information about urban change planning. None of the public officials answered the questions and demands of the citizens. For that reason, the issue of expansion of the pedestrian zone in the Belgrade city center was chosen as the deliberation topic of the CA.

Due to the unfavorable epidemiological situation caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, members of the Scientific Committee who organized the CA in Belgrade decided to move the event fully online, using the Zoom platform**.** The Belgrade assembly was attended by citizens from different demographic categories. In terms of age, there were 34.38% of citizens aged 16-30, 56.25% aged 31-60, and 9.38% were over 60 years old. There were 40.63% male and 59.38% female participants. In terms of education, 3.13% of the participants had only primary education, 37.5% had a high school degree, and 59.38% had a college or university degree.

CA included a total of 32 participants[7] divided, with the help of neutral moderators, into four smaller groups with eight participants in each. In each group, there were six-seven "ordinary" citizens, that is, representatives of the population that is *particularly affected* by the possible expansion of the pedestrian

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7   The planned sample was 40 participants, but due to the epidemiological situation and online discussion, that number was reduced to obtain sufficient diversity in the sample and enough space for conversation among all participants.

zone – people who live or work in the city center – and one-two "active" citizens (see Fiket, Ilić Pudar Draško 2022), representatives of organizations that have already publicly expressed their views regarding the expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city center project. On the whole, there was 78.13% "ordinary citizens" and 21.88% "active" citizens. Additionally, representatives of the sensitive groups were included[8] (those whose lives and work would be more affected by the extension of the pedestrian zone): parents with small children (up to 10 years), people with physical disabilities, retirees, owners, and workers in facilities located in a defined zone, and workers and managers of cultural institutions (both public and private) such as museums, libraries, galleries, and other cultural institutions.

The "citizens' jury" of both active and ordinary citizens had the chance to hear arguments from various *independent experts* and *political decision-makers*, and ask them questions in return. The CA included three discussions with two panels in between (one with experts, the other with decision-makers). Citizens' task within each group was to exchange arguments and sort through different (and often conflicting) claims, and eventually come up with recommendations for public officials to implement.

Weeks before the debate, the participants received carefully designed and balanced briefing materials that informed them about a variety of perspectives and beliefs in order to familiarize them with the discussion topic. During deliberation, participants were encouraged to explore, comprehend, change, and develop their perspectives, as well as to better assess the perspectives of others. The experts who provided additional information were carefully selected to offer different viewpoints, ideas, and thoughts on the issue discussed. The citizens looked at the relevant facts and values from multiple points of view. They critically assessed the available choices through discussion in which all equally participated, and ultimately worked through the underlying disagreements, antagonisms, and difficult choices inherent to complex political problems. After that, they had the opportunity to question the *political decision-makers*, and to make their own proposals regarding the expansion of the pedestrian zone. In the final, decision-making phase, participants made some conclusions about what they heard and learned during this process. There was no need to pressure participants in the CA to produce a false sense of consensus (agreement). In addition to the positions agreed upon, voting was held to capture all of the participants' opinions, ensuring that both minority and majority perspectives were heard.[9]

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8   Participants were selected by stratified random sampling. Although the random sampling can ensure the equal chance of all citizens being elected, oversampling some marginalized groups can increase the likelihood that their voice is heard (James 2008)
9   Even though deliberative democracy is based on a mechanism very different from the *pure* aggregative approach that relies on a system of collecting individual votes (regarded as a private act of expressing individual will or preferences) the two are not mutually exclusive. They can be combined in the political decision-making process and both are very important if applied in a particular order – public deliberation must precede votes aggregation. The reason is that deliberation can support citizens to

The First Discussion

Given that the deliberation process should provide a free space for expressing attitudes, exchanging opinions, asking questions, gathering information, and working together on the policy proposal, we wanted to examine whether this democratic mechanism made this possible. To get answers to some of the questions about the deliberative practice, we will use citizens' statements from the group discussion we had a chance to follow.

At the beginning of the discussion, some participants explicitly supported the idea of pedestrian zone expansion, others were more cautious and skeptical, while some were strongly opposed to it. Nevertheless, from the initial and spontaneous reactions of the citizens in the first group discussion, it immediately became clear that they had a problem with the *legitimacy* of the project decisions. "The problem is the way this is done, not whether it should be done. I'm not sure I have a clear position on whether I need a wider pedestrian zone or not", one participant said.

The problem of legitimacy is usually closely related to distrust in government decisions, which, as previously stated, undermines democratic rule. Moreover, citizens have the feeling that their interests are not taken into account. "I don't trust this government, so I guess that certainly affects my attitude. But, on the other hand, procedurally, I don't see who consulted the citizens, the users of that space, the people who live there, work there… I don't understand how the public interest was determined. That bothers me a lot more. Everything is justified in the name of citizens' interest, but nobody asks the citizens anything about anything".

Regardless of the dissatisfaction with the way the local government treated the citizens in the process of transforming the city center, further discussion among participants led to the recognition of certain advantages and arguments in favor of expanding the pedestrian zone. In the first place, they highlighted the potential environmental benefits. Specifically, they pointed to the improvement in the local ecological environment, stressing that traffic rerouting would reduce noise and air pollution in some streets. Some participants pointed out that it also contributes, in the long run, to the promotion of cycling, pedestrian, and public transportation at the expense of motor vehicles. "We who live and work here experience psychological harassment due to the behavior of certain drivers and the way they park their cars. Those who work here come and go and that's it; the pedestrian zone would be good primarily for the health of the people who live in this part of the city". Further arguments for this intervention were the possibilities for the creation of urban green spaces and tourism (economic) development.

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comprehend the addressed problems, to better understand their interests and the interests of others, and then to come up with more informed decisions – either through collective agreement or through an individual vote (Bächtiger et al., eds., 2018: 21).

We can see how inclusive deliberation between diverse groups of people can bring new perspectives and make them *rethink* their previous views in light of new information. While initially almost everybody accepted arguments about tourism benefits and noise reduction, one participant urged others to *reconsider* what appeared to be obvious benefits. She said: "In my opinion, if we say that the expansion of the pedestrian zone is accompanied by economic and tourism development, and an increase in catering facilities, entertainment facilities, and so on, the issue of noise is being introduced again: it will not be reduced but increased. On the other hand, the benefits would indeed be the reduction of exhaust gases, cleaner air, especially if it is accompanied by the expansion of the green zone". And immediately, the other participants replied: "I live there. The noise coming from the traffic when you open the window in the evening is nothing, it's like white noise. But when drunken people pass by and scream and shout and go waiting for the bus on the bridge, believe me, it's a lot louder".

When the moderator asked for citizens' opinions about who would surely benefit from this project, participants made a distinction between public and private interests, i.e. the interests of certain groups. Most of the citizens agreed that the project will surely benefit young people and caterers. One participant said: "Young people will benefit more than old people. We already have a problem with the ambulance in the existing pedestrian zone. It all needs to be well organized in order to be beneficial for everyone, not just young people. Also, it will benefit people who have a property in the city center, but live somewhere outside the center; because they will be able to rent the property in the center to tourists". Another participant agreed: "Young people will benefit the most... those who are coming to the city center purposefully for fun and parties... there would be no danger of being hit by a car if they get drunk. Secondly, as far as caterers are concerned, it may be alright for those who own cafes and restaurants, but for those who run hotels, it could be catastrophic. Would a foreigner who comes here for a business trip want to walk three kilometers with his luggage to get into one of the many hotels in this area? It would not help the most profitable branch of the hospitality industry. I don't think it's good at all. Older people will have nothing to do here. And not just old people. Our city center is not designed as a part of Berlin around, for example, the Brandenburg Gate, where you don't have a lot of housing. Here, it's a different story".

The debate makes it clear that there is a concern that the center will become inaccessible and difficult to traverse for people with limited mobility (older people and people with disabilities, parents with small kids, etc.), and that the ecological benefit argument is limited and unconvincing. As one participant said: "Increasing the pedestrian zone will not necessarily increase green areas, as we have seen so far in the previous projects in the city".

In debating about whether this project could contribute to the cultural and historical identity of the city, some participants claimed that it will be harder to get to the museums, theaters, and galleries. As one said: "It will be difficult for older people, who visit museums and theaters more often, to get to them. And for disabled people too. So, it doesn't contribute, on the contrary".

Other participants responded that there is always a way to make things work: "Something like that small electric vehicle that already operates in the pedestrian zone can be used for transport. There's no need for massive means of transportation such as buses and trolleybuses".

Participants of the assembly agreed that the issue is not only complex but also nontransparent to citizens. That is why they did not feel comfortable having or giving a clear answer to the specific question of whether they are for or against the expansion. They agreed that the general plan is obscure and that it is unclear how it will affect the already problematic functioning of traffic and lack of parking spaces, as well as what the idea behind the expansion is, who benefits from it, whose life would be made more difficult, and what is the government's vision of Belgrade in the future. As one participant said: "It seems to me that this is why all of us have a problem with this specific issue. We start from a hypothetical situation – if the problem of traffic would be solved... But, the traffic is not the only problematic aspect of this project. That is why it is so difficult for us to imagine an ideal situation, and we are very skeptical about a functional solution".

While considering the legal aspect of the problem, one of the participants, who supported the expansion of the pedestrian zone from the beginning, said: "In the media, I saw some people complaining that they did not participate in the making of and developing this project. Looking at it as a lawyer, I can say that authorities are not obliged to include them. However, I believe that for the sake of greater legitimacy, citizens who live in these streets should have been invited to participate in decision-making. I think that citizens should have been more involved, and this is my main argument against this project".

One of the active citizens, whose organization was already publicly engaged on the issue, said: "I completely agree with what was said earlier. First of all, this is too vague a procedure for carrying out such a major intervention in the city". In reply to the statement that there is no legal obligation for public debate, she answered: "It is only because the planning document is missing. There is a simple procedure and a hierarchy of plans. The project cannot rely on strategy, the strategy is not binding, not in the way that plans and planning documents are. This project does not rely on anything, it came out of nowhere and the authorities use this legal loophole that public debate does not have to be organized, but in fact, the legitimacy of such an intervention must be realized in conversation with citizens, as the [the name of the previous speaker] nicely said... I do not agree with [other participant's name[10]] and think that it is *possible to find a solution for different needs* [emphasis added]. It is only necessary to map those needs together with the citizens. Secondly, I also think that the long-term impact of such an unplanned intervention in the city center is very dangerous, difficult to see from this perspective... Those properties, the value of which will rise, will lead to unseen segregation. Only restaurants that can

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10   She was referring to the citizen who earlier in the debate said that it is impossible to satisfy everyone's needs.

pay the high prices and people who can pay the rent will remain. It will thus contribute to the tragic segregation of citizens in Belgrade, which I think is a disastrous outcome".

Other participants went even further in deepening the understanding of the issue at stake. One participant said that if somebody makes such interventions in the city center, it does not matter if you live or work *there* – the focus should be on how it affects other parts of the city. "I once heard from an expert that in a big city, if something is done in one area it has a domino effect on the entire city", she said.

The first discussion revealed that for the majority of citizens, the idea of a wider pedestrian zone *would have been* acceptable if there had been a prior public debate; and if the plan for the city development in the following period had been more transparent. Most of the citizens agreed that those missing steps would have made the project more acceptable. At the end of the first discussion, citizens agreed that they *would* back the project *if* it included ease of movement for those with mobility problems, allowed access to ambulances and fire trucks, as well as if it provided solutions for parking and regulated dining establishments. They also all agreed that the involvement of the citizens in the first, planning phase is not enough and that continued participation is necessary.

Panel with Experts

After the first discussion, citizens from all four smaller groups were brought together in the first plenary session with independent experts. During the panel, there was a lively dialogue between the participants and experts, both on camera and in written communication (chat). They were given an opportunity, through their group representative[11], to ask questions they previously agreed upon. Citizens presented specific issues related to the expansion of the pedestrian zone, became familiarized with experts' views, and heard new information, clarifications, and possible suggestions during a short time.

In the group we followed, the key topics and questions that stood out were sorted into three groups. The first included the question about how should participatory planning process look from beginning to end, and what mechanism would allow project monitoring and modification in line with citizens' experiences. The second group of questions was related to traffic issues and possible solutions: How to solve the possibility of fire trucks and ambulances in the pedestrian zone? How exhaustive should a new traffic rerouting plan be in order to avoid the negative consequences (i.e. traffic jams, etc.) of making a pedestrian zone in the city center? What vehicles would be most suitable for

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11   During the discussion participants easily agreed on a representative who will communicate their views and ask questions on which they had previously agreed. There was no need to vote on the most important questions since they ranked them in order of importance based on consensus.

the transport of persons with disabilities and the elderly? How should parking zones for authorized vehicles for residents and people who drive to the pedestrian zone from other parts of the city be regulated, controlled, and monitored? Are there any alternative locations for the underground parking garage, planned to be built in the University Park (urban green space)? Would the new pedestrian zone disrupt traffic in other parts of the city? The third group of questions was about the cost-effectiveness of the project; its financial aspect. Is it responsible from the financial aspect to reconstruct the already repaired Republic Square and install tram rails at the Slavija Square?

We argue that these questions and their range demonstrate 1) citizens' motivation and will to better understand the different aspects of the project in question, and 2) that a deep comprehension of the issue in question emerges after deliberative discussion. Furthermore, the answers and the information the citizens received from experts were to be used for further joint work on their final proposals which were distributed to the decision-makers.

The Second Discussion

The discussion with the experts resulted in useful information and suggestions. "I heard that we need to discourage the use of cars in the city center by, for example, raising parking prices, which would make people use public transport more or to walk. I think it should be done if we want to avoid traffic jams", one participant said.

Another participant stated: "It was very interesting to hear people from different industries, each of them expressed their opinion on this topic and for me, it brought an expansion of knowledge... It was interesting what they were talking about, the Paris model... The introduction of a car-free day in the wider center would be acceptable for me, even an extension to two days, on the weekend, as a pilot project".

One participant replied that he believed such an example existed in Belgrade in the past, with pedestrian-friendly Saturdays: "But people still walked on the sidewalks, where they normally walk, they didn't use streets. So we need to raise people's awareness. That's the only way we can do it. And maybe we could test certain ideas not by doing something and then abandoning it if it doesn't work, because that's expensive, but rather by trying out ideas on certain days of the month". Others disagreed. They argued that one or two days are not enough to see all the possible consequences; when life goes on, various situations happen all the time.

One participant also noticed that, regardless of expertise, it is impossible that one single person could resolve a long series of difficult problems: "It's great that we had a chance to hear these people, but I noticed that their opinions also differ from each other, and I especially think that they didn't take into account, except for two of them, concrete examples of something happening in practice that can bother people. Everyone else started from their general perspective, but there is no common position". Another participant replied

that she agrees with the objectives and that a one-day experiment is a *pro forma* simulation that would not give any reliable indicators. She agreed that it has to be done for a longer period if we want to test how it works. In reply to a participant with whom she disagreed, she said: "I understand the argument about expensiveness. To do this simulation, we do not have to completely replace the public transport route, but to increase the intensity of the trolley at a specific period, as a representative of public transport that is already there. This simulation can be as close as possible and it must last for some time". During the expert discussion, participants heard a valid argument in favor of the idea of slow-traffic streets which they found valid, stating that it is beneficial for all actors in traffic to change their habits.

All participants agreed that during the next session they should propose to decision-makers a longer period of project simulation, which will be constantly followed by feedback from citizens. They also agreed that transparency in decision-making will consequently give legitimacy to democratic decisions. As one participant said: "It should certainly be transparent so that citizens can see it on the Belgrade city's website, the whole project, budget, and work-planning. That way, people would be informed about what is happening in their city".

Another participant said that because older people don't use the internet as much, it may be better if they received all information on a combined utility bill, through certain local media or any other available means in order to communicate with as many interested people as possible.

But one of the participants pointed out that this is exactly the problem and that *very few people are interested at all*. Opposing the assumption that people are unconcerned and unenthusiastic about political issues, another participant replied: "This is a very important point... But I think that people, in general, do have an opinion; they just don't have any faith that they can influence something, decisions... And it is demotivating for all of us to participate in something if we think we have no influence... This must not be an isolated event, but a new completely different approach to decision-making. It has to be established for all processes, so that we, as citizens, can slowly build our confidence to participate in such courses, to acquire knowledge but also to believe that our involvement makes sense... We should keep in mind that this is a long process in which the culture of participation in political decision-making is slowly changing. The government must also make an effort to constantly commit to such a practice...".

Additional concerns were raised by the fact that even the experts did not have a complete insight into the plan either. One participant remarked that everybody is skeptical about whether the mass inclusion of citizens in decision-making may really take place: "Nobody knows exactly what will happen. We are all confused even about the exact outlines of the pedestrian zone, what streets are the boundaries, no one said that exactly". Participants came to an agreement that it is exactly this non-transparency and ambiguity that makes all of them wonder what kind of interests are there at stake, regardless

of whether there are any or not. "That led to the ambivalence about this project", a participant said.

One of the participants said that they need to think about what they want to do *in principle*, and they all unanimously agreed that they want some solutions for traffic problems in Belgrade, not necessarily a new pedestrian zone: "There are some disagreements among us about what that solution should be. But I have the impression that we all very much agree in principle and on some ultimate goal – we all agree on the idea of ecologically sustainable mobility. It may be something we have a consensus about in this group. To pave everything and turn it into a pedestrian zone is a hasty solution that ignores all other problems".

Then another participant replied that maybe it would be more effective to *stimulate* families to act in support of this goal, educate children, organize "green weekends" and smaller events, where people would be encouraged to deal with environmental issues, walk, ride a bicycle, etc. She said that we need a positive approach, not a negative one. Few other participants opposed this idea, saying that, unfortunately, education is a more difficult and longer process than the introduction of some disincentives. But, in the end, they agreed that both approaches could be combined to achieve maximum efficiency.

Before the panel with decision-makers started, participants from the group agreed about the final questions and proposals for public representatives. They wanted *to know more about* the explanations, arguments, reasons, and studies in favor of the expansion of the pedestrian zone, the expected benefits of the expansion, traffic and mobility problems, project funding, and to find out if the pedestrian zone meets the residents' needs. "Decision-makers are not the ones who live and work there, they are not under pressure. Somebody made certain decisions, and citizens have the right to ask why", a participant said.

The atmosphere among the participants was very positive, everyone agreed with the questions that the representative would present in their name to decision-makers. There was clear and visible enthusiasm as citizens looked forward to hearing the reactions to their questions, and they could hardly wait for the next session.

Reflection on Plenary Session with Decision-Makers

After the session with politicians, citizens realized that the plan to expand the pedestrian zone was about to be implemented and that everything had already been decided. Since the time and circumstances did not allow decision-makers to answer all of the citizens' questions and suggestions, there were opposing reactions among citizens to the plenary discussion with decision-makers. Moral, motivation, and enthusiasm have suddenly fallen concerning the possibility that citizens can influence urban events in any way. "It is clear that it's all just a farce... Everything has already been decided and it will always be so. Nobody asks citizens about anything", a participant said (see Fiket, Ilić, Pudar Draško 2022).

But at the end of the discussion, one participant, an active citizen, concluded in a more positive light, stressing that a platform and initiative like this emphasize the importance of participatory democracy: "It is as terrible for me as it is for you. But that doesn't affect my view that this whole process makes sense, it's just obvious that someone else has to be in the place of the decision-maker for this to work. That's my feeling. I just think that we shouldn't tie these things together, because as far as I understand, the initiator of this whole process is not the government, but the Institute of Philosophy and Social Theory. As much as what we have just heard is devastating to me, it speaks about this government and this particular project, but I still think that this process through which we, people who didn't know each other, went through today was great".

They all thanked each other and agreed on their final proposals. Immediately after the assembly, the proposals were presented to all participants to vote on[12].

The design of the assembly itself foresaw those options and proposals with the most votes will be delivered to the relevant political representatives as recommendations and communicated to the media. The goal is to encourage police representatives to take into account the suggestions of citizens, formed as a result of the informative and inclusive debate, when making political decisions regarding the regulation of traffic mobility in the city center.

A Result of the First Citizens' Assembly

Entrusting complex policy decisions to institutions such as the CA involves certain trust in the competence of citizens to make reasonable choices, as well as confidence that deliberation and the process of learning new information may be the cure to ordinary citizens' incompetence and political apathy. It is usually difficult to discuss controversial issues with strangers or people who think differently. However, our findings from the Belgrade CA support the view that ordinary citizens can make reasonable and informed choices, especially when they realize that institutional projects align with their values. The quality of the participants' responses was also very high and there was a positive impact on participants' knowledge (compare to Đorđević, Vasiljević 2022). They used arguments and reasoning to express their opinions and conclusions rather than short and unsubstantiated statements. Participants in the online

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12   Each group send their final proposals to all participants. All were asked to rank maximum three proposals: proposals received 3 points for first choice, 2 for second, and 1 for third. Based on independent individual votes, there was a strong preference for keeping the trolleybus, as the cleanest form of urban public transportation in the city in environmental terms (46% of all participants in the CA voted for it). Informing citizens about all the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed project, as well as plan simulations stand out as a basic precondition for trust in decision-makers (39% participants). The announced expansion of the pedestrian zone was perceived mostly negatively, as something that would cause big problems for life and mobility in the city. Micro pedestrian and slow traffic zones are seen as a more relevant and comfortable solutions for a number of different needs (35% of all participants voted for this proposal).

deliberative CA presented reasons more often than personal stories, although they did do that as well. Deliberation also allowed the group to set apart the good arguments from the bad, and to deepen their understanding of the problem that was discussed. We could see that participants more often appealed to general than private interests. During the discussion, they often referred to other groups (older people, people with disabilities, people with small children) with respect and empathy rather than advocating for their own group. While considering the issue of pedestrian zone expansion, citizens in the CA showed a great amount of respect towards the group as a whole and to other participants' arguments, and made no interruptions during the discussion (compare to Fiket,Ilić, Pudar Draško 2022 in this volume). Additionally, in the analyzed debate, we found no evidence that the most informed member (active citizens) led the decision-making process for other members.

Concerning the issue of motivation, we can conclude that deliberation and careful institutional design can motivate people to participate in politics. Before the panel with decision-makers, we saw that, as a result of their participation in the CA, participants in the assembly showed and reported a significant increase in interest in political decision-making that affects their lives, as well as a sense of being informed about politics (see Fiket, Ilić, Pudar Draško 2022 in this volume). We could also see how the diversity of CA participants, as well as the method of their selection, which was conducted with the help of various experts from different fields relevant to the issue under discussion, can lead to more creative decisions than those reached by professional politicians – the political elite. Their closed approach to policy-making which ignores the diverse views that citizens hold, and their general aspiration to secure or expand their own interests, undermines democracy and has fewer chances of benefiting the community.

Conclusion

Considering the vast literature on deliberative democracy practice, it is a real pity that deliberative practice has so far been neglected in Serbian institutions. We could see the encouraging results of CA held in Belgrade. Using the method of qualitative content analysis, our findings from this particular CA demonstrated the capacity of institutional design to empower ordinary citizens to participate in local political practices and led to better understanding of discussed topic. Although the Belgrade CA was conceived as a scientific experiment rather than a real institutional deliberative body (the result of deliberation was not intended to produce binding decisions), we gained some important insights regarding democratic decision-making processes and citizens' abilities. The conditions under which deliberation took place, the inclusion and equality of participants in the CA symmetrically distributed power that enabled people affected by collective endeavors to participate in political practices.

However, deliberative democracy bodies often lack significant influence on policy-making or electoral politics. Despite the wide scholarly interest in the

work of those bodies, to date, their role has been fairly marginal in real-world political decision-making. Although some theorists and practitioners expected that deliberative bodies initiated by universities or foundations and informal groups could influence political decision-making through the media and their impact on the wider public (Fishkin et al. 2000; Goodin, Dryzek 2006) without government backing, most deliberative events have little or no effect on public opinion and the decision-making process. Therefore, it became clear that in order to show its full potential and genuinely influence public policy, deliberative bodies need to collaborate with regular governmental institutions.

New problems require new solutions. We must not see deliberative democracy practices as a naïve hope, but as a feasible mechanism that allows full recognition of the real capacities and limitations of citizens, experts, politicians, and political processes. Although the scope of this study is limited, we can recognize how deliberative bodies such as CA constitute democratic arenas for broadly representative groups of people to learn together, listen and respect one another, deal with complex issues, and make an effort to find common ground on solutions. The design of CAs and other mini-publics can be understood as a set of encouragement systems that promote certain behaviors and dispositions amongst participants over others. Through these and similar institutions, inclusive deliberation and participation prevent the authoritarian rule of a small group of the political elite and politically active people, increases the legitimacy of political decisions, and ensures that the people with different socio-economic backgrounds will be more fairly represented in the political life of the community.

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Ivana Janković

Deliberativna demokratija – teorija i praksa: slučaj građanske skupštine održane u Beogradu

Apstrakt

U ovom radu ispitujemo da li je moguće unaprediti demokratiju podsticanjem običnih građana da učestvuju u donošenju političkih odluka i da li učešće u deliberativnim institucijama može da učini građane kompetentnijim donosiocima odluka. Koristeći kvalitativne podatke, analizirali smo diskusiju koja se odvijala unutar građanske skupštine (GS) održane u Beogradu, koja je za temu imala pitanje proširenja pešačke zone u centru grada. Ovo je bila prva GS u Srbiji, organizovana kao deo istraživačkog projekta usmerenog na promovisanje i unapređenje inovativnih demokratskih praksi na Zapadnom Balkanu. Cilj je bio da se podstakne uključivanje građana u rasprave od javnog interesa. Pretpostavke od kojih smo pošli su bile da, kroz proces učešća i odlučivanja u građanskoj skupštini, obični građani mogu doneti promišljene i informisane izbore, povećati svoje znanje o temi o kojoj se raspravlja i postati motivisaniji da učestvuju u donošenju političkih odluka na lokalnom nivou. Naša analiza sadržaja diskusije unutar GS sugeriše da je deliberacija pozitivno uticalo na znanje učesnika o temi skupštine. Pokazano je da su građani tokom rasprave koristili iscrpna i složena objašnjenja, a ne kratke izjave, da su bili u stanju da razlikuju dobre od loših argumenata i češće se pozivali na opšte nego na privatne interese. Učesnici skupštine su iskazali značajno povećanje interesovanja za političko donošenje odluka koje utiču na njihove živote, kao i osećaja informisanosti o politici. Na kraju, želeli smo da skrenemo pažnju na izazove i otvorena pitanja koja ostaju – ona koja se tiču pitanja uticaja deliberativnih institucija na političko odlučivanje u stvarnom svetu.

Ključne reči: deliberativna demokratija, građanske skupštine, javna deliberacija, demokratska legitimnost, političko učešće

Irena Fiket, Vujo Ilić and Gazela Pudar Draško

FAILED EXPECTATIONS: CAN DELIBERATIVE INNOVATIONS PRODUCE DEMOCRATIC EFFECTS IN HYBRID REGIMES?[1]

ABSTRACT

Participation in deliberation in stable democracies produces effects which are beneficial for democracy, while the results of deliberative innovations in non-democracies are more ambiguous. This article contributes to the debate about the effects of participatory democratic innovations on attitudes, related to democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation, in the increasingly ubiquitous hybrid regimes. We present the evidence collected from the participants before and after deliberative mini publics (DMPs), held in Serbia in 2020. Serbia is an exemplary case of a recent wave of autocratization, which had led to it becoming a hybrid regime, and it had no track record of deliberative innovations. When conducting the mini publics, we introduced an innovation in the standard design, by including active citizens – representatives of local initiatives or social movements particularly interested in the issue of DMPs. We could not find evidence that the democratic innovation affected attitudes of participants regarding democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation. However, we did find that participants of the DMPs became less satisfied with the functioning of the democracy on the local level. We argue that the anti-democratic wider context of hybrid regimes can produce adverse effects when introducing participatory democratic innovations, at least when it comes to this specific dimension of political participation. We conclude with the suggestions for further research, and a call for consideration of the wider political context when designing democratic interventions in hybrid regimes.

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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1. Introduction

As democratic governance has been in decline globally, in both consolidated and emerging democracies, a new wave of studies on how to make democracies more resilient has emerged. One of the most prominent approaches in both academic and political debates, centered upon civic participation in democratic processes, was the deliberative approach. Following a forceful theoretical argumentation in favor of deliberation, decades of empirical research showed that participation in deliberation in stable democracies produces different effects, beneficial for democracy. At the same time, since the early 2000s, hybrid regimes, essentially autocratic regimes that still maintain formal elements of democracies, have proliferated globally.

However, there is a gap in research that would establish if there are possible effects of deliberative, participatory practices on attitudes about democratic participation and democracy in hybrid regimes. We argue that the empirical findings from participatory innovations in consolidated democracies need not travel well to the contexts of non-democracies or hybrid regimes. And, even though some forms of participatory innovations have been implemented in such contexts, from China and Russia to Turkey, there is still no sufficient research on the connection to the citizens' related components of the quality of democracy.

In order to address this gap, this paper contributes to the debate about the effects of participatory democratic innovations on attitudes related to democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation in hybrid regimes, by presenting evidence from deliberative mini publics (DMPs) held in Serbia in 2020. We focused on the case of Serbia, because it is a paradigmatic case of a sharp democratic decline in the last decade, leading to the establishment of a hybrid regime.

We employed a repeated measures design, surveying the participants before and after the deliberative mini public. As we do not find statistically significant changes in expressed attitudes before and after deliberative mini publics, our analysis fails to find sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that democratic innovations in hybrid regimes do not affect attitudes of participants regarding democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation. However, we did find that participants of the DMPs became less satisfied with the functioning of the democracy on the local level, so we could reject our null hypothesis and confirm, at least when it comes to this specific dimension of political participation, our second hypothesis, that the anti-democratic wider context of hybrid regime can produce adverse effects when introducing participatory democratic innovations.

Even though we found either no changes in attitudes, or adverse effects in attitudes towards democratic participation, positive changes were identified in relation to more competent political participation, since participants' knowledge on the topic of deliberation is enhanced towards more precise, elaborated

and inclusive information, encompassing different perspectives (in this volume: Đorđević, Vasiljević 2022).

Together, these findings should serve as guidance for further research on the use of participatory innovations in non-democratic environments, and as a precaution for political actors and democracy promotion entities to take into consideration the wider political context when designing new democratic interventions.

In the following sections, the case of Serbia will first be positioned in the theoretical context of both participatory democracy and its deliberative perspective. This will be followed by the presentation of the relevant participatory democratic empirical data from Serbia as a hybrid regime, a section on the research design and empirical analysis, and the article will close by the conclusion with the contextualized discussion.

2. Participatory Perspective on the Quality of Democracy

From a participatory perspective, the democratic malaise in stable democracies has been observed mainly through the progressive disillusionment of citizens with electoral politics, decreasing participation and interest towards politics, declining trust in institutions, and the overall detachment of the citizens from the institutional political sphere (Scharpf 1999; Merkel 2014; Mansbridge 2020), declined public support for democracy (Norris 1999; Bellucci, Memoli 2012), and citizens' lack of the sense of political efficacy (Rahman, Gilman 2019).

In other words, the criteria used for the *assessment of the quality of democracy from a participatory perspective* primarily refers to the *interest of citizens in politics and their willingness and capacities to participate in political life*. Democratic citizens need to be "enabled to know about politics, to voice their opinions, and to properly choose their representatives" (Caprara, Vecchione 2017: 305).

Citizen's sense of political efficacy has been also identified as one of the key indicators of the quality of democracy from a participatory perspective. Political efficacy refers to "an individual's perceived ability to participate in and influence the political system" (Yeich, Levine 1994: 259). Departing from the single concept of efficacy, scholars moved to a two-dimensional conceptualization of internal efficacy meaning individual political self-confidence and external efficacy, referring to a sense of government responsiveness to citizens' demands (Craig et al. 1990; Niemi et al. 1991). The recent studies introduced a dimension of collective political efficacy as system responsiveness to collective demands for change, in an attempt to de-individualize the political efficacy as a precondition of political mobilization (see: Caprara, Vecchione 2017; Bandura 1997; Craig, Maggiotto 1981).

Political participation of the citizens and overall quality of democracy is also shaped by the *levels of political trust* (Norris 1999). Since the formulation of the social capital theory, it was argued that political and social trust represent attitudes that strongly affects the stability of democracy (Putnam 1993,

2000; Inglehart 1997; Braithwaite, Levi 1998; Warren 1999; Sztompka 2000; Denters, Gabriel, Torcal 2007).

However, the research shows that the relationship between trust and participation is not so simple. While political trust is conventionally treated as beneficial for democracy, the lack of trust combined with a strong sense of political efficacy could be also considered as the optimal combination for participation (Gamson 1968). Besides, empirically, political trust is related to the *citizens' satisfaction with democracy* (Zmerli, Newton 2007), which is another measure that has been used to assess the quality of democracy. More precisely, satisfaction with democracy represents one of the measures of political support of the citizens for the specific political regime.

The observations about the state of democracy based on these measures stimulated important contemporary discussion about different ways citizens participation could enhance democracies (Mayne, Geissel 2016, 2018), grounded on the older argument that more participation could engage citizens and increase their sense of political efficacy and trust, leading to more positive attitudes to democratic processes and practices (Pateman 1970; Barber 1984).

3. Improving the Quality of Democracy through Participation in Mini Publics

One of the most prominent approaches to democratic citizens' participation in both academic and political debates, is the deliberative approach. The 'transformative' power of deliberation (Warren 1992; Chambers 2003) in expanding the democratic sphere is one of the distinctive elements of deliberative theory. In a broader sense, deliberation is expected to induce democratic transformation of the political process, its outcomes, and the actors involved (Habermas 1984; Benhabib 1996; Gutman, Thompson 1996; Dryzek 2000). The decision-making process and its outcomes would become more legitimate and democratic as actors become better informed, more interested, more rational and reflective. The opinions and preferences of citizens could be transformed in the direction of public-spirited, more consensual, more common good oriented (Rosenberg 2005) and more trusting towards the institutions (Stoker, Evans 2019). In contrast to the 'aggregative' model of democracy, where the opinions and policy preferences of the actors are simply aggregated, in the 'deliberative' model they are transformed through a process of deliberation that produces various democratic effects, both for the individuals and for the collective decisions they make.

Empirical research on deliberation is mostly based on the use of deliberative mini-publics, arenas (citizens juries, deliberative polls, citizens assemblies, Planungszelle, town meetings etc.), arenas in which a sample of citizens, selected from the population affected by some public issue, discuss that specific issue (Goodin, Dryzek 2006; Warren 2009; Smith, Ryan 2012). The design of DMP is inspired by key principles of deliberative democracy (inclusiveness, exposure to different opinions, reasoned opinion expression and making of a collective decision), but it can vary from one DMP to another. However, they

all share some common basic features, aimed at ensuring the achievement of the ideals of deliberative democracy through moderated small group discussion, facilitated interactions with politicians and experts and formulation of the policy proposals (Fiket 2019).

More than fifteen years of empirical research on deliberation confirmed the hypothesis that participation in deliberation in stable democracies produces different "democratic" effects. Deliberation makes citizens develop *more interest in politics* and *more trust in institutions* as they learn how democratic processes are working (Grönlund, Setälä, Herne 2010). They become *more supportive of the democratic system* (Luskin, Fishkin, Jowell 2002; Fishkin 2009; Mansbridge 2010), their *satisfaction with democracy increases* (Fiket, Memoli 2013) and their *sense of political efficacy develops* (Morrell 2005; Spada 2019).

The main idea of DMPs is that deliberation has a positive effect on the health of democracy. However, the focus of empirical research on deliberation, especially regarding non-democracies, remained primarily concerned with understanding the effects of deliberation on specific political decisions and not the wider context of the quality of democracy.

Research on deliberation in non-democracies is predominantly based on the Chinese case, where, as a part of institutionalized political process, the Chinese Communist Party has been increasingly implementing deliberative institutions within the system characterized by a strong authoritarian role (He, Warren 2011, 2017; Zhou 2012; Yan 2018). The findings from the Chinese experiences show that, overall, deliberative models of participation implemented within Chinese society could provide a way through which the citizens may influence political decisions. Still, on the other hand, they also mainly served authoritarian policymakers to legitimize the decisions and to make the process of decision-making smoother (He, Warren 2011). Deliberations were focused on and structured in the way to ensure 'problem solving', leaving apart their capacity to exhibit the political contestation and to empower citizens (Leib, He 2006; Jayasuriya, Rodan 2007)[2].

More precisely, empirical research done on numerous deliberative experiences held in China showed that deliberation within authoritarian regimes have *minor positive effects on the quality of democracy seen from a participatory perspective*. Participation in deliberative processes significantly *increases political interest* and has a *minor effect on citizen satisfaction with the political system* but it does *not affect citizens' sense of political efficacy* (Yan 2018). As underlined by Yan (2018), the almost complete lack of influence of deliberation on citizens' attitudes towards participation may be best explained by the political rationale that underpins deliberative institutions in China and that is to "improve governance and enhance authority" (He 2014).

While on the one hand, we could identify the literature with the findings of the positive democratic effects of deliberative models of participation in a

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2   See the introductory article of this special issue for a more detailed account of authoritarian deliberation (Fiket, Đorđević 2022).

consolidated democratic environment, as well as more ambiguous effects of authoritarian deliberation, the effects of participatory innovations in hybrid regimes are less known.[3] Based on the comparison of findings from deliberative experiences in democratic and non-democratic contexts, we argue that, following the logic of hybrid regimes, where formal democratic institutions exist, but are abused by ruling parties to maintain unfair advantage over opponents, citizens' attitudes might not be changing, or might not be changing in the same direction as expected in consolidated democracies. In the next section, we will introduce Serbia as a case of a hybrid regime, and then provide basic information about the attitudes of Serbian citizens towards dimensions of participatory democracy.

4. Participatory Dimension of Quality of Democracy in Hybrid Regimes: The Case of Serbia

In the last two decades, democratic governance has been in decline globally, in both consolidated and emerging democracies. However, unlike the democratic collapses of the past, which usually occurred through revolutions, or military coups, the current wave of autocratization is characterized by a gradual decline (Diamond 2015; Bermeo 2016; Levitsky, Ziblatt 2018; Lührmann, Lindberg 2019). Increasingly, the autocrats rely on democratic mechanisms to gradually disassemble democracies (Lührmann, Lindberg 2019). As a result, hybrid regimes, that are essentially autocratic but maintain elements of democracies as a facade that conceal entrenched power in the formal institutions, have proliferated since the early 2000s (Levitsky, Way 2020).[4]

This type of regimes creates a new challenge for understanding citizen participation. Participation is not a value in itself, instead it is highly dependent on the context and relations with the institutions and actors (McQuarrie 2015). Systems with a dominant political party (as many hybrid regimes are) don't leave much space for citizens to believe in their own agency, and they find it difficult to envisage how politics can be changed (Karv, Lindell, Rapeli 2021: 17). The same is true for political efficacy, which differs across communities and depends on the environment (Wolak 2018; Karv, Lindell, Rapeli 2021). Democratic context matters when discussing the democratic effects of participation, and this is especially the case in the post-communist space, where democratic values and political practices (re)entered the political space nurtured in an autocratic and highly centralized political system (Chen et al. 2021).

In hybrid regimes, it could be therefore expected that more participation in formally democratic processes could have two-way effects on citizen-related

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3   For example, citizen assemblies in Turkey, or participatory budgeting in Russia, more information available at the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy website oidp.net (viewed January 30, 2022).
4   They also drew the attention of scholars that defined them in different, but relatable ways, as competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky, Way 2002, 2010), electoral authoritarianism (Schedler 2006), illiberal democracies (Zakaria 2003), and so on.

components of the quality of democracy: democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation (Mayne, Geissel 2016). On the one hand, it could empower citizens, and activate the "virtuous cycle" of political participation, as suggested by the democratic theorists, and empirical findings from democratic contexts. But on the other hand, it could also be producing adverse effects, by confronting empowered citizens with the hollowed-out institutions and abuses of power, diminishing their political capacities, and fortifying those skeptical of democracy in their convictions.

We selected Serbia as a case for implementing participatory intervention in a hybrid regime for two reasons - one, it is an exemplary case of recent autocratization leading to a hybrid regime, and two - there is no track record of deliberative innovations (besides the top-bottom participatory budgeting that had very limited effects). According to the V-Dem Institute, Serbia is one of the five countries that experienced the sharpest decline in their Liberal Democracy Index between 2010 and 2020 (Alizada et al. 2021). It has recently being classified as some form of hybrid regime, by a variety of authors and organizations that monitor the quality of democracy (Lührmann, Tannenberg, Lindberg 2018; Bieber 2018; Vladisavljević 2019; Levitsky, Way 2010, 2020; Repucci 2020; Alizada et al. 2021).

When selecting Serbia we took into consideration that participatory innovations are rare throughout the whole Western Balkans region. Besides two latest implementations of citizen assemblies in Bosnia and Montenegro[5], both of which were supported by external democracy-promotion actors, there were, to our knowledge, no other similar interventions. Some participatory budgeting experiences in Serbia were recorded, mostly on a local level, and as pilot projects, but with unclear outputs and without longer-term sustainability (Milosavljević et al. 2020).

In this article we use the case of deliberative mini publics held in Serbia to test whether deliberative interventions can change the attitudes towards democratic participation in a specific setting of hybrid regimes. In order to proceed further, we also argue that there is a need for such interventions, as the existing attitudes are not strongly favoring participation.

5. Attitudes towards Democratic Participation in Serbia

Since Serbia has been classified as a full if imperfect democracy for only a short period of roughly 10 to 15 years at the beginning of the century, it is difficult to draw stronger connections between the quality of democracy and democratic participation. After the mass citizens' mobilization in overthrowing the autocratic regime of Slobodan Milošević in 2000, different measures of democratic

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5   Citizen Assembly held in Montenegro on November 4, 2021, more information available at www.skupstina.me/me/dogadjaji/skupstina-gradana (viewed January 20, 2022), and Citizen Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, held in February 2022, available at www.skupstinagradjana.ba (viewed January 20, 2022).

participation have been declining, reflecting an alienation from the formal mechanisms of representative democracy.

The rise of the authoritarian political party, the Serbian Progressive Party, in the last decade should be seen in light of the institutional weakness that provided insufficient democratic safeguards (Bieber 2018), but also the dramatic abuses of power, where on both national and local level, the authorities undermine the legal framework and the principle of rule of law, in parallel with the democratic institutions (Vladisavljević 2019; see also the discussion on autocratization in Fiket, Đorđević 2022).

Recent research points to a connection between the overall attitudes towards democracy and the democratic decline in Serbia, in line with wider findings in Europe. Lavrič and Bieber (2021) analyzed the empirical data for the Western Balkans region since the 1990s, and showed that support for democracy was declining, while support for a strong leader was increasing in most countries, including Serbia.[6]

However, looking more closely at the participatory dimensions, as well as a specific period of autocratization (from 2012 to 2020), a more complex picture emerges, when it comes to interest in politics, external and internal efficacy, satisfaction with democracy and attitudes towards participation.

Serbian citizens show relatively *low interest in politics in general, and somewhat higher interest in local politics.* The 2018 European Social Survey (ESS) found only 5% of respondents very interested in politics, and 16% quite interested.[7] The annual survey of citizen engagement conducted by Crta shows only 6% were very interested and 23% somewhat interested in politics in general in 2019, and longitudinal data also shows no substantial changes between 2013 and 2019. However, Crta surveys also show that the respondents were consistently more interested in local politics than in politics in general.[8]

Attitudes towards *external political efficacy* at the national level are mostly negative, but again they are slightly more positive at the local level. The 2018 ESS data shows only 6% of respondents think that the political system allows people to have a say in what government does a great deal or a lot, and 16% think it does so to some extent. Similar responses were given to a question about the political system allowing people to have influence on politics (6% a great deal or a lot, 14% some).[9] On the other hand, Crta annual citizen engagement surveys shows that the percentage of respondents that agree their engagement can lead to changes in the local community was consistently slightly

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6   In addition, they point to the fact that an increasing share of citizens support both strong leaders and democracy, suggesting the alignment of citizens' attitudes with the type of regime being developed over time.

7   ESS Round 9 (2018), variable polintr (weighted). This is corroborated by Eurobarometer's Political interest index which identifies only 15% with strong interest (Wave 94.3, question C2, weighted), (European Commision 2021).

8   Data from Crta annual citizen engagement surveys 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

9   ESS Round 9 (2018), variables psppsgva, psppipla (weighted).

higher than those thinking they can influence things at the national level (17% and 14% in 2019).

Respondents have *low perceived internal political efficacy*, and they report low engagement in the local community. Citizens assess themselves as being very and completely able to take an active role in a political group in 10% of cases, while only 8.5% of respondents were completely or very confident in their own ability to participate in politics[10] (2018 ESS). In addition, low perceived internal political efficacy corresponds with the consistent findings of low reported engagement in the local community, with 87% in 2019 not actively participating in any action or initiative in the local community, and similar ratios existing in the last two decades (Crta 2019).

Citizens of Serbia state they *somewhat understand politics*. In 2019, 49% of respondents answered they know very little or don't know anything about politics in Serbia in general, largely consistent with the previous years. Similar ratios exist for knowledge about local politics, 53% reporting little or no knowledge in 2019 (Crta 2019).[11]

Respondents are *moderately satisfied with democracy* at the national level, while there are no systematic measures of attitudes towards democracy at the local level. 2021 EB data shows 44% of respondents are very and fairly satisfied with the way democracy works.[12,13] Crta annual surveys show 55% in 2019 agreed that regardless of all the difficulties, democracy is the best system for Serbia, which is a steady increase since 2014, and notable compared to the low scores in the previous decade (44% agreeing in 2007).

Finally, citizens have *positive attitudes towards civic engagement* at the local level. Even though citizens are not engaged locally to the same extent, Crta engagement audit shows 37% of them want to influence decisions at the local level, a slight increase since 2013, while on the other hand, a smaller percentage, 31% wants to influence decisions at the national level.[14]

We can conclude that the overall picture is a complex one. First, the respondents show low or average support for the participatory dimension of democracy. However, there are no pronounced trends of declining attitudes towards participation, with the exceptions of a slightly negative trend in the interest in politics, and a positive trend in believing that democracy is the best system for Serbia, when we compare periods from the beginning and towards

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10   ESS Round 9 (2018), variables actrolga, cptppola (weighted).
11   This data on understanding politics is largely corresponding to the 2019 Eurobarometer responses, in which 59% totally and tended to agree they understand well what is going on in today's world, while 39% totally and tend to disagree (Wave 92.3 2019, question QC9.2, weighted), (European Commision 2019).
12   Eurobarometer (2021), question SD18a, weighted.
13   Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country is 3.56, with 0 being extremely dissatisfied, and 10 extremely satisfied (ESS 2018, variable stfdem, weighted).
14   The latest 2021 Crta audit shows 49% of respondents think that all citizens should always be actively engaged in politics, 20% that it is sufficient to vote in elections, while 28% think politics should be left to the politicians (Stojilović, Ilić 2022).

the end of the process of autocratization. In addition, attitudes towards efficacy are mostly negative, but respondents systematically better assess the efficacy and positively evaluate engagement at the local level, even though participation itself is low.

6. Hypotheses and Methodology

The empirical part of our paper aims to contribute to the question of whether participation in deliberative institutions implemented within hybrid regimes can contribute to improving the participatory aspects of the quality of democracy measured through the components of the *democratic commitments, political capacities, and political participation*, for which we can propose three hypotheses based on the insights provided in theory and empirical data.

We begin by proposing that the difference between the types of regimes prevents the empirical findings about the virtuous cycle of participation in democracies from traveling to non-democracies. It might be the case that the effects of the larger obstacles to democratic expression in the electoral or representative sphere completely overshadow any potential effects of non-electoral, participatory or deliberative processes. Our null hypothesis, therefore, is that participation in deliberative institutions in hybrid regimes does not affect attitudes of participants regarding democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation.

It might also be the case that deliberation can produce effects in hybrid regimes, and that the underlying mechanisms are the same, or similar enough to what is established empirically in stable democracies. Our first alternative hypothesis would be that the participation in DMPs in hybrid regimes positively affects citizens' attitudes. However, the anti-democratic wider context which revolves around emptying democratic mechanisms of their purpose, can also produce adverse effects in participatory interventions, so our second hypothesis is that the participation in DMPs in hybrid regimes negatively affects citizens democratic commitments, political capacities and political participation.

In order to test these hypotheses, we rely on the data we collected through questionnaires before and after the DMPs[15] held online in 2020[16]. We invited a sample of 31 individuals from Belgrade to participate in a one day long deliberation process on the issue of traffic mobility in downtown Belgrade. The purposive sampling procedure was applied in selecting citizens' in order to include not only those that in socio-demographic terms represent the population who lived in the defined areas of Belgrade, but also those citizens that were particularly affected by the debated issue, namely, citizens with physical

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[15]   As explained in the Introductory article (Fiket, Đorđević 2022), in order to make the official name of our DMP more understandable to the participants, the research team chose to use the term Citizens Assembly given that the concept of deliberation is generally not well known in Serbia.
[16]   There were two DMPs held in Serbia in 2020, one in Belgrade and one in Valjevo. In our paper we used the data from the one held in Belgrade.

disabilities, senior residents, parents of small children, businesses owners, or workers located in the affected area as well as workers in the cultural institutions. The participants were selected from an initial sample through snowball, or chain referral sampling, by different samplers, meeting a pre-determined quota (Fiket, Đorđević 2022).

Our design of DMPs also included one significant innovation to standard design of the DMPs – inclusion of active citizens, representatives of local initiatives or social movements particularly interested in the issue[17]. The justification for this design came up as an answer to the agonistic criticisms towards DMP, which underline that random selection of citizens displaces conflicts in society, does not sufficiently include actors already involved in social conflicts and may have depoliticizing consequences, and as a tentative attempt to connect the grassroots mobilizations of the citizens with top-down citizens participatory arenas such as DMP[18].

The discussion was organized in two rounds of moderated small group discussions, and two panel sessions – with experts and decision makers. Each of four parallel small group discussions involved two movements' representatives besides six regular citizens. The group discussions and plenary sessions with experts went as planned, while the politicians, most of which were from the ruling Serbian Progressive Party, which were invited to the plenary session mostly did not attend. Relevant to the interpretation of our findings, the only decision maker that did join the session, ignored the questions and proposals formulated by the citizens that participated in the group discussions (see the introductory article by Fiket and Đorđević in this special issue for more details).

The participants answered the same set of questions twice, before and after the DMP, which allowed us to compare their attitudes and assess the eventual changes, which will be discussed in the next part of the article. Several limitations of this design should also be mentioned at this point. Our design included only some experimental design elements, such as treatment and repeated measurements of attitudes, but it did not include control groups and, as most other studies of DMPs, it does not meet the standards of controlled experiment (Farrar et al. 2009). That means we could not isolate the effects of the treatment, as we can not exclude that the attitudes of the wider population were changing at the same time, due to reasons unconnected to the DMP. However, given our findings, in which we do not find statistically significant changes in all but one observed attitude, this presents less of a problem.

In addition, we should add that, due to the external constraints including the budget for the research, the exposure of the participants to the process was

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17   Active citizens who participated in group discussions were members of three civic initiatives: "Pedestrians are not Marathon Runners" ("Pešaci nisu maratonci") "The Ministry of Space" ("Ministarstvo prostora"), and "Streets for Cyclists" ("Ulice za bicikliste").
18   For more information about specificities of design of DMPs see the introductory article in this special issue (Fiket, Đorđević 2022).

quite limited – only one day, which means that our findings can be affected by "too little" treatment. In future research these elements of design should be addressed in a different way. Even though our sample size (N=30) could be considered adequate, a larger randomly selected sample, with the elements of controlled experimental design, would produce more reliable results. However, we believe that these findings, together with the direction of the observed change, offers some indications that could be further investigated.

In the empirical part of this article, we have employed simple descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) at T1 (before) and T2 (after the DMPs), as well as paired samples t-test for each of the seven items included, exploring in addition the directions of the change in the attitudes before and after the event. We chose t-test as the most appropriate statistical technique for the analysis of repeated measures given that we only compare two sample means, over repeated measures ANOVA, which would produce the same statistical significance, but would imply less straightforward interpretation. As t-tests are a classic statistical technique its description can be found in most statistical handbooks (Gravetter et al. 2020).

7. Analysis and Findings

In the empirical part of the article we first present the descriptive statistics and the repeated measures analysis, related to attitudes of DMP participants that we have classified as: *political interest/commitment, external and internal efficacy, satisfaction with democracy, and attitudes towards civic participation.* Further, we analyze the direction of individual participants' attitudes change after the deliberative mini public. Finally, we discuss the participants' evaluation of the DMPs.

Starting with the descriptive statistics, the mean of the participants' attitudes *before* the DMP reveals the genuine interest in politics and political participation (Table 1). Participants claim to be interested in politics (general interest M = 3.17, and interest for the local government M = 3.47), and feel capable of taking part in the group dealing with the political issues (M = 3.40). They have no developed feeling that they usually don't understand politics (M = 3.87; 26% never feel they don't understand politics), and strongly believe that citizens should engage more in problem-solving in their own environment (M = 4.77; 97% fully and almost fully agree).

However, the participants feel externally inefficient when it comes to their own influence on the political system, even on the closest, local level (M = 2.13). 71% of the participants claimed to have very little or no influence at all on the local government. Additionally, participants are inclined to be dissatisfied with the functioning of the democracy on the local level (M = 3.97), which supports their feeling of political impotence. Half of all participants responded they are completely (value 0) and extremely dissatisfied (value 1) with local democracy.

Next we wanted to analyze the changes of citizens' attitudes after deliberative mini public (Table 2). Paired t-tests didn't identify relevant or statistically

Table 1: Citizens' attitudes towards participation before and after the deliberative mini public

Questions	T1 Mean	T2 Mean	T1 SD	T2 SD	Minimum	Maximum
To what extent are you interested in politics?	3.17	3.00	0.75	0.87	1 (not at all)	4 (very)
How interested are you in the work of local government?	3.47	3.30	0.57	0.7	1 (not at all)	4 (very)
To what extent does the political system in Serbia allow people like yourself to influence what the government does at the local level?	2.13	2.00	0.73	1.05	1 (not at all)	5 (very)
How much do you find yourself capable of actively participating in a group that deals with political issues?	3.40	3.37	1.16	1.24	1 (not at all)	5 (very)
Do you ever feel like you do not understand what is happening in politics?	3.87	3.03	3.39	2.55	0 (never)	10 (often)
How satisfied are you with the way democracy functions at the local level?	3.97	3.07	2.55	2.38	0 (fully unsatisfied)	10 (fully satisfied)
Do you agree that citizens should be more engaged in solving problems in their own surroundings?	4.77	4.83	0.5	0.46	1 (fully disagree)	5 (fully agree)

Sample N = 30

significant changes of attitudes after participation in DMP. However, even on this small sample, there is one finding that should be closely analyzed. There was a significant decrease in the satisfaction with the functioning of the democracy on the local level after the deliberative mini public (M = 3.07, SD = 2.38) compared to the answers before the event (M = 3.97, SD = 2.55), t(29) = 2.3, p < .05, and with a medium effect size found (d = 0.43, 95% CI [0.05, 0.8]).

We interpret this finding as a sign of frustration of participants with the lack of real involvement by politicians which were invited, and either did not come, or participated in the event, but whose behavior led to further disillusionment of the participants with the local government (we discuss this further in the participants' evaluation below, see also the qualitative analysis in this special issue, Janković 2022). Compared to, for example, Fiket and Memoli (2013), where satisfaction with the democracy increased mostly after the session with the politicians, due to their understanding of the complexity of the decision-making process, our case suggests that session with politicians revealed the detachment of the political representatives from its constituency (Fiket, Đorđević 2022).

Table 2: Changes of citizens' attitudes after deliberative mini public

Attitude	Question	Mean change T2-T1	Sig. (2-tailed) for change
Political interest/commitment	To what extent are you interested in politics?	-0.17	0.362
	How interested are you in the work of local government?	-0.17	0.231
External efficacy	To what extent does the political system in Serbia allow people like yourself to influence what the government does at the local level?	-0.13	0.38
Internal efficacy	How much do you find yourself capable of actively participating in a group that deals with political issues?	-0.03	0.882
	Do you ever feel like you do not understand what is happening in politics?	-0.83†	0.241
Satisfaction with democracy	How satisfied are you with the way democracy functions at the local level?	-0.9	0.026*
Attitudes towards participation	Do you agree that citizens should be more engaged in solving problems in their own surroundings?	0.07†	0.489

Sample N = 30; * Statistically significant, $p < .05$; † Positive change from T1 to T2

Compared to the Chinese establishment's efforts to implement deliberation to legitimize their own governance (He, Warren 2011), Serbian counterparts made no efforts to engage with citizens. This finding is supported by other studies of the political perception of the Serbian citizens, where impotence manifested through political inefficacy and passivity was identified in combination with severely negative perception of the politicians (Fiket, Pavlović, Pudar Draško 2017; Petrović, Stanojević 2020; Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021).

The rest of the changes presented in Table 2 were mostly slightly negative, such as dimensions of political interest and external efficacy, including the one question referring to internal efficacy – own capabilities to take part in politically active groups. However, there were two changes in the positive direction that are aligned with the general experience of the citizens who participate in DMP, even though the changes were not statistically significant at the .05 level. Participants' perception of understanding of politics increased after the DMP (M = 3.03, SD = 2.55), compared to before (M = 3.87, SD = 3.39), even though the increase was not significant (t(29) = 1.2, p = .24). Also, the attitudes towards the need for civic participation very slightly increased after the event (M = 4.83, SD = 0.46) compared to before (M = 4.77, SD = 0.5), also without statistical significance (t(29) = 0.7, p = .49).

Graph 1: Individual participants' attitudes change after deliberative mini public in %
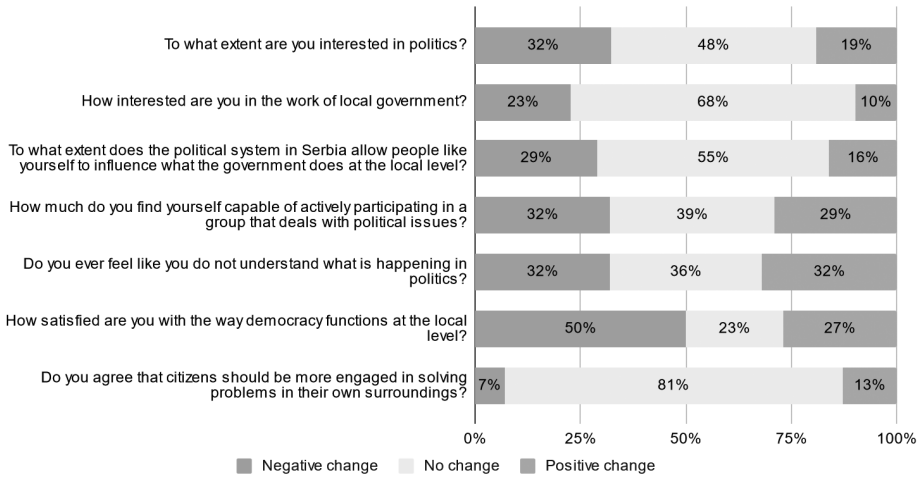
Additional descriptive statistics, presented in Graph 1, show the percentages of the direction of changes in individual participant responses, after the DMPs, compared to before, divided in three categories: percent of participants reporting negative change, positive, and no change. What we can see here is that there were more negative than positive changes in regards to all questions, except the *only* positive change - the increase in the number of participants believing that citizens need to be more engaged in their community (13% changed their attitude towards confirming this statement, compared to 7% who changed the attitude towards less believing so). The boldest change seems to be the decrease of satisfaction with the local democracy, which was also the most polarizing question - 50% were less satisfied compared to before the event, while 27% were more satisfied, and which was the only change in repeated measures analysis with statistical significance.

Turning to the participants' reactions to the process of DMPs, the deliberative process was very positively evaluated, with a mean of 7.84 points out of 10, and the quality of the discussion was evaluated as high (M = 8.39, out of 10). Table 3 shows additional responses: the respondents felt other participants respected their own opinions and attitudes (M = 4.29, 5-point scale), and found answers to their own statements respectful (M = 4.42). Also, participants felt that opinions and attitudes of others in the group discussion were meaningful and justified (M = 4.26). Discussion also led to higher interest in the issues that were discussed in DMP (M = 4.16), which points towards the empowering effect of the deliberation on the citizens' interest in the community/political issues.

Comments of the experts and representatives of civic initiatives' during the plenary session were mildly helpful to participants (M = 3.32), while the participation of the political decision makers was mostly negatively evaluated

Table 3: Evaluation of the process of deliberative mini public

Statements	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
The submitted materials were decisive for my final positions	31	2.32	1.45
My attitudes were treated respectfully by other participants	31	4.29	1.07
The responses of other participants to my opinions were in place	31	4.42	1.03
The opinions and attitudes of other participants seemed meaningful and justified	31	4.26	1.06
Participating in a group discussion improved my understanding of the problem	31	4.06	1.34
The comments of experts and members of civic initiatives helped me to better understand the problem	31	3.32	1.25
The comments of political decision makers helped me to better understand the problem	31	2.48	1.41
Participating in the discussion made me understand better those who disagree with me	30	3.50	1.33
The discussion made me more interested in the topic of conversation	31	4.16	1.19
I accept the final position of the group in which I discussed	31	4.42	1.12

Minimum value: 1 - I do not agree at all; Maximum value: 5 - I agree very much

(M = 2.48), which supports our interpretation regarding the reasons for the participants' decrease of satisfaction with the local democracy. Finally, it is interesting to note that, despite an overall very positive experience with the DMP, very carefully prepared material on the issue of the DMP didn't have significant influence on the final opinion on the discussed issue (M = 2.32). We may conclude that precisely the deliberation, the ability to speak freely, to feel respect for one's own stance, and the chance to exchange arguments between the equals, contributed more to an overall positive impression of the participants.

The overall experience of deliberation was such that it led all participants to state they would repeat it. The empowering effect of the deliberative process can also be inferred from the statements of all participants that they would take part in the locally organized action in the future. While two thirds (68%) said they would participate in a local action that contributes to their community, a third (32%) would do so if the action was initiated by fellow citizens, while none of them selected the answer "yes, if the local government initiated the action".

8. Concluding Discussion

We have focused our research and this article at the intersection of the contemporary discussion on democracy decline and the utilization of participatory democratic innovations for reinvigorating democracy. Particularly, our aim was to add to very scattered evidence on the effects of deliberative mini publics in non-democratic contexts – in hybrid regimes as one part of the (non)democratic spectrum that is not falling on its extreme ends.

The data we have collected from the deliberative mini public held in November 2020 in Serbia allowed us to analyze their potential effects on the citizens'-related components of democratic quality.

In general, we found no changes when it comes to political interest/commitment, efficacy (external and internal), and the attitudes towards participation components of quality of democracy. What we did find was a statistically significant negative change in satisfaction with local democracy, which, coupled with negative evaluation of the usefulness of comments made by political decision makers, points in the direction of hypothesized adverse effects of participatory innovations in the context of a hybrid regime.

These findings go against the established arguments that more participation in deliberative mini publics can engage citizens and lead to more positive attitudes to democratic processes and practices, and challenge them to consider the wider political context when discussing potential effects. Just like the findings from deliberative experiences in non-democratic regimes have minor positive effects compared to democratic regimes, hybrid regimes should be seen as a category in itself.

In planning participatory interventions as a way to make democracies more resilient, we need to consider that hybrid regimes are associated with a low sense of political efficacy and mistrust in formal institutions and elected representatives, which has to do with simulating democracy instead of practicing it. This is a different context compared to i.e. China, where top-down participatory innovations were employed to additionally strengthen and legitimize the authoritarian rule. Our findings, which are a product of (frustrating) interaction of participants and elected representatives, suggest that participants could see through this simulation. If deliberative practices should enhance democracies, then they need to be based on *genuine* involvement of all parties involved.

We also identified some positive findings - participants' sense of understanding of politics and attitudes towards the need for civic participation have improved, even though we could not report statistically significant changes. This should be seen in light of the positive changes identified in relation to the topics discussed at the DMP (Đorđević, Vasiljević, 2022). When citizens have relatively high interest in local politics, understand politics, and have positive attitudes towards democracy and engagement, then these engagements might have positive effects, if the engagement would be genuine from all sides.

Finally, these hypotheses should be tested in future research, which could vary types of engagement by elected representatives, as well as topics of

discussion. Also, given the limitations of our research design, these new interventions should include larger groups, expose them more to deliberation, and include control groups as well, in order to better capture the potential effects of deliberation. Our impression, based on these first deliberative mini publics in Serbia is that citizens are hungry for being taken seriously as *zoon politicon*, which opens avenues for designing different fora for participation, with perhaps different outcomes, if there is a genuine interest for creating politics in common interest.

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Irena Fiket, Vujo Ilić i Gazela Pudar Draško

Izneverena očekivanja: mogu li deliberativne inovacije u hibridnim režimima imati demokratske efekte?

Sažetak

U stabilnim demokratijama učešće u deliberaciji proizvodi efekte koji pogoduju demokratiji, dok su rezultati deliberativnih inovacija u nedemokratijama neodređeniji. Ovaj članak predstavlja doprinos debati o efektima participatornih demokratskih inovacija na stavove o privrženosti demokratiji, političkom kapacitetu i političkoj participaciji u sve prisutnijim hibridnim režimima. U radu predstavljamo rezultate ispitivanja učesnika, pre i posle njihovog učešća u deliberativnim mini javnostima (DMJ), održanih u Srbiji 2020. godine. Srbija predstavlja uzorni slučaj poslednjeg talasa autokratizacije, putem kog je postala hibridni režim, i pored toga nema razvijenu praksu deliberativnih inovacija. Prilikom sprovođenja mini-javnosti, uveli smo inovaciju u uobičajeni dizajn, tako što su uključeni i aktivni građani - predstavnici lokalnih inicijativa ili društvenih pokreta koji su bili posebno zainteresovani za temu DMJ. Naši nalazi nisu pokazali da je demokratska inovacija uticala na promenu stavova učesnika o privrženosti demokratiji, političkom kapacitetu i političkoj participaciji. Međutim, utvrdili smo da su učesnici DMJ bili manje zadovoljni funkcionisanjem demokratije na lokalnom nivou. Ovo objašnjavamo širim, anti-demokratskim kontekstom hibridnih režima, koji proizvodi neželjene efekte prilikom uvođenja demokratskih inovacija, bar kada se radi o ovim specifičnim dimenzijama političke participacije. Zaključujemo članak sa predlozima za buduća istraživanja, i preporukom da se prilikom dizajniranja demokratskih intervencija u hibridnim režimima uvaže specifičnosti šireg političkog konteksta.

Ključne reči: deliberativna demokratija, mini javnost, demokratska inovacija, učešće građana, hibridni režim, Srbija

Ana Đorđević and Jelena Vasiljević

THE EFFECTS OF DELIBERATION ON CITIZEN KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES: A CASE STUDY OF A BELGRADE DELIBERATIVE MINI PUBLIC[1]

ABSTRACT
Participation in deliberative arenas is often lauded for its transformative impact on citizens' attitudes, sense of agency and ability to formulate concrete policy proposals. The focus of this paper is the first ever deliberative mini public in Belgrade, centred on the topic of expanding the pedestrian zone and rerouting traffic in the city core. By relying on a set of qualitative and quantitative data collected before and after the deliberation, we aim to explore the effects of the public deliberation on the participants' knowledge, attitudes and preferences. Our hypothesis was that participation in this deliberative process led to *better understanding (enhanced knowledge) of the discussed topic and change in attitudes and preferences regarding its realization*. The scope of this study is limited, given the non-experimental design and small sample. Overall, the results indicate that participants` knowledge on the topic of deliberation is enhanced, becoming more precise, elaborate and encompassing different perspectives. As for the attitudes and preferences, in most cases, around two-thirds of the sample changed their positions, while about a third of the sample changed sides, mostly agreeing less with the expansion of the pedestrian zone. The findings support the conclusion that, on a local level, deliberation has the capacity to inform and enhance competence for greater political participation.

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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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1. Introduction

The central tenet of deliberative democratization is that deliberative capacity does not reside solely in electoral institutions, but can also be found in various other, less formal, arenas and fora (Dryzek 2009). In addition to their acknowledged positive impact on resolving political issues, deliberative processes, therefore, can yield democratizing effects on micro-levels as well. This arguably leads to two positive effects. One is that such deliberative exercises can scale-up and improve the whole political system (Parkinson, Mansbridge 2012). The other one, on which this paper focuses, is that participation in deliberative fora like citizens' assemblies and deliberative mini publics improves political learning, promotes individual opinion change and increases a personal sense of political efficacy (Fishkin, Luskin 1999; Luskin et al. 2002; Suiter, Farrell, O'Malley 2016). Empirical evidence supporting such claims has propelled numerous recent initiatives across the globe to organize citizens' assemblies and similar deliberative formats around various political issues (Lacelle-Webster, Warren 2021). The opportunity to be involved in a direct and sustained exchange of arguments with groups of citizens holding different, sometimes opposing views – especially an opportunity to gain direct insight into arguments and positions held by disadvantaged groups, like minorities or persons with disabilities – potentially increases our sense of empathy and understanding of different views. It strengthens collective capacity to reach optimal decisions with various interests taken into consideration (Suiter, Muradova, Gastil, Farrell 2020). Exposure to different arguments is seen as an essential element of deliberation, as a corrective factor for biased argumentation we might hold, being surrounded, most of the time, by like-minded citizens (Mutz 2006). Discussion in which alternative opinions are suggested is a necessary condition not only for individual transformation but also for expression of reasoned opinion (Habermas 1984), Taking part in deliberation can thus be effective not only in reaching common decisions around polarizing issues, but can also impact citizens' attitudes, personal assessment of political knowledge and ability to formulate concrete proposals and participate in political decision-making.

It is precisely this influence of deliberation on one's knowledge, attitudes and preferences that is the focus of our analysis. Our case study is a deliberative mini-public that took place in Belgrade, on November 21st 2020, on the topic of rerouting traffic in city core.[2] More specifically, the circumstances that framed and brought about this deliberative meeting were the official city plan to reshape the city core by expanding its pedestrian zone, by closing some additional twenty streets to motorized traffic. The plan met with opposition by several citizen initiatives, as well as by some experts, who claimed that the existing city infrastructure could not support such rerouting of traffic, that residents

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2   To make the concept of deliberative mini-public more understandable, the research team used the term *Citizens' Assembly*, throughout the communication with the participants.

in the city core would be cut off from main traffic routes, and, above all, they objected the lack of transparency and public debate concerning the plan.[3] The main research question of our analysis is: *Has participation in this deliberative process changed participants' a) knowledge and level of information about the topic; b) attitudes toward it; c) personal preferences regarding its realization*?

While the national and local political context remains beyond the scope of our analysis,[4] a couple of observations need to be made. Deliberative mini publics and other deliberative fora can be organized and are indeed organized in different national and political contexts. However, there is evidence to suggest that the political climate and wider institutional setting, including the level of trust in public institutions, are important factors shaping the quality and results of deliberations (Jiang 2008; Curato, Hammond, Min 2019). Favourable circumstances for good-quality deliberation include functioning democratic institutions, relatively high levels of trust in institutions, expert bodies and decision-makers. In this respect, the political climate in Serbia represents a significant challenge. Both expert reports that monitor the state of democracy (Shadow Report-State of Democracy in Serbia 2021, Internet; Freedom in the World 2021, Serbia, Internet) and recent scholarly analyses (Bieber 2018; Castaldo 2020) suggest that Serbia should perhaps no longer be considered a democratic state, given the sharp rise in authoritarian rule and state-capture mechanisms. Additionally, citizen trust in public institutions is worryingly low (Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021). All this represents a challenge for organizing a deliberative mini public, one the organizing committee was aware of and took into consideration when preparing the material and the logistics so that the deliberative process could meet all the requirements of a good-quality and open debate. It equally represents a factor to be considered for qualitative analysis of the discussions that took place within the plenary sessions. However, in this paper we will not analyse the content and the dynamic of the discussion groups (for a qualitative content analysis of the topics discussed, see Janković in this volume). Our research goal is to analyse the *effects* of participation in the deliberative mini-public on participants, based on their reported answers regarding knowledge, attitudes and preferences *before* and *after* the deliberative mini-public took place. We did this using a non-experimental pretest-posttest design. Our hypothesis is that, regardless of the unfavourable democratic political climate in Serbia, participation in deliberative mini-public held in Belgrade, led to *better understanding (enhanced knowledge) of the topic under discussion and change in attitude and personal preference regarding its realization*.

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3   For more information about the research design and organization of this mini public, as well as the choice to include grassroot movement representatives as participants, alongside ordinary citizens: see the introductory chapter to this volume by Fiket and Đorđević.

4   For a detailed account of specific challenges of organizing a deliberative mini-public in a hybrid political regime, such is the current one in Serbia, see Fiket and Đorđević and Fiket, Ilić and Pudar Draško in this volume.

2. Methodology

Participants

Research on the effects of deliberation is usually done on a representative sample of participants (Mansbridge 2010, Steiner 2012). However, in this study, because we focused on a very specific local issue, we applied purposive sampling, with the aim to include not only citizens who live and work in the relevant area, but additionally, those who are specifically affected by the problem of (traffic) mobility in Belgrade's city core. The sampling criteria sought to accommodate the principal goal of having at least one person from the following categories in each discussion group: people who own businesses or whose place of employment is located in the affected area; workers and managers of cultural institutions in the affected area; local residents with physical disabilities; senior local residents; local residents who are parents of small children (up to 12 years old).[5] The sample consisted of a total of 32 participants, with 25 'regular' citizens and 7 'active' citizens, i.e., members of citizens` initiatives involved in the public debates surrounding the project of rerouting traffic in the city core (see the research design described in the introductory chapter).[6] Participants were of both genders (W=59%), diverse age (with 56% in the age range 31-60) and various education levels. Most participants were highly informed (84% followed the news every day for one to two hours).

Procedure

The participants were recruited by trained recruiters via snowball method, through pollsters' network. They were thoroughly informed about the project within which the study was conducted, the aim of the deliberative mini-public, the organizers and collaborators. After they agreed to participate, they were given the questionnaire via CATI technique[7] by trained interviewers (28 October to 11 November 2020). Between the first survey and the deliberative mini public (11 to 17 November 2020), all participants received carefully balanced

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5   The purposive sampling procedure was applied to include not only persons who represent the population living in the affected areas in socio-demographic terms, but also citizens in some way affected by the public issues under discussion. Hence, the sample included citizens who depend on easy access to public transportation (senior citizens or citizens with physical disabilities), and employees of cultural institutions situated in the affected area (because they raised their voice in the public that the announced project will affect the approachability of their institutions) etc.
6   Those citizen initiatives were '*Pešaci nisu maratonci*', (Pedestrians Are Not Marathon Runners) '*Ministarstvo prostora*' (Ministry of Space) and '*Ulice za bicikliste*' (Streets for Cyclists).
7   CATI stands for Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing. The participants were administered a questionnaire about their general attitudes, policy preferences, level of knowledge on the debated issue, their general political orientation, participation and interest in politics and finally their standard socio-demographic data.

informative materials, with which to familiarize themselves with different sociopolitical perspectives and attitudes regarding the topic. The materials were prepared by the researchers from the scientific board of the study. Inclusivity of different perspectives within the materials was achieved by sending them to relevant actors – citizen initiatives, experts, and decision-makers – for reading and commenting, before they were distributed to the participants. All comments that arrived were accepted and included in the final version of the informative materials. The material consisted of information on the project of expansion of Belgrade's pedestrian zone in the city core, as well as the problem of traffic in the same area, with highlighted arguments pro et contra. Before the deliberative mini-public, held on 21 November 2020, the participants were sent the agenda for the event and the link for online participation. After the event, they were again given the same questionnaire, again via CATI. For their participation in the survey and the deliberative mini-public they received a voucher.

In sum, all participants filled in the questionnaire twice: once (T1) two weeks before the deliberative mini-public and the second time (T2) shortly afterwards.

Instruments

The questionnaire consisted of several subgroups of questions. The basis of our analysis in this paper are answers given in T1 and T2 to the subgroups pertinent to three categories of information: participants' knowledge about the topic of expanding the pedestrian zone, their attitudes toward it and their preferences regarding its realization.

Knowledge about the topic was measured by four questions, of which the first two, 1.1 and 1.2 (one closed [binary choice] and one open-ended), were only asked in T1, given the expectation that participants became familiar with them by T2. The other two open-ended questions (1.3 and 1.4) were asked both times. The questions were the following:

1.1 *Are you informed about the adoption of the Plan for sustained urban mobility that anticipates an expansion of the pedestrian zone in the central part of Stari Grad?*[8]

1.2 *If YES, do you know what it specifically calls for?*

1.3 *Are you familiar with citizen initiatives or groups who oppose the implementation of the pedestrian zone expansion in the central part of Stari grad?*

1.4 *Do you know what specifically these initiatives and groups oppose?*

The *attitudes* toward the topic – the expansion of the pedestrian zone and rerouting of traffic in the city core – were measured by several 5-point Likert

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8   Municipality in downtown Belgrade.

scales (from 1– I do not agree at all to 5 – I very much agree). The questions were the following:

2.1 *The expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city core will lead to traffic problems:*

a) *Greater difficulty of movement for seniors and less mobile persons.*

b) *More frequent traffic jams in the lower part of Dorćol.*[9]

c) *Poorer access to emergency services.*

2.2 *The advantages to the pedestrian zone expansion in the city core outweigh the disadvantages.*

2.3 *The expansion of the pedestrian zone makes sense only with the construction of an underground railway.*

2.4 *The expansion project is a significant opportunity for the development of city tourism and economy.*

2.5 *The expansion of the pedestrian zone will not contribute to solving ecological problems.*

2.6 *Opponents of the pedestrian zone expansion are guided by personal and not public interest.*

The construction of items measuring attitudes toward the topic followed the logic of balanced pro et contra arguments, so as to secure the participants' non-biased responses.

Finally, the *preferences* regarding the realization of the project were also measured by 5-point Likert scales (from 1– I do not agree at all to 5 – I very much agree). The items were the following:

3.1 *The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded.*

3.2 *The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded along with the construction of the underground railway.*

3.3 *First, there should be a public debate, and only then an acceptable solution should be adopted.*

3.4 *The current state of the city core should be preserved.*

3.5 *The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded, but the trolleybus lines should be kept.*

3.6 *The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded, but not at the expense of green areas.*

3.7 *The current state of the city core should be preserved, but more bicycle lanes should be introduced.*

These items were constructed with regard to sets of preferences *for or against* the expansion project, as well as conditions to be met if the project

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9   The affected neighbourhood in the Belgrade municipality.

were to go forward. Finally, all the items and questions on the topic of the deliberative mini public, which are the subject of this paper, were constructed in congruence with the information material citizens read before the event.

Data analyses

The obtained data were analysed with the purpose of examining the effect of participation in the deliberative mini public on participant knowledge, attitudes and preferences regarding the project. For participant *knowledge*, qualitative data analysis was conducted in order to detect changes in answers provided before and after the participation. Data on *attitudes* and *preferences* were quantitatively analysed by simple descriptive statistics in T1 and T2 (mean, standard deviation and frequencies), crosstabs, and paired samples t-test for each of the items. Given the small size of the sample, the purpose of the analyses is not to conclusively infer based on statistical significance of the changes, but rather to inspect changes in frequencies within certain answers, thus revealing tendencies in the data. The scope of this study is limited, given the non-experimental design and small sample. However, it presents some of the preliminary results of a pioneering study about the capacity of an organized deliberative forum to inform and equip citizens in Serbia for more competent involvement in political decision making.

3. Results

The results will be presented in three sections, with respect to the three explored aspects described above. The results on participant knowledge before and after the deliberative mini-public will be given in the form of interpretation of changes, based on the comparison of answers given in T1 and T2. The results on attitudes and preferences will be presented by each item (15 in total), in order to inspect the changes in each attitude and preference. Information will be given on the changes in the mean value from T1 to T2, the results of t-test of statistical significance of the change, frequencies for each answer in T1 and T2, and crosstabulation of frequencies. Such a peculiar analysis, given the small sample of the study, is intended to bring insight into *tendencies* in attitudes and preferences. More general interpretation of the changes in these two aspects will be presented in the discussion and conclusion.

Citizen knowledge about the city's plan to expand the pedestrian zone and reroute traffic in the city core

This is the only part of our analysis where we used qualitative analysis of the data provided to three open-ended questions and one closed, binary choice. The first two questions were asked only in T1, as they pertained to participants' general acquaintance with the project of expanding the pedestrian zone and were thus obsolete in the questionnaire sent after the deliberative mini public took place (T2). Those questions were the following:

1.1 *Are you aware of the adoption of the Plan for sustained urban mobility that calls for the expansion of the pedestrian zone in the central part of Stari grad?*[10]

1.2 *If YES, do you know specifically what it consists of?*

Answers given to those questions provide us insight into participants' general knowledge about the topic of the deliberative mini public prior to being given information or participating in deliberation. Of the total sample, 12.5% answered negatively to question 1.1, meaning that they had no prior knowledge about the city's plan to expand the pedestrian zone and amend the traffic in that part of the city. *Of those who answered affirmatively* to question 1.1, almost one third (29.6%) could only say that they heard about the plan, but knew no further details about it ('don't know anything specific'; I don't know any details, it's about expanding the pedestrian zone'). Almost half (48%) could provide some details in answering question 1.2, but none of the answers contained integral information about the project; rather, participants stressed some particular aspect of it: 'cycling lanes and an attempt to improve traffic in the city centre'; 'there will be more pedestrian and bicycle mobility, less parking space'; 'renovation of the city centre, rearrangement of the sidewalks, bicycle lanes, greenery, closing of traffic'. An interesting detail is that 22.4% of those who were informed about the plan answered question 1.2 by expressing their attitudes towards the project, even though it was not implied by the question. Of the 6 answers in total, 2 contained moderately positive evaluation of the project ('all I know is that streets where my kids go to school will be car-free'; 'the traffic jams in this area are constant, we would all love this to become a pedestrian zone, I hope this is what the plan contains'), while 4 expressed negative attitudes ('… I don't think this is the smart way to do it'; '…it's not guided by good examples'; 'Belgrade has no infrastructure for such a thing, people will be in a ghetto').

The open-ended questions asked both in T1 and T2 were:

1.3 *Are you familiar with citizen initiatives or groups who oppose the implementation of the expansion of the pedestrian zone in the central part of Stari grad?*

1.4 *Do you know what specifically these initiatives and groups oppose?*

Regarding question 1.3, the level of knowledge about the subject matter was even lower in T1 in comparison to limited knowledge expressed in answers to 1.1 and 1.2. 60% of the sample answered it in the negative, meaning that they were not familiar at all with the existence of opposition to this plan. The remaining 40% of the sample had some awareness of it, but most were able to name only one actor (including very vague answers like 'local residents are objecting', or wrong answers like 'those connected with the Parking service'); '*Pešaci nisu maratonci*' (Pedestrians are Not Marathon Runners) – the citizen

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10   Municipality in downtown Belgrade.

initiative most publicly vocal about its opposition to the project was listed in 19% of the participants' answers.

Similarly, in answering the question 1.4 in T1, 54% of participants answered with a simple negation. Other participants stated the following reasons (some of them provided more than one): problems with parking for local residents (6), difficult access of emergency services (3), bad traffic planning (3), negative impact on commerce and cultural life (1), opponents are guided by personal interests (1), negative impact on green spaces (1), the way the plan was adopted (1).

Answers to 1.3 and 1.4 in T2 showed significant changes in the participants' knowledge about the actors opposed to the plan and reasons for their opposition. After the deliberative mini public, 5 participants (15.6%) answered question 1.3 with 'I can't remember'. Four participants provided vague answers ('citizen initiatives'; 'people who live on those streets'), while 23 participants, 71.8% of the sample, showed that they are now familiarised with particular initiatives opposing the project. Most interestingly, answers to 1.4 in T2 were in average longer and much more elaborate than in T1. Compared to 54% answering with a simple 'no' in T1, there were only 5 'I don't know' answers in T2 (15.6%). Most of the reasons stated in T1 were repeated in T2, but with additional arguments attached ('they don't want to be cut off from the traffic and from traffic communication with other parts of the city and they're fighting for access to streets'; 'not enough access for delivery and emergency services, including garbage disposal; 'long walking distances to reach public transport'). An interesting novelty, which most certainly stems from the exposure to the arguments put forward in the deliberation, is the appearance of two new reasons to question 1.4: impact on senior citizens and citizens with disabilities, and lack of a participation and consulting ('nobody asked them about the plan'; 'not enough transparency'; 'impact on certain groups of citizens, like people with disabilities or pregnant women').

Citizen attitudes towards the city's plan to expand the pedestrian zone in the city core

2.1a: The expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city core will lead to traffic problems: greater difficulty of movement for seniors and less mobile persons.

Table 1: Frequencies of answers to item 2.1a in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	9	1	9	3	8	30
T2	7	0	10	4	11	32

Note: 1 – I do not agree at all; 2 – I agree only a little; 3 – I agree to some extent; 4 – I agree rather much; 5 – I very much agree.

Citizens moderately agreed that the expansion of the pedestrian zone would lead to more difficult movement for seniors and less mobile persons in T1 (M=3.00; SD=1.58); this changed towards slightly more agreement in T2 (M=3.40; SD=1.57). However, the change is not statistically significant (t=-1.25; p=.22). Despite that, based on Table 2, we can observe that 63% of participants changed their position, and almost half of the sample changed side[11] (43%), from not agreeing to agreeing (26%) or vice versa (17%).

Table 2: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.1a in T1 and T2.

T2						
	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
Not at all	4	0	3	0	2	9
Only a little	0	0	1	0	0	1
To some extent	2	0	2	2	3	9
Rather much	0	0	0	1	2	3
Very much	1	0	2	1	4	8
Total	7	0	8	4	11	30

2.1b: The expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city core will lead to traffic problems: more frequent traffic jams in the lower part of Dorćol.

Table 3: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.1b in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	5	1	4	9	12	31
T2	2	1	7	9	13	32

On average, citizens mostly agreed that the extension of the pedestrian zone would increase traffic jams in the lower part of Dorćol (M=3.71; SD=1.44). This general attitude was even stronger in T2 (M=3.90; SD=1.16), although the change was not statistically significant (t=-.86; p=.39). Based on cross tabulation, we calculated that 61% of citizens changed their position, but only 26%

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11   Change of position is any change of chosen answer and change of side is a change from not agreeing to agreeing or vice versa. The percentage of those who changed their position is calculated first by calculating the percentage of those who did not change their position (the sum of the grey diagonal) and then by extracting that percentage from 100. In a similar way, the percentage of those who changed sides is calculated by extracting the sum of those who changed sides from those who changed only position, and then calculating the percentage.

changed sides in both directions evenly (13%). Most people (around 19%) kept their position of strong agreement.

Table 4: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.1.b in T1 and T2.

	T2					
	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1 Not at all	2	0	2	1	0	5
Only a little	0	1	0	0	0	1
To some extent	0	0	0	3	1	4
Rather much	0	0	1	3	5	9
Very much	0	0	4	2	6	12
Total	2	1	7	9	12	31

2.1c: The expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city core will lead to traffic problems: poorer access to emergency services.

Table 5: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.1c in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	7	2	8	3	11	31
T2	7	4	4	6	11	32

In T1 citizens moderately to strongly agreed that the expansion of the pedestrian zone would lead to poorer access to emergency services (M=3.29; SD=1.57). This general value remained the same in T2 (M=3.29; SD=1.62). Further analysis of changes in frequencies showed that 71% changed their position, half of whom changed sides (35%) in both directions evenly. This means that even though the average opinion did not change, the participation in deliberation led to more than a third of the sample to change their side. Table 5 does not show any conspicuous finding, except that the number of those who *agreed to some extent* decreased, while the number of those who agreed *rather much* increased. Table 6 shows that most participants (16%) kept their position of *agreeing very much* with the statement.

Table 6: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.1c in T1 and T2.

T2						
	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1 Not at all	3	1	2	1	0	7
Only a little	1	0	1	0	0	2
To some extent	2	1	1	1	3	8
Rather much	0	0	0	0	3	3
Very much	1	2	0	3	5	11
Total	7	4	4	5	11	31

2.2: The advantages to the pedestrian zone expansion in the city core outweigh the disadvantages.

Table 7: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.2 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	9	3	10	1	8	31
T2	9	6	6	9	1	31

On average, citizens moderately agreed with this item in T1 (M=2.90; SD=1.56). However, in T2 they agreed less (M=2.63; SD=1.27), although the change is not significant (t=1.05; p=.30). Cross tabulation of frequencies supports this finding: 63% changed their position, but only 27% changed sides, and 17% to a lesser agreement. 20% of participants *did not agree at all* in both T1 and T2. On the other hand, while in T1 26% of participants *agreed very much*, in T2 the percentage of those fell to 3.2% (see Table 7). However, this fall can be attributed to those who softened their attitude from 5 to 4, that is, from *agree very much* to *agree rather much* (as the latter increased from 1 to 9, Table 8).

Table 8: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.2 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	6	0	0	3	0	9
T1	Only a little	0	1	1	0	0	2
	To some extent	2	5	2	1	0	10
	Rather much	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Very much	0	0	3	4	1	8
	Total	8	6	6	9	1	30

2.3: The expansion of the pedestrian zone makes sense only with the construction of an underground railway.

Table 9: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.3 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	6	6	9	4	6	31
T2	9	5	8	5	5	32

On average, in T1 citizens agreed moderately with the statement that the expansion of the pedestrian zone makes sense only with an underground railway system (M=2.94; SD=1.39). In T2 this inclined toward agreeing less (M=2.77; SD=1.45). This change, however, is not statistically relevant (t=.50; p=.62). Again, around two-thirds of the sample changed their position in T2 (61%), and 42% changed sides, with slightly more participants agreeing less (23%) than more (19%). Most participants have kept their position of agreeing *to some extent* (13%).

Table 10: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.3 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	3	0	1	0	2	6
T1	Only a little	2	1	0	2	1	6
	To some extent	3	2	4	0	0	9
	Rather much	0	1	1	2	0	4
	Very much	1	0	2	1	2	6
	Total	9	4	8	5	5	31

2.4.: The expansion project is a significant opportunity for the development of city tourism and economy.

Table 11: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.4 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	8	6	3	6	8	31
T2	8	8	4	6	6	32

Participants *agreed to some extent* with the statement that the expansion of the pedestrian zone would be significant for city tourism and economy (M=3.00; SD=1.59). Their attitude did not change much in T2 (t=,.93; p=.36), although it inclined toward less agreement (M=2.84; SD=1.51). Most participants held their position (52%), and only 10% changed sides – mostly toward less agreement (7%). However, the biggest number of participants kept their strongly negative attitude, expressing doubt that the expansion of the pedestrian zone would improve the city's tourism and economy.

Table 12: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.4 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	6	1	1	0	0	8
	Only a little	0	4	2	0	0	6
T1	To some extent	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Rather much	1	0	1	2	2	6
	Very much	0	0	0	4	4	8
	Total	8	7	4	6	6	31

2.5: The expansion of the pedestrian zone will not contribute to solving ecological problems.

Table 13: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.5 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	8	0	5	8	10	31
T2	4	5	4	4	15	32

Participants on average agreed that the extension of the pedestrian zone would not contribute to solving ecological problems (M=3.39; SD=1.58). This attitude became stronger in T2 (M=3.68; SD=1.54). Again, the change is not statistically significant (t=-.92; p=.36). Based on cross tabulation, we can infer that around two-thirds of the sample changed their position (61%), while one-third changed sides (32%), with slightly higher inclination towards agreement (19%) than disagreement (13%). Most participants *agreed very much* with the statement in both T1 and T2 (22%). Of those who had *agreed rather much* in T1, most shifted to *agreeing very much* in T2 (50%).

Table 14: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.5 in T1 and T2.

		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	T2						
T1	Not at all	2	2	1	1	2	8
	Only a little	0	0	0	0	0	0
	To some extent	1	1	1	0	2	5
	Rather much	0	1	1	2	4	8
	Very much	1	1	0	1	7	10
	Total	4	5	3	4	15	31

2.6.: Opponents of the pedestrian zone expansion are guided by personal and not public interest.

Table 15: Frequencies of answers to item number 2.6 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	8	2	9	2	6	27
T2	16	1	3	4	8	32

The attitude of low to moderate agreement that the opponents of the pedestrian expansion were led by personal interest in T1 (M=2.85; SD=1.51) became slightly, but not significantly weaker in T2 (M=2.70; SD=1.81; t=.38; p=.71). However, the results of cross tabulation are interesting: 67% changed position, but 52% changed sides, evenly distributed to those who began to agree more, and those who began to disagree (26%). Therefore, even though the average value remained practically the same, there was some disturbance in the attitudes. Most participants who did *not agree at all*, kept their attitude in T2. Those who changed their attitude of *agreeing to some extent* in T1 were split evenly towards a strong negative or strong positive attitude in T2 (around 12%).

In T1 30% did *not agree at all* with this statement; in T2 the number grew to 50% of the whole sample (see Table 15).

Table 16: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 2.6 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	Not at all	5	0	2	0	1	8
	Only a little	1	1	0	0	0	2
	To some extent	4	0	0	1	4	9
	Rather much	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Very much	3	0	0	1	2	6
	Total	13	1	2	3	8	27

Preferences of citizens regarding the expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city core

3.1: The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded.

Table 17: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.1 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	7	3	4	5	12	31
T2	9	4	5	10	4	32

On average, before the deliberative mini public, citizens moderately agreed that the pedestrian zone should be expanded (M=3.39; SD=1.63). This preference changed *towards less agreement* in T2 (M=2.90; SD=1.47), and the change *is statistically significant* (t=2.14; p<.05; Cohen's d=.38). 55% of participants changed their position, only 23% changed sides, but 17% began to disagree in T2. Table 17 shows that the number of those who *agree*d *very much* with the expansion of the pedestrian zone decreased by a factor of three. Table 18 shows that participants still agree with the statement, but not as strongly, since most who chose *very much* in T1, chose *rather much* in T2. A further very important finding is that most participants *did not agree at all* in both T1 and T2 (around 19%) – in other words, the deliberative mini public had no impact on the attitudes of those who already strongly disagreed with the project in T1, while it influenced the attitudes of those who agreed moderately to strongly.

Table 18: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.1 in T1 and T2.

		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	T2						
T1	Not at all	6	0	1	0	0	7
	Only a little	1	0	1	1	0	3
	To some extent	1	1	1	1	0	4
	Rather much	0	1	1	3	0	5
	Very much	1	1	1	5	4	12
	Total	9	3	5	10	4	31

3.2: The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded along with the construction of the underground railway.

Table 19: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.2 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	7	4	7	2	11	31
T2	9	4	5	7	7	32

Moderate agreement in T1 with the statement that the pedestrian zone should be expanded on the condition of the construction of an underground railway system (M=3.19; SD=1.60) inclined towards lesser agreement after the deliberative mini-public (M=2.97; SD=1.58), but not significantly (t=.83; p=.41). Around half of the sample changed their position (48%), half of whom changed sides (26%), mostly towards agreeing less (16%). Again, the biggest number of participants kept their position of *not at all* agreeing with this statement, but it is inconclusive whether this is because they are against the specific proposition or against the project as a whole. Some of the participants who had *agreed very much* in T1, agreed less in T2 (7 out of 11, which is 64%).

Table 20: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.2 in T1 and T2.

		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	T2						
T1	Not at all	6	0	0	1	0	7
	Only a little	1	2	0	0	1	4
	To some extent	1	0	3	2	1	7
	Rather much	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Very much	1	2	1	3	4	11
	Total	9	4	4	7	7	31

3.3: First, there should be a public debate, and only then an acceptable solution should be adopted.

Table 21: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.3 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	0	0	3	4	24	31
T2	0	0	1	1	29	31

Answers to this question provide the clearest position regarding the participants' preferences: T1 already showed a strong preference for a public debate prior to the adoption of any solution (M=4.73; SD=.58). After the deliberative mini public, the average increased to almost unified opinion (M=4.90; SD=.40). This change is marginally significant (t=-1.98; p=.06; Cohen's d=-.36). 87% of participants did not change their position, stating that they agreed very much with this preference, with only 3% (one person) changing sides.

Table 22: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.3 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Only a little	0	0	0	0	0	0
T1	To some extent	0	0	1	0	1	2
	Rather much	0	0	0	1	3	4
	Very much	0	0	0	0	24	24
	Total	0	0	1	1	28	30

3.4: The current state of the city core should be preserved.

Table 23: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.4 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	4	2	7	7	10	30
T2	2	2	6	5	16	31

On average, participants agreed in T1 that the current city appearance should be preserved (M=3.52; SD=1.38). This opinion grew stronger in T2 (M=4; SD=1.28), although not statistically significantly (t=-1.85; p=.08). Around

two-thirds of the sample changed position (62%), half of whom changed sides (31%), mostly agreeing more (24%). Based on Table 23, it can be observed that the number of those who *very much agree* grew from 10 to 16, while most of the participants already *agreed very much* with this preference (24%; Table 24).

Table 24: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.4 in T1 and T2.

	T2					
	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1 Not at all	1	1	1	0	1	4
Only a little	0	1	0	0	1	2
To some extent	1	0	0	2	4	7
Rather much	0	0	3	2	2	7
Very much	0	0	1	1	7	9
Total	2	2	5	5	15	29

3.5: The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded, but the trolleybus lines should be kept.

Table 25: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.5 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	5	1	11	6	8	31
T2	4	1	4	7	16	32

Citizens mostly agreed with the proposition to expand the pedestrian zone as long as trolleybus lines were preserved (M=3.35; SD=1.35). The average preference increased in T2 to *agree rather much* (M=3.94; SD=1.41). The change is not statistically significant (t=-1.74; p=.09). 68% of participants changed positions, and as many as 45% changed sides, mostly agreeing more (32%). Based on Table 26, we can observe that half of the sample *agrees very much* with this preference after the deliberative mini public, most of whom arrived there from some other position (12/16).

Table 26: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.5 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	2	0	0	2	1	5
T1	Only a little	0	0	0	0	1	1
	To some extent	0	0	3	2	6	11
	Rather much	0	1	0	1	4	6
	Very much	2	0	1	1	4	8
	Total	4	1	4	6	16	31

3.6: The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded, but not at the expense of green areas.

Table 27: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.6 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	2	1	5	3	20	31
T2	5	0	3	1	23	32

On average, citizens strongly agreed in T1 that the expansion of the pedestrian zone should not be implemented at the expense of green areas in the city core (M=4.23; SD=1.23). This preference stayed the same in T2 (M=4.13; SD=1.52; t=.35; p=.73). Only 39% changed their position, but 29% changed sides, about the same number in both directions. More than half of the sample already *agreed very much* with this preference in T1 , and this number increased in T2 (Table 27).

Table 28: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.6 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	2	0	0	0	0	2
T1	Only a little	0	0	0	0	1	1
	To some extent	0	0	1	0	4	5
	Rather much	1	0	1	0	1	3
	Very much	2	0	1	1	16	20
	Total	5	0	3	1	22	31

3.7: The current state of the city core should be preserved, but more bicycle lanes should be introduced.

Table 29: Frequencies of answers to item number 3.7 in T1 and T2.

	Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
T1	5	2	7	3	14	31
T2	6	2	2	8	13	31

Participants moderately to strongly agreed in T1 that the current city appearance should be preserved, except for the addition of bicycle lanes (M=3.63; SD=1.54). This general preference stayed the same after the deliberative event in T2 (M=3.60; SD=1.58; t=.14; p=.89). Around half of the sample did not change their position (48%), 20% changed sides, and 13% began to disagree. Most participants have kept their position of *agreeing very much* (30%), but 10% went from 'to some extent' to 'rather much', indicating a slight tendency towards more agreement with the preference after the deliberative mini public.

Table 30: Cross tabulation of frequencies of answers to item number 3.7 in T1 and T2.

		T2					
		Not at all	Only a little	To some extent	Rather much	Very much	Total
	Not at all	4	0	0	1	0	5
T1	Only a little	0	1	0	0	1	2
	To some extent	2	0	1	3	0	6
	Rather much	0	0	0	1	2	3
	Very much	0	1	1	3	9	14
	Total	6	2	2	8	12	30

4. Discussion and Concluding Points

In this paper we sought to examine the impact of the first ever deliberative mini public in Belgrade. We looked at the effects of this event on the participants' knowledge, attitudes and preferences regarding the expansion of the pedestrian zone in the city core and changes to traffic plans in the very heart of Belgrade. Relying on the literature on transformative and democratizing effects of deliberation on participants' opinions and attitudes, our research hypothesis was that participation in this deliberative mini public would lead to *better understanding (enhanced knowledge) of the discussed topic and change in attitude and personal preferences regarding the plan's implementation.*

Our analysis was based on a set of qualitative and quantitative data collected from the questionnaires the participants answered before and after taking part in the deliberative process (T1 and T2). Regarding the participants' *knowledge*, qualitative data analysis was conducted to detect changes in answers provided before and after the participation. Quantitative data on *attitudes* and *preferences* were analysed by simple descriptive statistics in T1 and T2, crosstabs, and paired samples t-test for each of the items. Given the fact that our case study had a non-experimental design and relied on a small sample, our analysis could only reveal tendencies in data. They are, however, observed in relation to each other, which, together with other outputs from the deliberative mini public – like reports on discussion groups and plenary sessions – provides a basis for tentative interpretation of the main findings.

Regarding the citizens' knowledge and possession of information about the topic of the deliberation, we can safely conclude that participation in this deliberative mini public yielded concrete results. While in T1 60% of the sample expressed no knowledge about citizen initiatives opposing the plan, in T2 71.8% of the sample was aware of them. More interestingly, citizens became aware of the concrete reasons for opposing the plan, and were able not only to list them but also elaborate their rationale. In T2 there was a notable presence of two listed answers absent in T1: the impact of the proposed project on seniors and citizens with disabilities, and the absence of a participating and consulting process. This can be attributed to the presence of senior citizens in the discussion groups during the deliberative mini public, as well as to the fact that the invited representatives of the citizen initiatives took the opportunity to highlight the non-participatory and non-transparent process by which the city officials devised and adopted the plan.

In analysing the quantitative data regarding citizens' attitudes and preferences about the project, as already explained, we were not relying on statistically significant changes only, due to the small size of the sample, but sought changes in frequencies, in order to understand the tendencies of the data. For example, we observed that on average, two-thirds of the sample changed positions, and one-third changed sides in answers provided in T2. Therefore, we paid special attention when that percentage was higher or lower.

For instance, in expressing their attitudes toward the statement *The expansion of the pedestrian zone will lead to ... greater difficulty in movement for seniors and less mobile persons*, almost half of the participants changed sides while 26% changed from not agreeing to agreeing with the statement, which is the biggest change we found among data on attitudes. The tendency towards higher recognition of problems that less mobile citizens would face, should the project of expansion be implemented, can be interpreted in terms of slightly higher sensitivity towards such persons. Namely, less mobile and senior citizens were included in the deliberative mini public and were therefore in a position to provide their fellow citizens with their distinctive perspective on the topic.

Another finding that also indicates the impact of the deliberation on participants' attitudes is the change in T2 responses to the statement: *The advantages*

to the pedestrian zone expansion in the city core outweigh the disadvantages. Whereas the percentage of those who *did not agree at all* remained the same, the percentage of those who *agreed very much* fell from 26% to 3.2%. This is most likely the result of the fact that participants had the chance to hear and discuss the negative consequences of the project. As further findings indicate, the deliberative mini public had greater impact on those participants who were moderately to strongly *in favour of* the project, rather than those who were *opposed to* it. In other words, those who expressed their objection to the expansion of the pedestrian zone kept their position, while those who were initially in favour of the project changed their views based on new information they collected during the deliberation. This could be put in the context of the current political climate, mentioned in the introduction. In general, the public in Serbia had very little opportunity to find relevant information about this project, let alone to be informed about opposition to it. We could observe this fact even while preparing the informative material for the deliberative mini public, and subsequently confirmed it by looking at answers given in T1 (in particular regarding information about opposition to the proposed plan). Organized deliberation proved to be the arena for presentation and elaboration of such arguments, and it clearly yielded some effects.

Further confirmation of this starting standpoint could be found in changes of attitudes toward the statement: *Opponents of the pedestrian zone expansion are guided by personal and not public interest.* Again, most participants who did not agree at all did not change their attitude in T2. In T1 30% did not agree at all with this statement; in T2 this number grew to 50% of the whole sample. 52% of participants changed sides. This finding indicates that after the deliberative mini public more participants became less convinced that the opponents of the project were solely led by personal interests. Since each of the four discussion groups within the deliberative mini public included one or two representatives of the citizen initiatives opposing the project, it is reasonable to assume that their arguments were convincing; in other words, participants became more receptive to the attitudes of the project opponents.

In examining the findings of changes in participants' *preferences*, we can again detect trends corroborating our starting point. There was *statistically significant* decrease in numbers of those agreeing with the statement, *The pedestrian zone in the city core should be expanded.* Again, most participants *did not agree at all* in both T1 and T2 (around 19%), while the number of those who very much agreed with the expansion of the pedestrian zone decreased by three times. In other words, the deliberative mini public had no influence on the attitudes of those who already strongly disagreed with the project in T1, but it did influence the attitudes of those who agreed with it moderately to strongly.

The overall trend in the participants`preferences after the mini public was more *opposed* than in favour of the proposed expansion of the pedestrian zone. The only meaningful exception to this were statements *in favour* of the project on condition the green areas and trolleybus lines be kept intact. Half the sample were firm, both before and after the mini public, in their preference

for keeping the green areas should the project be implemented. Regarding the preference of realizing the project on condition of keeping the trolleybus lines, participants tended to agree strongly, especially after the mini public. Based on these findings, we can assume that for the citizens affected by the project of the expansion of the pedestrian zone, ecological concerns are of very high importance.

Finally, the last item to be taken into consideration here is the one without any major change between T1 and T2, but still of significance for the overall analysis. Agreement with the statement, *First, there should be a public debate, and only then an acceptable solution should be adopted* was already very high in T1, yet after the deliberative mini public, the average agreement increased to a nearly unified opinion. The participants' appetite for deliberation and inclusion in public debates is further confirmed in their evaluation of the deliberative mini public: 100% of the sample confirmed that they would like to be included in similar initiatives in the future.

To conclude, our analysis mostly confirmed our research hypothesis: the deliberative mini public held in Belgrade did enhance the participants' knowledge about the topic, and led to some changes in the participants' attitudes and preferences.[12] The trends of change could not be observed in all the items pertinent to the participants' attitudes and preferences. Those that could be observed point to the conclusion that the deliberative process exerted influence on participants who were initially (before the deliberation) moderately or strongly in favour of the project, while the attitudes and preferences of those who were initially against it, practically remained the same. The exposure to arguments held by different categories of citizens (e.g., those with difficulties in mobility), as well as citizen initiatives and experts who were openly opposed to the project, slightly tilted the participants against the overall project. In evaluating the quality of the deliberative mini public, participants agreed from *rather much* to *very much*, that "other participants' responses to expressed opinions were appropriate" (93.5%), "opinions and attitudes of other participants seemed appropriate and justified" (84%), and "participation in group discussions deepened understanding of the issue" (77%).

Even though, given the small sample of the study, our findings could only detect trends, their significance lies in the fact that they represent some of the first results of a pioneering endeavour of studying the effects of an organized deliberative forum on knowledge, attitudes and preferences among the citizens in Serbia, country with a hybrid political regime. On a bigger sample, we could expect these tendencies to grow stronger, to the point of statistical significance and more generalizable findings.

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12   Similarly, qualitative content analysis of the discussion groups suggests that deliberation had a positive impact on participants' knowledge of the topic, see Janković in this volume.

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Efekti deliberacije na znanje, stavove i preferencije građana: studija slučaja beogradske deliberativne mini javnosti

Apstrakt

Učešće u deliberativnim arenama često se pozitivno ocenjuje zbog transformativnog uticaja na stavove građana, na njihov osećaj moći delovanja i na njihovu sposobnost da formulišu konkretne predloge javnih politika. U fokusu ovog rada je prva deliberativna mini javnost u Beogradu, organizovana na temu proširenja pešačke zone i preusmeravanja saobraćaja u centralnom delu grada. Oslanjajući se na skup kvalitativnih i kvantitativnih podataka prikupljenih pre i posle deliberacije, cilj nam je da istražimo efekte javne rasprave na znanje, stavove i preferencije učesnika. Naša hipoteza je da je učešće u ovom deliberativnom procesu dovelo do boljeg razumevanja (produbljenog znanja) diskutovane teme, kao i do promene stavova i preferencija u vezi s njenom realizacijom. Iako je opseg studije ograničen, s obzirom na njen neeksperimentalni dizajn i mali uzorak, izvedeni rezultati pokazuju da se znanje učesnika o temi unapredilo, postalo preciznije, razrađenije i otvorenije za različite perspektive. Što se tiče stavova i preferencija, oko dve trećine uzorka je promenilo stav, po najvećem broju pitanja, dok je oko jedna trećina promenila stranu, uglavnom u pravcu manjeg slaganja s predlogom proširenja pešačke zone. Nalazi podržavaju zaključak da, na lokalnom nivou, deliberacija ima kapacitet da informiše učesnike i unapredi njihove kompetencije za šire političko učešće.

Ključne reči: deliberacija, deliberativne mini javnosti, učešće građana, pešačka zona i saobraćaj, Beograd, znanje, stavovi, preferencije, lokalna politika.

Andrija Šoć

FROM DELIBERATION TO PARTICIPATION: DEMOCRATIC COMMITMENTS AND THE PARADOX OF VOTING[1]

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I examine the view that, surprisingly, the more citizens deliberate about politics, the less likely they are to participate in the realm of the political, and vice versa. In the first part of the paper, I approach the problem from the perspective of the paradox of voting, the claim that voting itself is instrumentally irrational because of the very low probability that a single vote will make any difference at the elections. In the second part of the paper, I argue that rather than analyzing voting instrumentally, it is better to view it as part of the civic commitments that constitute what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society. The act of voting is not primarily an individual's attempt to decisively influence any particular outcome, but an affirmation of the key practice that upholds the democratic society in which citizens play a part. This reveals a meta-paradox of voting. Namely, to not vote is to exhibit a type of behavior that implies acceptance of democracy simultaneously with rejecting its defining component. Because of that, I will claim, not voting is itself irrational. In light of that conclusion, in the third part of the paper, I explore the extant divide between deliberation and participation by referring back to the analysis of civic commitments. Whereas participation without deliberating reveals ideological bias, deliberation without participation expresses a lack of understanding of what it means to be a citizen. The way to connect them is to engage in a process of attaining reflective equilibrium between the two, starting from the practice of deliberation that would be fully informed by the awareness of our democratic commitments and disconnected from ideologically motivated participation.

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Introduction

The paradigm of democratic participation is voting, as the legitimacy of a representative government stems in large part from the high turnout at the elections. In an ideal scenario, the turnout itself would be the result of an array of participatory actions initiated by citizens themselves. The foundation of such an interest in the mechanisms of political and electoral action would be previous deliberative endeavors set up as a way to express and accept political differences, even occasionally bridging the gaps in political views. Each issue would be decided on its merit and in light of carefully weighed reasons, backed by methodologically sound research and neutrally collected data. This picture describes two ways in which citizens could be more closely characterized: as deliberative citizens and as participatory citizens. The distinction between the two is succinctly formulated by Brennan:

> Deliberative citizens have frequent significant crosscutting political discussion. That is, they frequently consider and respond to contrary views. They are careful in forming their own political preferences. They are able to articulate good reasons on behalf of contrary views. They have high levels of political knowledge.

> Participatory citizens engage heavily with politics. They run for office, run campaigns, vote, give money to campaigns, attend town hall meetings, engage in protests, write letters to the editor, etc. (Brennan 2011: 175)

In the political circumstances we described in the first passage, there would exist the complete convergence between three models of democracy – liberal, deliberative and participatory. Whereas liberal democracy rests on the values of justice, liberty, and equality, deliberative and participatory models supplement this broad conception with specific views on how key democratic values would be upheld within the confines of a political life that involves periodic elections, changes in governing bodies, occasional crises that test the judgment, leadership, and unity of the political parties, and other multifaceted phenomena engrained in any democratic political system.[2]

The story, as one might expect, is considerably more complicated than that. What some of the most extensive research shows is that there appears to be an insurmountable incompatibility between being a deliberative citizen and being a participatory citizen (Mutz 2006). To deliberate, even before engaging other citizens, means to closely follow the words and actions of political agents, to approach complex issues with due attention, and to, to the best of one's ability, determine the right side and the wrong side of an issue. But what happens if no political option holds the view one would consider the right view? What if all political options seem unattractive, interchangeably so? One then loses the motivation to participate and invest one's time in such an unappealing prospect. To not participate then becomes a question of preserving one's time and

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2   See, for instance, Gould 1988, Singer 1973, and Waldron 1999.

energy for more suitable, personal, projects and this subsequently turns into the simple calculation of instrumental rationality – to participate in political life: to vote, campaign, march, write letters, etc. is to lose an irretrievable asset, time, that would yield a more profitable outcome if invested elsewhere.

On the other hand, to participate in a political life requires proper motivation in spending such an investment. However, the research presented by Mutz shows that people who are motivated in this way rarely genuinely deliberate. They enter the political life already clear on who they support and they are rarely ready to change their views in light of any new data. Their view that their time and energy are properly spent on political participation stems from how they ground their acceptance of this or that political position. This, however, is not based on deliberation. As Brennan puts it, „participatory citizens tend not to have much cross-cutting political discussion [and] instead, they seek out and interact only with others with whom they already agree" (Brennan 2011: 176; Mutz 2006: 30).

It appears that there is an impasse. Pessimism might be in order, but the research described in the previous passages is not all that there is to observe. In this paper, I plan to explore the issue of deliberation/participation incompatibility from the perspective of the so-called 'paradox of voting' (henceforth also referred to as 'PoV'). As first formulated by Downs (Downs 1957), the PoV thesis states that it is irrational to vote because one vote is highly unlikely to make a difference in the voter's life, unlike a vast number of other actions which can and do make a difference for the agents themselves and others to whom the action may pertain. Thus, it is more rational to stay at home on an election day and iron your clothes than it is to spend time and energy casting a vote. For Downs, this line of thinking involves 'the simultaneous truth of two seemingly contradictory propositions: 1) rational citizens want democracy to work well to gain its benefits, and it works best when the citizenry is well informed; and 2) it is individually irrational to be well-informed':

> Here individual rationality apparently conflicts with social rationality; i.e., the goals men seek as individuals contradict those they seek in coalition as members of society. This paradox exists because the benefits men derive from efficient social organization are indivisible. For purposes of this discussion, let us assume that everyone benefits in the long run if government is truly run "by consent of the governed"; i.e., if every voter expresses his true views in voting. By his "true" views, we mean the views he would have if he thought that his vote decided the outcome. But in fact his vote is not decisive: it is lost in a sea of other votes. Hence whether he himself is well-informed has no perceptible impact on the benefits he gets. (Downs 1957: 246)

What Downs means by these observations is one seemingly (and, as we will see, deceptively) simple statement of fact based on the instrumental view of rationality: that because one vote doesn't determine the outcome of an election, the effort spent on getting informed to the degree that renders that vote reasonably cast is worth significantly more than the action for which it is spent.

This is the point at which the deliberation/participation incompatibility (henceforth: DPI) intersects with the paradox of voting. Resolving the latter, as I will try to show, will help us make inroads toward resolving the former. I will attempt to accomplish this in three steps. First, I will discuss different aspects of the paradox of voting, from both the empirical and the theoretical angles. Second, I will discuss the notion of rationality this paradox is based upon and try to show that we need an altogether different standard of rationality if we are to properly discuss what it means to vote at the democratic elections. Third, I will return to the question of deliberation and participation and explore how we can remove the seeming incompatibility. The main thread of the discussion throughout the paper will rest on the view that to understand what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society is to explore the commitments such a role entails, and that carefully analyzing these commitments requires a value-neutral pragmatist point of view.

1. The Paradox of Voting – Why We (Don't) Vote

In the previous section, I stated the basic version of the paradox of voting. One of the most interesting things about it is that such a claim is both unintuitive and unsurprising. It is unintuitive because elections are something we hold as crucially bound to the political fate of the electorate and millions of people vote every year in every democratic country (as well as in some less-than-democratic countries). Surely such behavior is not viewed by the person in the voting booth as being paradoxical? On the other hand, it is unsurprising if we look at the recent history of turnouts. The data shows decreasing across multiple countries. Let's look at the countries which significantly differ in their current and past democratic performance[3]:

Country	Year	Turnout		
Colombia	1991	33.00%	2002	46.45%
Czech Republic	1990	96.33%	2017	60.84%
Denmark	1981	87.77%	2019	84.60%
Germany	1980	88.57%	2017	76.15%
Hungary	1990	65.10%	2018	69.67%
Spain	1982	79.83%	2019	71.76%
USA	1980	88.60%	2016	65.44%

As we can see from the table, the turnout in all countries except Denmark is either already very low and still on the decline, or is decent (though on the

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3   Data can be found at: https://www.idea.int/data-tools/vt-advanced-search. This is merely a comparative illustration, and is deliberately limited to just several cases wih low, middling and high turnout. The provided link contains full list of countries per tournout and doesn't change my point regarding the decreasing turnout.

low-end of what one would reasonably call a good turnout) but falling. In that sense, perhaps Downs's formulation of the paradox of voting is on the right track. There may seem to be something about our votes not making any difference that makes elections unappealing to citizens and contributes to the decreased turnout. In order to better understand what influences the decision to vote or not to vote, let us take a look at a survey conducted by Pew Research in 2006[4] (the same year when Mutz published her research on the DPI thesis). In it, the participants were asked to state whether they agree with a proposition pertaining to their voting habits. The researchers then measured what percentage of participants, divided by the frequency of their voting, agreed with each of the propositions. Even though such an approach only indirectly relates to the reasoning behind the paradox of voting, the analysis of different combinations of answers will help us understand what it is about the paradox that might be considered at least *prima facie* correct. Namely, the way this research is represented, we can cross-reference two distinct sets of data: the content of the proposition and the frequency of voting and not-voting, to arrive at an interpretation of the answers. This will also bring us closer to the next step, which is considering some plausible ways to alleviate the problem posed by the paradox.

Here is the outcome of the research, as provided by Pew:

A Spectrum of Voters and Non-Voters: **How They Differ**			
---------- *Voting Frequency* ----------			
Regular	Inter- mittent	Registered, but rare	Not registered
%	%	%	%
35	20	23	22=100
Agree with each statement...			
Interested in local politics — 91	76	57	45
Duty as citizen to always vote* — 88	80	60	39
This election matters more — 83	74	67	67
Feel guilty when I don't vote — 72	70	57	45
Know little about candidates — 44	60	76	68
Bored by what goes on in DC — 25	38	42	43
Angry with government — 24	15	14	22
Issues in DC don't affect me — 15	25	32	27
Voting doesn't change things — 13	18	30	33
Sometimes too busy — 8	12	29	43
Difficult to get to polls — 8	8	19	30
Based only on those who 'completely agree.'			

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4   https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2006/10/18/who-votes-who-doesnt-and-why/

Although a thorough analysis of this table would require far more space than is available here, for the present context it is also unnecessary. There are several propositions where the discrepancy between those who regularly vote and those who are not registered to vote is greatest and these will be the first item to examine. Take a look at the propositions: 'interested in local politics', 'duty as a citizen to always vote', 'sometimes too busy' and 'difficult to get to polls'. In the first two cases, there is a 91/45 and 88/39 split between the first and the fourth column, which means that 91% and 88% of regular voters agree, respectively that they are interested in local politics and that they think it is their duty to vote, whereas only 45% and 39% of those who are not registered to vote agree with those statements. The reversely high split 8/43 and 8/30 occurs for the latter two propositions.

Thus, for the sizeable percentage of the citizens who never vote, being sometimes too busy or finding it difficult to access the polls seems to be one of the confounding variables which decisively influence their voting practices. At the same time, a similar percentage of the same group of participants isn't interested in local politics, nor do they think it is their duty to vote. This sort of voting profile seems then to be the profile of someone who would agree with Downs's formulation of voting paradox based on instrumental rationality. Again, intuitively, in order to move beyond the instrumental view, one would, it seems, need to hold voting to be the duty that trumps the assets (time, effort, energy, etc.) spent to be informed, arrive at the polls, and cast a vote. As we can see, moreover, only 13% of those who regularly vote hold that voting doesn't change things, meaning 87% hold that it does.

Now, the proponents of the PoV thesis might point to the fundamental irrationality of such behavior and of the belief that one vote can change anything. After all, are we not in the same territory as when examining the lottery paradox?[5] Strictly speaking, they would be correct and one might even be compelled to explore constructive ways in which the problem presented by the paradox could be alleviated. For instance, a *prima facie* plausible attempt to resolve the problem of PoV is to find ways in which a voter can gain more influence at elections. For instance, a group of solutions would appeal to the very aspect of a political agency captured by the participatory model of democracy. Namely, talking to candidates or elected representatives about concrete issues, participating in grassroots movements, performing community service or campaign volunteering could conceivably mean that a citizen has increased the range of their voting actions, and even if their vote is still only counted the same, they have garnered additional votes for their preferred election option and thus made their efforts more worthwhile. A different, institutional approach to increasing the voter influence would entail making politically relevant information more readily available and reliably presented, thus alleviating common concerns expressed by voters that politicians or the governing body itself do not really address real concerns that voters have.

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5   See, for instance, Hawthorne 2004.

The problem with these strategies is that they only strengthen the PoV thesis. Namely, one only needs to consider the efforts required to even start to accomplish any of the mentioned goals. Becoming a more educated or a more active voter takes time and effort, while the vote one casts still counts as one and there is no guarantee that any of our additional actions will change even one vote. Thus, instead of making our act of voting instrumentally more rational, in terms of PoV, such moves are rendering it even more irrational. Instead of spending 30 minutes to cast a single among millions of votes, we spend much more time on various political activities, only to again cast a single among millions of votes. There is a clear expenditure of at least one resource – time, with unclear benefits of gaining another – a more influential vote. Therefore, the more we do to become educated citizens in a democratic society, thus becoming better citizens, the less we ought to be concerned with voting itself, thus directly undermining the democratic society we live in.

Moreover, by thus strengthening the paradox, we are undermining the viability of both civic participation and of civic deliberation because neither appears to yield outcomes that would make either seem rational, let alone effective or fruitful. Thus, to even get to the dilemmas posed in regards to the PDI, we must address their *prima facie* viability. To do that, we must first try to resolve the paradox of voting and, as we will see in the next section, this can only be done if we successfully challenge the root premise of the paradox, the instrumental view of rationality.

2. Rationality of Voting – Instrumentalist and Pragmatist Conceptions

When a citizen considers whether to vote, it is natural to think about what one votes on, whether the candidates or the political proposals are worth our time, if our vote will change anything, and do we have anything better to do on the election day. After all, voting is just one action among many we need to perform that day, and in order to determine if it is instrumentally rational to vote, we must weigh the cost and the benefit of voting against the cost and benefit of any other action that we can do on the same day. Thus, applying the standards of instrumental rationality seems to pit our resources against one another. Since our resources are limited, we are in the territory of a zero-sum game: some tasks must be abandoned for others to be accomplished. This is why, according to the PoV thesis, to spend valuable time in order to exercise minuscule influence on political life is fundamentally irrational.

However, even though *prima facie* understandable, treating voting as just another type of everyday action, on par with paying bills, driving to the store, etc., means disassociating it from the system of government within which it is only possible, which gives it meaning and is, in turn, reinforced by it. Thus, a part of what it means to be a citizen in a democratic society is to treat voting as an activity that defines a democratic system. Democracy is founded upon several fundamental institutions that embody essential values of justice,

freedom, and equality, among others. The institution of elections, the peaceful exchange of power, the independent legislative body which guarantees the legitimacy of the elections all pertain to any democratic form of government.[6] Voting is then one of the fundamentally distinctive democratic practices, and an unavoidable aspect of a society that can be justifiably called 'democratic' is the constitutional codification of elections. What this entails, it seems, is that the reasoning behind the PoV thesis is based on a mistaken premise that doesn't account for the definitional significance of voting and thus applies an incorrect, instrumental, standard of rationality.

There are, however, multiple ways in which one might want to discuss voting non-instrumentally. In no specific order, we might point out a wide range of reasons for voting. One can vote out of the sense of civic duty, or out of the sense of moral duty. People vote simply because they wish to express their freedom to do so, or because they want to be seen casting a vote. In addition, they commonly vote simply because they genuinely prefer one of the options at the ballots, or because they want to express their dislike for one of the options. What I want to emphasize here is that none of these genuinely capture what it means to vote. The question of whether it is rational to vote doesn't end with the instrumental zero-sum approach outlined earlier, nor with the normative claims of the duty-based reasons for voting. Instead, we have to take into account the most basic fact about voting – that it is a defining element of democracy.

To live in a democratic society is to tacitly or overtly accept its foundational values and institutions. When discussing the person who, at the election day, considered whether to vote or to clean a house, we were thinking of a generic democratic citizen in a stable democracy – a person who, by all accounts, accepts the division between branches of government, follows the laws, believes that everyone is equally protected and has the same human and civil rights as every other citizen. In other words, we were thinking about a democratic citizen who approves of the system of government codified by their country's constitution and doesn't perform any acts to somehow subvert it or change it (we will return to this later). However, if such a citizen withholds going to the polls and casting a ballot, what they essentially do is exhibit behavior that is in

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6   One can naturally contest both the normative aspect of democracy which pertains to ideals of freedom and equality, and its procedural aspect, reflected in regular elections. The topic of this paper doesn't require one to accept this traditional model of democracy and certainly there are numerous criticisms that have been levied against it in the previous years. In fact, numerous pariticipative and deliberative models have been put forward in order to provide better alternatives to the way a democracy could better embody both freedom and equality (see, e.g., Elstub 2018). I do not claim here that the traditional model is somehow superior to these alternatives, nor that it is something that can't be reassessed. It is simply a starting point from which elections and voting can be discussed in the context of citizens' democratic commitments, especially as they pertain to assent to freedom and equality (in one form or another). I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for the suggestion that led to this clarification.

contrast to their otherwise common democratic practice. They fail to adhere to the practice of voting and thereby, in their actions, demonstrate that they do not accept one defining element of democracy, while, at the same time, demonstrating in their other actions that they accept other defining elements of democracy. However, since those elements are all essential to it, failure to uphold even one is a failure to uphold democracy as a system. And just like we would deny that a country can be democratic if the judicial and executive branches of government were not independent of each other, so we would deny that a democratic country can fail to hold regular elections. Thus, the practice of voting is not different in its democratic capacity from the division of government. The citizen who doesn't vote, then simultaneously accepts and doesn't accept the basic tenets of democracy and, therefore, accepts and doesn't accept democracy itself. This, I claim, is the real paradox of voting.

To capture the sense in which this is the case, we have to go beyond the instrumental conception of rationality and explore its deeper, pragmatic dimension. By 'pragmatic' here, I refer to an idea that goes back to C.S. Peirce and his formulation of the pragmatic maxim.[7] It goes as follows:

> Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object. (Peirce 1986: 266)

While the pragmatic maxim has a wide range of applications, I here want to focus on the view that underlies the second sentence in this maxim – that the conception of an object is the whole of the conception of the effects. By analogy, the conception of a democratic citizen is simply the conception of the actions of a citizen relevant to characterizing the citizen as following through on essential democratic commitments (i.e., accepting and upholding the defining aspects of democracy). By applying this maxim, we can thus say the following. To be a citizen in a democratic society is, as just mentioned, simply to act in a way that affirms values, practices, and institutions of said society. By not voting, a citizen doesn't act in a way that affirms this. Thus, not voting implies that democratic citizens do not consistently act on the commitments they themselves accepted. This means that their behavior is, as mentioned, paradoxical.

There is a conception that predates Peirce by almost a century and captures a similar incompatibility – namely the idea that Kant expresses through his hypothetical imperative (Kant 1996). For Kant, hypothetical imperatives 'represent the practical necessity of a possible action as a means to achieving something else that one wills, or that it is at least possible for one to will' (Kant 1996: 4:414). Furthermore, as Kant notes, the claim of a hypothetical

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7   This is one way of attemtping to incorporate an aspect of pragmatism into political theory. For another, more tied to Perice's view of truth, see Misak 1999. For attempts to apply Dewey's pragmatist views, see Putnam & Putnam 2017. Depending on the context, I will sometimes use the term 'pragmatist' instead of 'pragmatic'. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this suggestion.

imperative is that if one wills an end, they must will the means it requires (Kant 1996: 4:417).[8] Peirce's maxim expresses the idea that goes in the opposite direction – that if someone doesn't will (or act on) the means for an end, then they don't will the end itself because to want the end to obtain entails wanting to have the means for achieving it. To simultaneously say that we want the end without wanting the means to that end is to exhibit a form of pragmatical irrationality. This goes beyond our mere rational management of different resources. Moreover, it determines the factors which will influence how we treat our resources (time, energy, effort, etc.) in the first place. It also helps us look at the question of voting (as a primary instance of civic participation) through the lens of our democratic commitments.

Previous considerations reveal something important about what it means to accept commitments of living in a democratic society. The PoV thesis mistakenly identifies the citizen as lacking any particular commitments, which is why their participation in the democratic institution of voting is analyzed on the same level as any other daily activity. To take the pragmatic view of democratic commitments is not to thereby recognize that citizens have a civic, moral duty or that they should have a legal obligation to vote (though these aren't mutually incompatible[9]). This sort of normative language doesn't need to follow from the statement of fact (if the pragmatic view is correct) that says: to vote is to exhibit a coherent democratic-affirming behavior; to not vote is to be pragmatically irrational and to not genuinely be a citizen. This is simply a pragmatic statement about our rationality and doesn't in any moral or legal way need to compel anyone to vote. It, however, resolves the PoV thesis by showing how formulating it is itself paradoxical.

We can clarify the distinctive nature of the pragmatic conception of rationality and commitments by giving a couple of simple examples. Which commitments one has can be determined from the role in which they perform certain actions. Let us take two distinctive roles – being a student and being a parent. One of the key commitments that students have is taking exams. We can immediately see how this can be connected to Kant's hypothetical imperative, as the exams are means to the end which the role of being a student entails – getting a university degree. In a similar vein, a defining commitment of a parent is to keep their child safe from harm. The actions that embody these commitments are actions that are appropriate for a person that undertakes the roles of a student or of a parent. Consider, now, a situation in which a student forgoes taking an exam and instead goes to a concert. The latter action is not

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8   There are readings that ascribe a wider implications of the hypothetical imperative. One of the current interpretative dilemmas is whether to apply a wide reading and take the hypothetical imperative as instructing agents on whether to have or not to have certain ends, or to apply a narrower reading according to which agents are only instructed to recognize the necessity of certain means once particular ends have been established. See more in Schroeder 2005 and Rippon 2014.

9   On some of the grounds for having moral duty to vote see e.g.: Guerrero 2010, Beerbohm 2012 and Zakaras 2018.

in accordance with the role of a student. Judging by their actions, we can say that by making that choice, such a person doesn't commit to being a student while effectively having said role. Even more drastically, let us consider a parent who neglects to feed their child. Their action (say, preparing a meal only for themselves) is the action of a person who isn't a parent, and yet they at the same time are parents. Thus, the mere description of the commitments that their roles entail shows the discord of their overt actions.

By the same token, at least judging solely by overt actions (or lack thereof), a democratic citizen who doesn't vote is no different than a citizen who doesn't vote because the system of government in the latter's country doesn't allow it. The non-democratic behavior is the same, and yet the former is a citizen living in a democratic society and presumably adhering to their other commitments (such as treating others equally and obeying the law). What we must bear in mind here is that this is a morally neutral account of stated behaviors (or lack thereof). The pragmatic account of rationality doesn't hold the person who doesn't vote as immoral no more than it holds the student who doesn't take the exam but goes to the concert as immoral. There are no moral principles embedded in such an account from which there would follow a conclusion that such a person is immoral because it fails to act on that principle. On the other hand, just like in the case of the neglectful parent, we can take the pragmatic account in conjunction with some moral principle and say that the person who fails to feed their child is certainly an immoral person. However, the statement that they are pragmatically irrational in following through on the commitments that their roles demand is not the statement that they have failed to make a moral act. It is, in one sense, a statement that is more fundamental than a moral judgment. It is compatible with value judgments but is itself value-neutral. What it claims is, in effect, that if a student doesn't take the exam, they aren't behaving like students, that if a parent doesn't feed their child, they aren't behaving like parents, and that if a person living in a democratic society doesn't vote, then they simply aren't behaving like citizens. If that is so, then one sense they both are and aren't students, parents, or citizens, and just like it doesn't make much sense if a parent says that they didn't have time to feed the child or that they had more important things to do, so it doesn't make sense to say that voting on the election day was somehow less important than cleaning a house because cleaning house made more difference for them than voting.

Seen this way, the act of voting is a foundational democratic act, rather than simply an individual and contingently fungible action. To not act doesn't by itself imply that one is an immoral person, as we still lack an overall conception of duty to vote that would elevate it to a moral principle. Again, the pragmatic account of rationality and of our commitments doesn't entail any moral principle which non-voting would fail. There might be a whole host of moral principles that could be tested or accepted in accordance with pragmatism, but pragmatism itself doesn't require any one of them to lead us to the idea that voting is wholly different than cleaning our house, driving, going on a holiday, reading a book, etc. In addition, it also doesn't imply that the act of voting ought to be

legally compulsory. Although there are countries with compulsory voting, and although there are different debates on the merits or demerits of such a practice, a pragmatic account is here again neutral. It doesn't state anything specific about it, and it doesn't need to, though it is compatible with different propositions. To understand why it is legislatively neutral, we can simply refer to the fact that it is virtually impossible (and very probably morally unacceptable) to legislate rationality. Just because not voting at concrete elections is pragmatically irrational doesn't mean that voting should be compulsory, no more than just because not taking exams is pragmatically irrational, there should be a law that would punish students if they didn't take some particular exams.

This might lead to a set of further questions. Even if voting isn't compulsory, why would we exhibit pragmatic irrationality if we didn't vote because we didn't prefer any option? What if the elections themselves are susceptible to fraud? Aren't there, after all, legitimate reasons for not voting that make our actions compatible with our civic role and our democratic commitments? The answer to this is that there are legitimate reasons, and this pragmatic conception actually helps us understand them better. Let us go through two scenarios, one in which there are no good options on the ballot and the other when we suspect that there will be election fraud. When it comes to the first, the simple answer is that just because we have no one to vote for, we can still follow through on our commitments. Instead of staying at home, we fulfill our civic role of a democratic citizen by going to the polling place and filling out the ballot the way we want to. If there are no good options, we can write that down on the ballot. That makes the ballot invalid, but it still expresses our commitment to the institution and the process. Furthermore, if done in a large number, it sends a much clearer and stronger political message than just staying at home. After all, a person who didn't vote might have been sick or away or uninterested, but a person who voted in protest will not be mistaken for a merely complacent or uninterested non-voter. And, if at an election with a 60% turnout, and the final tally yielding, say, a 25/22/10/8 split among major options, a 20 or 30% of invalid ballots (with the rest really being sick/away/etc.) would mean much more than 40% of people simply not showing up.

When it comes to not voting because of the suspicion of fraud, the pragmatic account helps us explain why, in those instances, it is not irrational to stay at home. Namely, a country in which it is not possible to hold legitimate elections is a country in which some of the basic democratic procedures cannot be followed through according to the law. The suspected fraud can happen in different ways.[10] Even in a country with a long-standing democratic tradition and different ways to preserve the legitimacy of the elections, such as the USA, it is all too easy to doubt the outcome and claim the failure to protect the legality of elections.[11] If a democratic capacity of a country that organizes

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10   A comprehensive examination of a variety of institutional forms of corruption, see Lessig 2013, Miller 2017, Rose-Ackerman 2015, Thompson 2018.
11   See, for example, Temming 2018.

elections is in doubt, then staying at home and not voting actually is in line with one's democratic commitments, since such an act is actually an expression of disregard for the diminished democratic performance of the country. In that sense, there certainly are situations in which adhering to democratic commitments would entail not voting. However, as we can recall, the scenario represented in the PoV thesis was entirely different than what scenarios with illegitimate or illegal elections would require.

Instead of thinking about the upshot of the pragmatic approach as providing a basis for a value judgment or for legislation of our political actions, it is much more pertinent to consider what it tells us about our roles and the commitments they entail. It is this aspect of what it means to be a citizen that, I will claim in the next section, will help us understand why the apparent incompatibility between deliberation and participation occurs in the first place. Moreover, it will provide an approach that might even make the appearance of incompatibility dissipate.

3. Between Deliberation and Participation

As we have seen in the introductory section, it seems intuitive to think of the deliberative and participative aspects of citizen involvement in politics and society as co-tenable. However, Mutz's research demonstrated that this intuition is entirely misplaced. Not only are the two jointly untenable, but they are also even almost contradictory – more participation seems to involve less deliberation, and more deliberation leads to less participation. We might ask why it is that we have such intuition in the first place?

One possible answer is that we have the tendency to think about citizen participation and deliberation in abstraction from the actual conditions of political involvement. What the 'ground-level' analysis demonstrates is that wide gaps between different groups of people lead to the increased appearance of the so-called 'echo chambers', a term denoting the discussions that take place only among the people who already agree with each other on whatever topic is at hand.[12] Groups of citizens who fail to register, or actively avoid sources with who they disagree, are less informed than they could be, even if the missing information needn't be some set of facts, but knowledge about the reasons for opposing viewpoints. Since participation requires motivation, it stands to reason that the most ideologically biased citizens will be most motivated to become involved in political matters – be it through community organizing, town hall discussions, campaign volunteering, and the like. However, since none of these activities requires talking to the other side, and sometimes they even preclude it, more participation actually entails less deliberation. After all, what to deliberate upon and with whom, when one already knows everything they need to know and everyone in their immediate surroundings already thinks the same thing?

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12   See more in: de Laat 2006, Parsell 2008, Sunstein 2008.

To approach the matter from the other side, let us take a look at what deliberation involves. To deliberate in a basic sense of the term (even before entering the public arena of politically motivated group-level discussions[13]) means to gather information about political parties, policy proposals, merits or demerits of particular representatives, etc., and to consider how to act in a political arena. However, elected representatives fail their constituents, policies are enacted based on something other than the interests of citizens and parties respond to genuine criticism too infrequently and overly defensively. In such situations, citizens aware of those problems lose motivation to participate. If a political climate becomes too discouraging, the lack of political participation extends even to refrain from voting. Now we can say why exactly. It is because in such situations disenchanted citizens apply the instrumental standard of rationality and think that being involved in politics, at least through voting, is simply not worth their time. By explaining the background of Mutz's result in this way, we arrive at two additional questions. First, is Mutz's research a definitive statement on deliberation/participation incompatibility? Second, how can the two become genuinely convergent? The remainder of this section will consist of answering these questions in turn.

We have mentioned earlier the rise of the phenomena of echo chambers. To use Mutz's term, the main wedge between deliberation and participation seems to be the lack of 'cross-cutting exposure' (Mutz 2006, 44). The two factors that, according to her, explain this are selective exposure and environmental constraints. However, such an account assumes that citizens have already been somehow predetermined to avoid discussions with the other side. Namely, the selective exposure is the result of previous biases, whereas environmental factors (by which Mutz has in mind the social aspect of our relationships with others) only constitute a possible hindrance to cross-cutting exposure, but by no means render them impossible. Furthermore, the advent of the Internet and various social media has more or less made the connection between our political preferences and our immediate social surroundings irrelevant (or at the very least weakly connected). One can discuss the problem of rising inflation with a person at the other end of the country, or the world, without ever needing to discuss it even in their household or with their neighbors. Even one's choice of sources of analysis of the problem of inflation isn't determined by what newspapers or what TV channels they have in their vicinity.[14] Rather, the choice is determined and even reinforced by the earlier choices that were made in this regard.

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13   For a detailed discussion of various aspects of deliberation in this sense, see Gutmann, Thompson 2004.

14   Calhoun made the point that 'most of the information we have about people from ourselves comes not through any direct relationships [but] through print and electronic media' (Calhoun 1988: 225). While certainly true in 1988, in 2021 we have to update this notion by expanding what 'electronic media' refers to, so as to include the dominancy of social media and various algorithms which determine what sort of exposure we will have to different sources of information, analysis and opinion.

In other words, the social context hardly matters, and selective exposure has a self-reinforcing aspect that renders cross-cutting exposure increasingly difficult. To put it even more pessimistically, the very motivation for being exposed to other perspectives, a precondition for entering deliberative discussions, is thereby lessened or eliminated, which then leads to the increased motivation for participating in the reinforcement of political points one already adheres to. Mutz correctly points to three benefits of cross-cutting exposure: encouraging a deeper understanding of one's own viewpoint, producing greater awareness of rationales for opposing viewpoints, contributing to a greater tolerance (Mutz 2006: 69). Ideally, these are the benefits that citizens ought to fully embrace. However, as is clear from the previous discussion, neither of the three has sufficient motivational capacity. It might even be surmised that only if one is already predisposed to hold the three inherently valuable, they would be ready for cross-cutting exposure. On the other hand, if one was already positively inclined to cross-cutting exposure, they wouldn't be susceptible to the problem of echo chambers or for ideologically motivated participation. Thus, to use a familiar metaphor, it seems that the cure for a disease would only work on people who aren't likely to get sick in the first place. The first question we asked earlier seems to be rather pessimistically answered. However, as we will see, the answer to the second might hold a promising way out of such a situation.

In asking whether deliberation and participation can become more convergent, we are in effect asking for a mechanism by which the main issue – lack of motivation for cross-cutting exposure – is resolvable by any effective means. One possible answer might be more deliberation by those who tend to ideologically participate and more participation by those who tend to deliberate. To be sure, there is deliberative research that points to actionable policy changes, and this is certainly to be commended.[15] However, this still doesn't account for the initial motivation for participating in such research, as that is what makes those citizens less bound to participate for ideologic or purely partisan reasons. In addition, a government's willingness to adapt its policies in light of deliberative events demonstrates its willingness to overcome polarizing partisan gaps – at least in some significant instances. Thus, we are faced with the same type of question – how to bring deliberation and participation closer together – only in an extended form: how to bring deliberation and participation closer together in cases in which there is initially little interest or inclination for taking part in one or the other. Here is where the pragmatic account of rationality and the resulting account of citizen commitments comes into play.

The key to understanding why deliberation and participation seem irreconcilable is to recognize that both sides – the one who deliberates without participating, and the one who participates without deliberating – share a common

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15   One promising instance is Fishkin's research via the method of deliberative polling (Fishkin 1991; Fishkin 1996). See some positive effects enumerated at https://cdd.stanford.edu/what-is-deliberative-polling/#Selected_Results.

failure: not following through on their democratic commitments. Much like the students who don't take exams, citizens who don't participate by not voting (which is, in a sense, a minimal form of participation) aren't fully citizens. On the surface and in that particular respect, their daily actions resemble, as I suggested in the previous section, those of the people who live in an autocratic state. Similarly, ideologically motivated participation fails to fulfill the democratic capacity of what it means to be a citizen because it exhibits inclinations that go against the main tenets of democracies – tolerance, impartiality, and equality. To overcome such a situation, members of both groups must start thinking about what are their roles in a society and what they entail. Moreover, they must act on closing the gap between their roles and their actual democratic performance or lack thereof.

This might seem as overly naive. After all, the biases we mentioned earlier seem all but impossible to remove. As Caplan terms it while talking about economic biases, they persist because of the tendency of people to behave in a rationally irrational manner (Caplan 2001). As Brennan puts it:

> A person is said to exhibit rational irrationality when it is instrumentally rational for him to be epistemically irrational. An instrumentally rational person chooses the best strategies to achieve his goals. An epistemically irrational person ignores and evades evidence against his beliefs, holds his beliefs without evidence or with only weak evidence, has contradictions in his thinking, employs logical fallacies in belief formation, and exhibits characteristic epistemic vices such as close-mindedness. (Brennan 2011: 173)

While discussing the likelihood that the described irrationality can be overcome, Brennan further notes:

> When it comes to politics, individuals have every incentive to indulge their irrational impulses. Demand for irrational beliefs is like demand for most other goods. The lower the cost, the more will be demanded. The cost to the typical voter of voting in epistemically irrational ways is nearly zero. The cost of overcoming bias and epistemic irrationality is high. The psychological benefit of this irrationality is significant. Thus, voters demand a high amount of epistemic irrationality. Most voters have the incentive to remain irrational about economic policy. (Brennan 2011: 174)

What the previous two quotes in effect demonstrate is that the instrumental approach leads to political complacency. As in the case of the failure regarding our commitments, both mere deliberation and mere participation exhibit a form of complacency. Namely, one is either complacent regarding the prospects of political realities being significantly different, or is, through partisan participation complacent with regard to what the other side has to say. Since the cost of such a state of affairs being changed is high, as noted by both Caplan and Brennan, we seem to be back at the beginning, when Downs discussed the paradox of voting using the very standard of rationality that is, in its

instrumental form, both theoretically reinforced and even empirically demonstrated in fMRI studies (Westen 2008).

However, as we have seen, there is more to be said, because the instrumental approach captures only one element of a citizen's political life. What it leaves out is the very factor that ought to determine what is to be calculated within an instrumental model of rationality. To return to the analogy with Kant's hypothetical imperative, an instrumental model might be able to determine (if anything) how some particular means stand in relation to particular ends in terms of their viability, but it cannot determine how are some ends to be chosen in the first place. Here, though, is where the analogy stops. As is well known, in Kant's view, that role is reserved for categorical imperative. On the other hand, the realm of the political cannot be easily subsumed under the banner of ethical principles.[16] The pragmatist approach to rationality fits, however, both with views that declare the political to be autonomous from the ethical and with the views that reject such a notion because it is, as we mentioned, value-neutral. In the context of answering our second question, the way this feature or pragmatism comes into play is the following.

To recognize one's role in any walk of life, we must consider what that role entails. The same way our words carry a certain weight and may imply what wasn't explicitly stated, so our different roles – being a student, a parent, a friend, a worker, a citizen – imply certain modes of behavior. To fulfill our roles successfully, such implications need to be carried out to their conclusion. A communicative effort wouldn't go very far if we didn't understand the implication of our words, or worse yet if we intentionally obfuscated them. In either case, it would reveal a pragmatist gap not dissimilar to how a failure to instrumentally determine a means-end relation would reveal a fundamental failure to observe which means are required by our chosen ends. Let us, then, take a closer look again at what it means to be a democratic citizen. When we discussed voting, we said that in ordinary circumstances – when a citizen isn't actively protesting the way their representative government or an autocratic regime rules their country – such a form of participation constitutes an aspect of what it means to be a democratic citizen. On par with upholding the tenets of freedom, equality, or justice, to take part in voting means that one holds the defining democratic institutions in the proper regard. Now a question arises in light of the reason we identified as being at the root of DPI – democratic complacency reinforced through the adherence to echo chambers which diminish or preclude cross-cutting exposure. Namely, what about voting along strictly partisan lines? Isn't that what exactly epitomizes the problem of the divide Mutz and Brennan discuss?[17] Taken at face value, it certainly is, but a

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16   In fact, it is doubted that something like that can or ought to be done at all. See, e.g. Nardin 2017.

17   Merely one among many examples of voting that doesn't reflect genuine democratic commitments (in the sense that it was motivated by partisan reasons) happened in the USA in the last presidential elections. According to the poll conducted by Pew

pragmatic approach doesn't merely analyze our actions. It goes into what lies behind them. Thus, we can say by following such an approach that an act of partisan voting undermines what democracy entails.[18] And because partisan voting is one overt form of non-deliberative participation, the pragmatic approach helps us see not only what is wrong with it, but what we should do to ameliorate the situation. The solution consists of four steps.

First of all, effective deliberation has to be the initial step, which then would lead to genuinely democratic participation.[19] Second, in light of the deliberative efforts undertaken with democratic participation in mind, citizens would be able to fully reflect on their commitments and whichever choices they then make (and realize through some form of participation) their democratic capacity as citizens wouldn't be thereby diminished. Third, whatever the result of their participation – whether their candidate lost, won, etc., that result would inform their further deliberative efforts. Fourth, such efforts would then influence future participation and render the duality between deliberation and participation mutually reinforcing, rather than incompatible. This sort of reflective equilibrium, to borrow a term from Rawls, would result in citizens both understanding what lies at the root of their commitments and becoming increasingly more proficient in fulfilling such commitments. Without needing to resort to any type of evaluative judgment about that sort of democratic performance we can say that the pragmatic account of rationality is thus able to capture the key to what constitutes the role that being a democratic citizen entails. At its root, citizens who avoid cross-cutting exposure and exhibit democratic complacency are fundamentally irrational in that particular aspect of the set of roles they play in their lives. However, the way out of that is readily available and attainable in modern democratic societies.

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research between Jan. 8-12 2021, for 67% of the voters hold that voting against Trump was a 'major reason', and only 12% don't think it was the reason for Trump's defeat. On the other hand, a half of the voters don't think that Biden's campaign was a reason for his winning the elections. See full results of the poll at: https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/01/PP_2021.01.14_biden-trump-views_04-03.png?w=640.

18   This is not the criticism of the partisan dimension of politics in general. Rather, it is the criticism of ideological voting based on partisan affiliation and not on the reasons relevant for the issue one votes about. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for suggesting that this might be inferred from the passage.

19   As one reviewer suggested, the issue with this first step is that it might be unattainable. While I agree that there is potential for such an assessment, there have been instances of effective deliberation, albeit in limited settings. More research is needed and certainly better recognition of the deliberative institutions would help. However, the solution I am proposing is formulated on steps that would have to be taken in order for it to work. I am not claiming that such solution can be achieved, but it is also clear that we cannot say in advance that it will not work. Any assessment must be based on a comprehensive body of reserach that is yet to be conducted.

4. Some Questions for Further Research

The first step in the process of achieving the reflective equilibrium between deliberation and participation is to start deliberating in the first place. In the years after Mutz's research, various types of deliberative research yielded promising results. Some included even the official policy changes, as mentioned earlier. Qualitative research has demonstrated that even the highly polarizing discussion topics can result in a cooperative and mutually beneficial discussion.[20] For instance, recent research into the question of the abortion provision in Ireland demonstrated a fairly high quality of discussion at the level of the Irish Citizens' Assembly (Suiter et al. 2021). The same research also showed the lower quality of discussion at the level of the Irish parliamentary committee. The authors found it fairly surprising that, when measured in light of what they term the 'cognitive complexity of the issue of abortion, a citizen assembly would score higher than the committee representatives. However, having in mind the partisan nature of the issue and the problems we discussed in this paper, perhaps that is not all too surprising. What remains to be seen is whether a discussion between political representatives and citizens would have the level of quality demonstrated by the former or by the latter. In addition, a variety of similar studies would need to be conducted in order to determine whether the respective levels of quality are maintained across different countries and on similarly divisive topics.[21]

Combined with the growing body of research related to different aspects of deliberation, this would help us understand in great detail how exactly citizens regard their own views, how they react to others' expression of their own attitudes, and what are the conditions under which a convergence or agreement occurs. That it can occur has been demonstrated in a limited setting by studies we mentioned throughout this paper (see, especially, Steiner et al. and Suits et al.). However, before any general conclusion can be drawn with confidence, similar setups need to be repeated in much larger settings and on multiple occasions. Moreover, even before any new data is collected, we can be certain that however actual deliberation develops, in order for it to be successful, citizens will have to put instrumental calculation second and embrace the pragmatically defined roles they play as members of a democratic society. Furthermore, in doing so, they will be better equipped to properly (re)act if and when their society exhibits anti-democratic or autocratic tendencies. As several papers in this volume demonstrate, it is precisely in such settings that organizing different events which entail both deliberation and participation can 'enhance public trust, political efficacy of citizens, politically articulate bottom-up led deliberative democratization that may one day have an official mandate by a more democratic government' (Fiket, Đorđević this volume).[22]

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20   See, for instance a discussion on positive deliberative transformative moments by Steiner et al. (2017).
21   See some of the promising outlines in: Luskin et al. 2014; Suiter 2021; Courant 2021.
22   See also a paper by Đorđević and Vasiljević (this volume), which represents a case study of a deliberative event, which was held in Belgrade in 2019.

Voting (or abstaining) is an integral part of democratic performance, and participation, in general, can reinforce such a role only when founded on a well-defined deliberative practice. Otherwise, to participate in society on an ideological level, even if overtly democratic in nature, is to undermine the genuine democratic potential of a person, a community, or a society as a whole. Similarly, to merely deliberate means to again refrain from fully embracing what it means to be a citizen. To paraphrase Kant's famous sentence, participation without deliberation is democratically blind, and deliberation without participation is democratically empty. If the claims in this paper are correct, then since both phenomena have the same root – democratic complacency borne out of the instrumental view of citizen roles in society, they also have the same solution – a pragmatist framework for achieving an actionable reflective equilibrium between the two.

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Andrija Šoć

Od deliberacije do participacije: demokratske uloge i paradoks glasanja

Apstrakt

U ovom gradu, ispitujem gledište prema kom, iznenađujuće, što se češće građani upuštaju u političku deliberaciju, to su manje skloni političkoj participaciji, i obrnuto. U prvom delu rada, razmatram ovaj problem iz ugla paradoksa glasanja, teze da je sam akt glasanja instrumentalno iracionalan pošto postoji jako mala verovatnoća da jedan glas napravi bilo kakvu razliku na izborima. U drugom delu rada, tvrdiću da, umesto da glasanje analiziramo instrumentalno, bolje je da ga posmatramo kao deo građanskih obaveza koje konstituišu građansku ulogu u demokratskom društvu. Akt glasanja ne treba primarno shvatiti kao pokušaj jedne osobe da izvrši odlučujući uticaj na bilo koji konkretan ishod, već afirmacija ključne prakse koja čini jedno društvo demokratskim. Ovo otkriva svojevrsni meta-paradoks glasanja. Naime, ne glasati znači istovremeno implicirati prihvatanje demokratije i neprihvatanje njene suštinske komponente. S obzirom na to, kako ću pokušati da pokažem, samo neglasanje je iracionalno. U svetlu ovog zaključka, u trećem delu rada istražujem jaz između deliberacije i participacije u svetlu analize građanskih uloga. Dok participacija bez deliberacije otkriva ideološku ostrašćenost, deliberacija bez participacije implicira nerazumevanje toga šta znači biti građanin. Deliberacija i participacija se mogu efektno povezati ako se uspostavi refleksivni ekvilibrijum između njih. To se, kako ću tvrditi, može ostvariti putem procesa čiji je prvi korak uspostavljanje deliberativne prakse koja je u potpunosti utemeljena na svesti građana o njihovim demokratskim ulogama, a izolovana od ideološki motivisane participacije.

Ključne reči: demokratija, deliberacija, participacija, glasanje, demokratske uloge

Sanja Iguman, Nevena Mijatović and Sara Nikolić

"KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, *ZA NAŠ KEJ!*" CITIZENS' PASSIVE SUPPORT TO THE LOCAL ACTIVIST GROUP[1]

ABSTRACT
Deep-rooted political turbulence, along with the present hybrid regime, have resulted in an undesirable social, economic and political milieu in Serbia. Such an atmosphere is a fertile ground for a grey economy, corruption, nepotism and restrictions to media freedoms. These 'unconventional' means of social functioning, have caused a decline in trust towards state institutions and proportionally, increase of citizen participation in non-institutional models of engagement.

The aim of this paper is to analyse one such model of non-institutional engagement: the local activist group *Za naš Kej*, operating in the area *Savski blokovi* (Sava apartment blocks) in New Belgrade. The authors analysed local residents' perception of the activist group *Za naš Kej* in comparison to the group's narratives and actions. By using a grounded theory approach authors explained the role of groups such as *Za Naš Kej* in the development of participatory and deliberative democracy within the local community.

Our data indicates that *Za naš kej*, despite its local character, does not have a strong foothold in the community, and thus receives only passive support. Citizens perceive *Za naš kej* as mediator between local institutions and residents of the Sava apartment blocks. Despite the failure to mobilise a wider group of citizens for their cause, this activist group continues to be a relevant (political) actor within the local community.

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Recent global dynamics have put cities at the centre of political tensions due to the privatisation of public spaces and reduction of social services (Mattei, Quarta 2015). Radical urbanization has caused the reconfiguration of the spatial economy in cities and communities, putting the latter in a strategic position for developing an analysis of global processes (Sassen 1996). These dynamics vary from country to country, depending on the social, economic and political context.

With quite a turbulent recent past and its long post-socialist transformation, Belgrade presents an interesting example for research of the interrelations between social, political and economic positions (Grubović 2006). Such circumstances directly caused a lack of civic education and decreased non-institutional social engagement. The synergy of these factors created fertile grounds for commotions between the state, the market, the urban planning issues and privatisation (Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021).

In addition, Serbia's recent tumultuous history has accelerated the development of a grey economy, nepotism, corruption and restrictions on media freedoms (Stanojević, Stokanić 2014). These 'unconventional' means of social functioning and communication, along with the overall atmosphere in Serbian society, have caused a decline of trust among citizens towards state institutions. Such an atmosphere is often generated when public institutions continuously turn a blind eye to illegal practices; when urban planning processes are not transparent and open to the needs of citizens, that is, the actual users of the commons. Such circumstances create dysfunctional relations among citizens and decision-makers, provoking citizens to take things into their own hands through various initiatives, neighbourhood activities or even protests (ibid.). On the other hand, reactionary and autocratic regimes seek to aggravate distrust and reduce citizen participation in decision-making, keeping all the decisions in the state's hands (Maričić, Cvetinović, Bolay 2018).

In the last five years, there has been a clear increase in use of non-institutional channels and instruments in Serbia (Vukelić, Stanojević 2012; Babović et al. 2017; Petrović 2018; Krstić et al. 2018; Pešić, Petrović 2020; Novaković 2020). An escalation in protests has shown that citizen trust in institutions and political parties has been declining sharply. By contrast, local initiatives and new social movements have been prospering (Petrović 2019; Delibašić et al. 2019; Pudar Draško et al. 2020; Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021). Concurrently, the global trend of declining political engagement with once dominant forms, such as party and union membership, has opened up compensating channels of representation and accountability. "New or newly popular civic forums, 'town meetings', 'open space events', citizens' juries and online consultations, provide spaces for testing of beliefs, reflection on values, articulation of interest and forging of agreement around policy platforms" (Rogers 2005: 604).

In this paper, we will present and analyse the perception of the residents of New Belgrade regarding the local activist group *Za naš Kej* (henceforth ZNK), as an example of such a "compensating channel of representation" (ibid.). This single-issue group has been advocating the preservation and revitalisation of

the Sava quay and related public goods and facilities since 2018. Further, we will discuss whether ZNK operates within the public sphere, providing space for all citizens to participate and deliberate, or is merely a hull of civil society, taking: "too-ready routes to participation by small groups of activists with intense commitments to (often) extreme causes, coupled with obstacles to routine participation by ambivalent citizens with everyday concerns" (Fiorina 1999: 20).

Since the foundation of the group, ZNK has been constantly trying to rely on the relevant institutions, by addressing the spatial and communal problems in the area they operate. Even though most of these attempts were unsuccessful, ZNK continues with the same strategy, although that might seem contradictory if we consider that activist groups usually "take things into their own hands" when distrust in institutions rises (Maričić, Cvetinović, Bolay 2018).

Finally, we will draw arguments and conclusions about ZNK's role in practising participatory and deliberative democracy in local communities, based on material collected through three independent paths: an online survey, in-depth interviews with residents of New Belgrade and an insiders' information about ZNK's functioning. We decided to follow a grounded theory approach (Glaser, Strauss 1967) for triangulation of the three sets of data about ZNK's activism to scrutinise not only the attitudes of citizens towards this activist group, but also the role the group plays within the local community. The findings will show that citizens̓ support to this group is rather passive, which might be used as an important feedback for the group. In the further research we might focus on the reasons why this is the case and what are the methods and tools that ZNK could undertake in order to improve their influence on the rise of citizen engagement in their community.

Authors' Reflection

The context in which ZNK will be analysed in this paper regards the Sava quay in the largest municipality in Serbia, New Belgrade. More precisely, ZNK operates in the apartment blocks (the so-called *blokovi*) – the socialist-modernist large housing estates with a population of 79,310,[2] including all three authors of this paper.

Keeping in mind that the authors of this paper are residents of the mentioned apartment blocks, in which area ZNK operates, it is essential to emphasise that during the formal part of the research, but also in its exploratory phase, they have gained direct and continuous field experience. In addition, two of the three authors are active members of ZNK.

Therefore, we approach the issues described here as residents, activists and, indeed, researchers. The dual position of researcher-activist significantly facilitates and accelerates the process of "entering" the field, participating in joint activities such as planting, clean-ups, group meetings, and gaining the trust of the local community. Moreover, these multiple identities open the door to

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2   According to the 2011 census.

informal conversations important for understanding the general attitude of this locally-focused form of activism.

However, we are aware that this type of engagement can also negatively affect the attitude of potential informants towards researchers and the research topic itself (Sztandara 2021, Kara 2017). Moreover, two of three authors are aware of their interest in promoting the positive image of ZNK through this paper. In this sense, we are attentive to the ethical obligation this activist-research position carries, treating it with caution and a dose of self-reflection in interpreting the obtained data.

Context

The Sava quay was built at the end of the eighties, right after the construction of the *blokovi*. The vast green areas next to the river were supposed to oppose the grey and concrete mass of buildings. Indeed, more than 80% of the quay's surrounding area consists of urban greenery. In accordance with the values and ideological paradigms from the period of construction, public spaces, green areas, promenades, riverfronts and embankments were not designed for profit, but were instead considered a public good (Le Normand 2014).

A replacement of political paradigm brought significant changes in urban theory and practice, namely an entrepreneurial city (Harvey 1989). Starting with "*Savski galeb*" in 1987, the riverbank has increasingly become dotted with *splavovi*, permanently docked barges with restaurants, night clubs and other leisure and sport facilities. In December 2021, the authors of this paper counted around 100 floating objects along the 2.4 km long quay, leaving only about 400 meters of free approach and view over the river.

According to the Law on Docking Floating Objects along Riverbanks (Sl. list grada Beograda, no. 4/2007), the minimum distance between two docked floating objects must be 15 meters. The Law further forbids the docking of the barges at certain places along the riverbank, due to potential pollution of water sources. Most of these floating objects have never received appropriate sanitary, technical, tourist permits to stay docked or float. Local authorities are aware of this situation and have confirmed it repeatedly in the local media.[3] These floating objects, thus, produce environmental, safety and legal problems for the local residents:

– Water, soil, air and noise pollution. The barges produce waste that is often dumped directly into the river; green surfaces are destroyed by vehicles, despite traffic being prohibited in that area (Water Law, Article 133); extremely loud music can be heard throughout the neighbourhood at night, particularly when operating hours are not respected (Law on Protection from Noise Pollution in the Environment).

3   Blic online, Internet. Available at: https://www.blic.rs/vesti/beograd/nadlezni-tvrde-da-izgoreli-splavovi-nisu-imali-dozvole-ali-i-da-nisu-prosli-tehnicki/m69m8nv (viewed 14 January 2022)

– Most of the barges are unauthorised to use electricity or the water supply and sewage systems. Electric cables and water pipes are illegally installed, hanging over pedestrian paths and tied to trees and electrical poles. Despite being designated a completely pedestrian area, motor traffic is present, destroying the surfaces and endangering visitors.

However, according to locals' and activists' reactions on the social networks and in the media, the biggest problem for most of them is immaterial: the fact that they do not see the river anymore because the view has been blocked by too many, too large barges.

Za naš Kej

In 2018, seven neighbours formed the informal group of citizens ZNK, after Belgrade's Deputy Mayor announced that the quay near the apartment blocks was slated to be reconstructed in the same way as Belgrade Waterfront – a new and controversial development in the centre of Belgrade, practically completely lacking green areas. This meant that vast green areas would largely be turned into built up and commercial areas. The newly-formed group immediately organised a petition, signed by 5,823 people.[4] And although the announcement of construction triggered the formation of a group, the underlying problem that brought them together was the dissatisfaction with the illegal barges.

Since 2018, the group has mostly dealt with the preservation and revitalisation of the quay in three main ways: internal and external communication; advocacy and participation in public review meetings about the area; fieldwork (collecting signatures for petitions, organizing clean-ups and forestation, etc.). The group is driven by a vision of preserving shared public goods, and acts on different institutional and corporate levels in trying to achieve that vision.

ZNK comprises fifteen citizens living in different parts of New Belgrade that are near the Sava quay. The group is open to new members and has no particular barriers to admission, nor obstacles to dropping out anytime. Members of the group communicate daily in a closed Viber group, while external communication with the group's supporters/followers takes place via social media. The group has around 1,800 addresses on its mailing list and over 3,000 followers on social networks. All the decisions are made democratically among active members, usually by voting within the Viber group. There are no official leaders of the initiative, only more or less active and assertive members. ZNK occasionally cooperates with similar local groups and citizen initiatives.

Method

To come up with a theory to explain how local residents perceive activist groups opposing the privatisation of public spaces in the Serbian capital, we

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4   ZNK Facebook post summarizing the petition, internet. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.940245963245787&type=3 (viewed 14 January 2022).

relied on the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss 1967). This paper synthesises insights gained through three sources of data studies that have ZNK's activism in focus. The authors of this paper participated in the design and implementation of two independent studies: an online community survey and interviews with the members of the community. Third source of data were insider insights about how ZNK functions. However, there are some limitations of using a grounded theory approach on secondary data. Authors could not challenge descriptive and analytical codes they uncovered in the data by returning back to the interviewees or online community survey respondents. Rather, authors relied only on their own insights for reaching the saturation of categories. However, all three authors were involved in discussion of the results to minimise unilateral reading of the data.

Online Community Survey

The quantitative data was derived from the online community survey conducted by the activist group ZNK. Surveys were used because they are conventional methods for direct involvement of citizens in the community, across all sectors – non-profit, business or governmental (cf. Zhang, Lin 2011). The survey was conducted online, administered through Google Forms and shared on social media and through email, in May and June 2020. The survey included questions[5] about demographic characteristics, attitudes towards the quay and attitudes towards ZNK. The sample of participants in ZNK's survey was not representative of the whole neighbourhood (and therefore neither are the results); rather it was convenient for the purpose of collecting different opinions and providing respondents with space to deliberate about issues in the neighbourhood that are important to them.

A total of 1,920 people participated in the online community survey, of which 1,149 were women. The median age of participants was 40, while 50% of participants were between 35 and 47 years old, with the youngest participant 12 and oldest 82. Eighty percent of participants live within a maximum distance of two kilometres from the quay. ZNK used the descriptive results[6] to inform its future activities. For the purpose of this study, authors discussed not only the descriptive results of questions from the survey, but also calculated additional results by intersecting different questions from the survey by using inferential statistical techniques Pearson's correlation[7] and Multiple linear regression[8]. Additionally, the authors discussed the mere implementation of the survey by ZNK.

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5   All questions in Serbian and English are available at https://osf.io/6q9ge/ (viewed 19.2.2022)
6   All results of the survey are available at: https://osf.io/mdgea/ (viewed 20.2.2022).
7   Measure of the strength of association between two variables.
8   Multiple linear regression is a statistical technique that uses explanatory variables to predict the results of variable of interest.

Interviews

The qualitative data refer to segments of conversational interviews (Leech 2002), and form a part of an ongoing, more extensive study on residential housing and urban commons in large housing estates in New Belgrade. For the purposes of this paper, the qualitative data represents segments of interviews conducted with fifteen residents (seven female, eight male) of New Belgrade housing estates, aged between 22 and 62.[9] In the Yugoslav period, these housing estates were predominantly inhabited by workers of non-manual activities, that is, the socialist middle class. After the privatization of the housing stock in 1991 and the rapid change of population after 2010, the apartment blocks continued to retain a class-homogeneous character, and are still predominantly inhabited today by the new, creative, technocratic middle class (Backović 2010).

All fifteen informants were recruited over a year-and-a-half-long period of fieldwork (May 2020 – October 2021). The interviews were conversational, audio-recorded with the informants' consent and held at the informants' homes or nearby cafes. Questions regarding civic activism in the neighbourhoods were raised as the end of the interview approached, such as "There are various citizen initiatives dealing with the urban greenery in your neighbourhood, along with Facebook groups and activist groups such as ZNK– do you take part in any of those?"; "What is your perspective of their activities?"; "Is that the reason you do not take a more active role in supporting them?", etc.

Insider Insights about How ZNK Functions

To better understand the internal dynamics of ZNK, in addition to the insider insights (such as messages sent to the ZNK at social media and dynamics of ZNK's activities) brought by the two author-activists, in this paper we will also rely on an interview[10] with one of the founders of ZNK. It was conducted in October 2019, as part of a more extensive study mapping new social movements in the Western Balkans and assessment of their needs and capacities.

The Process of Data Analysis

The data were analysed following the initial research question of how local citizens perceive ZNK. As interviews provide the best insight into the participants' contemplation of ZNK, they were the starting point for descriptively labelling different attitudes towards the activist group. First insight from the

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9   As the subject of the more extensive study on residential housing and urban commons only somewhat coincides with the research questions of this paper, only the segments of the interview that explicitly refer to civic activism in New Belgrade and the attitude of respondents towards activist groups operating in local communities in which they live have been used for this paper.

10   Agenda for the interview with one of the ZNK founders is available at: https://osf.io/m8z7d/ (viewed 25.2.2022).

data was the prevalence of *passive support* against *active support* toward ZNK from the interviewees. Further, authors validated this result with insider information about ZNK (such as lack of volunteers) together with comments of survey participants. From the second reading of the interviews authors labelled interviewees' explanations for their passive support to the ZNK into three descriptive categories. Labels were *lack of information*, *apathy* and *strategic and/or ideological disagreement*.

To draw the first analytical codes explaining ZNK's role in the community regarding promotion of participatory and deliberative democracy, authors again triangulated data from all three data sources. Two analytical codes emerged - ZNK's role as *a service to the local community* and *platform for civic education*. Proceeding with the saturation of analytical codes allowed us to propose a theory about how ZNK developed the role of service-provider and education platform in the context in which it operates.

Results and Discussion

Dominantly passive support from the local community

It is important to emphasise at the very beginning of this chapter that we have not come across a respondent that does not support the causes for which ZNK stands. ZNK has thousands of followers on social media and email newsletter, five thousand people signed the survey in 2019, almost two thousand people took part in the online community survey in 2020, and hundreds of people come to large scale events ZNK organises for the community. In 2020 ZNK organised an exhibition at the quay. The exhibition opening on June 28, 2020 was attended by approximately hundred local residents. On September 11, 2021 ZNK organised the festival entitled "See you at the quay?" (*Vidimo se na keju?*), which was attended by around a thousand visitors. Moreover, the respondents in the online community survey that were more familiar with ZNK[11] were more keen to participate in diverse activities around quay's issues in future[12] (r=.214[13], p<.001).

Despite the potential to mobilise community members, after three years of existence, ZNK counts only fifteen enthusiasts, while the numerous population of the nearby large housing estates provides only passive support. One of the quotations from in-depth interview summarises this pattern:

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11 Self-assessed familiarity by answering the question: "How familiar are you with what the informal citizens' association "Za naš kej" is doing?" on a scale: 1- "Not at all", 2 - "A little", 3 - "Partially", 4 - "I am very familiar".

12 Keenes to participate was calculated as a sum (with minimum of 0 and maximum of 9) of all the activities participants marked they would attend or be volunteers. Pool of activities was: forums with experts, rallies, petitions, sharing flyers and hanging posters, being a building representative, speaking to media, ecological events, cultural events and sport events.

13 The greater the absolute value of Pearson's r is (from 0 to 1), the more interrelated are changes within two variables. Plus or minus represent the direction in which the change is taking place.

I support them. I did not directly participate, but I shared everything online that I could, I did not come into contact with them directly, but I tried my best to raise awareness about it because I think they are fighting for something... (F, 21, student)

Further, in the online community survey, respondents were offered to leave an anonymous comment, which 72 of them did[14]. The comments were classified into three elements of attitudes towards the quay and ZNK – "elaboration", "affection", and "action". First, the respondents used comments to elaborate their opinion from the initial survey or ask additional questions and give unrelated suggestions. Second, the respondents expressed greetings or gratitude towards ZNK and appreciation of the quay. Finally, the respondents either perceived ZNK as their representative, which allowed them to stay passive and rely on ZNK ("Go for it, ZNK!", "Keep up the good work, ZNK"), or else they showed motivation to participate with ZNK in fighting to preserving public goods together ("We have to preserve the Savàs quay!!!", "We are here to help in all the cultural and ecological projects", "I will participate in your activities whenever I have time", "I await the call for the next meeting of the group"). From 72 comments, only 22 people showed motivation to join ZNK in whatever form. These contrasting participant positions (passive or active) were to be expected, considering how many people share ZNK's views on the quay but do not volunteer in the ZNK's activities (or are otherwise active in the quay`s preservation).

Besides "counting heads" of followers on ZNK social media and events, the online survey allowed the authors to understand attitudes, behaviours, and demographics of people close to ZNK. Through the survey, ZNK successfully mobilised members of the community who have an interest in maintaining the quay as 66% visit it almost daily throughout the year, or at least once or twice a week. However, not all the survey participants have the same familiarity with ZNK's activism because the survey was shared online not just by the ZNK, but its followers and other popular Facebook pages in the neighbourhood.

To see which attitudes, behaviours, and demographics of the community encourages more attentive following of local activist groups such as ZNK, we ran a multiple linear regression model using variables from the survey. We included five predictors (perceived appearance of the quay, amount of leisure time spent at the quay, residence proximity to it, age and gender), and one criterion – familiarity with ZNK's activism. Model provided some regularities worth mentioning. First, those more familiar with ZNK's activism also had a slightly worse opinion about the quay's appearance (β[15]=-0.169, $p<.001$[16]). Second,

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14   All comments (in Serbian) are available at this link: https://osf.io/t6v7n/ (viewed: 22.3.2022.)

15   β and b coefficients are a measure of total effect of the predictor variable (such as age or spending time at the Quay) on the criterion (familiarity with ZNK's activism). Greater the value of coefficient, greater the effect of particular variable on the criterion.

16   Parentheses contain statistics and parameters showing if the model is significant. If p value is below <0.001, we presume that model results are more likely to represent real conditions in the population instead of representing random variations.

those more familiar with ZNK's activism spent slightly more time at the Quay (β=0.182, *p*<.001). However, neither residence proximity to the quay (β=-0.037, *p*=.953), nor participant age (β=-0.063, *p*=.005), nor gender (b=-0.056, *p*=.235) contributed significantly to the prediction of familiarity with ZNK's activism. Results from the model support the perspective of ZNK as an activist group that has the potential for mobilising diverse community members in terms of demographics (age, gender, residency) but people unified in terms of how much they care about the quay where they spend their leisure time, and are unsatisfied with its current appearance enough that they want to deliberate about it.

Still, all five predictors taken together predicted only a 5.6% of differences in the familiarity with the ZNK (F(5, 1870)=23.137, *p*<.001). One of the reasons for the low predictive power of the model is that variables we included in the model were the ones available from the online community survey which was made to provide a glimpse into public opinion and not extensive brand analytics. Other reasons that contribute to the differences in familiarity with the ZNK's activism, and thus lesser participation in ZNK's diverse activities around quay's issues, came up from the in-depth interviews. Based on qualitative data consisting of interviews and informal conversations with participants of ZNK activities, the reasons for predominantly passive support to this local activist group can be classified into three groups: lack of information; apathy; strategic and/or ideological disagreement. In the next section, we will analyse each of these reasons in more detail.

1. Lack of information

The fact that almost a third of the respondents from the interviews claim that they are not sufficiently or not at all familiar with the activities of ZNK was surprising at first, especially considering the fact that the group has been operating for several years:

> *I haven't seen it anywhere, I just know that sometimes they announce in a Facebook group that there will be cleaning or planting of trees, but I don't know who does it, who organises it.* (F, 1996, student)

> *I don't have a particular view because I don't know enough about what they do. I mean, I can see from these events that they are organising, but I don't know exactly what they are doing and what their plans are. I mean, as much as I'm kind of even somewhat familiar with these things and interested in topics, I don't think they've really reached me. Actually, I don't know how I can get involved in what they are doing to benefit the whole block. So, basically, I don't know much. I don't know how to get involved. Maybe I wouldn't even get involved, since, for various reasons, I don't know what's going on there.* (M, 35, lawyer)

> *I have never heard of them, I don't follow social media, but I go to the quay all the time. I go for walks almost every day or feed the swans...* (M, 61, retiree).

Results of the online survey confirm this. Half of the 1,920 people interested in landscaping the quay said they know "nothing" or "a little" about

ZNK's positions and activities, while 36% said "partially," and only 12% said they are familiar with them "to a large degree." To a certain extent, the survey reached people outside ZNK's supporters and served as a campaign for raising awareness about ZNK's activism. However, the 230 participants who said they knew ZNK's positions and activities "to a large degree" can be taken as a good approximation of the number of people actually being ZNK's most ardent supporters in the community at that point. Online community survey was circulating for days around the internet, newsletter, viber group, and mouth-to-mouth in the neighbourhood so there is only a slightest chance that someone from the ZNK's closest community missed it.

The low recognition of ZNK's activism in the neighbourhood reflects the fact that most of the activities of this local activist group, paradoxically, take place within social media bubbles, and not in the field. When it comes to learning about ZNK, 12% of 1,920 survey participants have heard about ZNK through the petition when ZNK was formed, 1% heard about ZNK through either TV or newspapers, while the majority learned about ZNK through social media (44%) and by word-of-mouth (17.%). Before participating in the survey, 25% of participants did not know that ZNK existed. This predominance of informing through social media completely coincides with the media practices of the Serbian population, based on the results of research on informing and media practices in digital environment in Serbia conducted by researches of the Centre for Media Research (Milivojević et al. 2020). The results of this study indicate that as many as 32% of the population of Serbia is predominantly informed through social media, of which Facebook is still the most used among various generations for information and other purposes, with as many as 77.4% of users (Ibid).

Finally, in an interview conducted with one of the founders of ZNK in 2019, the informant (M, 45, *Za naš Kej*) recognised the need for more fieldwork. He emphasised that the greatest need is for the initiative to grow and include assertive representatives of every building in the area. Throughout the interview, the same informant underscored a burning need for more fieldwork and a door-to-door campaign to mobilise the community. However, none of this seems to have materialised in the past three years, which is the reason why many residents of the area near the quay are still not familiar with the activities and goals of this activist group.

2. Apathy

Existing research already indicates a high degree of political mistrust among Serbian citizens (Spasić 2004; Golubović 2007; Fiket, Pudar Draško 2021), which leads to apathy and anti-politics (Rajković 2020, Fiket et al. 2022). Further, the interviewed New Belgrade residents are not immune to such a pervasive and long-lasting condition:

Last winter in [apartment] block 70 I signed that petition for the spacing between the barges. I know all about it, and if I notice activists on the Quay, I absolutely approach them; it doesn't bother me to answer a survey or sign a petition or

anything. But I think that in this country if someone powerful wants to accomplish something that will be the case. It's something the little man can't influence. I think that's a big problem. (F, 47 cosmetician)

When social (and political) mobilisation occurs in such unfavourable political circumstances, it generally has an individualistic focus (Fiket et al. 2017). This is exactly the attitude towards joint engagement in their neighbourhoods, expressed by some of our interview respondents:

Our courtyard was tidied up by a guy across the street, he was all over the news, literally buying seedlings and flowers out of his pocket. And, bro, that's it. You want to take care of your own, of what's in front of you, your garden. And that's usually tidied up by people who are downstairs so they look at it. (M, 36, architect)

The high interest in joint actions of neighbourhood clean-ups and the spring/autumn plantings organised by ZNK and similar initiatives in the neighbourhood challenge this trend to a certain extent. To operationalize community support for diverse ZNK activities that will be undertaken in the future, ZNK asked the participants in the online community survey to check all activities they would be keen to participate in, either as organisers or attendants. Participants selected a median of three out of nine activities they would engage in, with 50% of them checking between 2 and 5 out of 9. Signing a petition is the easiest way to engage: approximately 3.5 times more respondents said they are interested in signing one than not. Ecological events (such as clean-ups) and rallies were also popular forms of engagement as 1.5 times more people would engage in them than not. On the contrary, participating in public forums and expert panels, cultural and sporting events and representing neighbours from their building in ZNK activities were quite unpopular: around twice as many surveyed community members would rather not engage in these activities than do so. Moreover, almost no one was prepared to speak publicly about the issues of the quay or spend their leisure time distributing flyers and posters about quay issues to the local people: respondents were eight times more likely to say "no" to "yes." After an exhibition organized in July 2020, ZNK planned activities such as flowering or cleaning the quay and sports events along the quay. Participants were more interested in flowering (1,285 out of 1,920) and clean-up of the quay (1,276) than in sports events (705) or bike tours (354). Trying to respond to the community's needs and wishes, ZNK organized the quay clean-up on World River Day in September 2020.

However, participation in these sorts of activities is far from articulated and conscious political engagement. One-time, sporadic and depoliticized actions such as flowering, neighbourhood clean-ups, or signing a petition certainly contribute to sensitizing the local community to urban issues and draw attention to the acute problems that the ZNK deals with. What we must not lose sight of when thinking about the political activism of the ZNK, is that without establishing and jointly articulating demands and strategies to solve burning environmental and urban problems, these activities are nothing but a slightly

elevated and advanced version of "taking-care-of-your-own mentality", mentioned in the quote above. Furthermore, the sporadic, ad hoc and occasional nature of ZNK activities is an obstacle to political organizing at the local level, as it requires long-term and dedicated field work.

3. Strategic and/or ideological disagreements

Unlike the social movements *Do Not Let Belgrade D(r)own - Ne davimo Beograd* (Domachowska 2019; Perić 2019) and *United Action For A Roof over Your Head - Združena akcija "Krov nad glavom"* (Vasiljević 2020; Dolenec et al. 2021), which flourished despite the unfavourable political climate, in its four years of existence, the main focus of the ZNK so far has not been to mobilise a large number residents and integrate sympathisers into the core of the organisation. Seeing as ZNK operates in the context of great distrust in the political system and democratic institutions, one of the possible reasons for this result is the institutional and legalistic nature of their struggle for public interest. Some of the respondents state this as the reason they do not support the work and activities of ZNK more actively:

> *I think that the story with ZNK bothered me in that the whole thing is illiterate politically, historically somehow. I don't think you should read some political theory, but somehow it is too much, not too much - it completely relies on some petitions and appeals to the city authorities, which I think is naive. I don't know what kind of worldview you should have and where you lived in previous years to think that it would do something. When I realized that, I never showed up again (...) But there are initiatives that have somewhat similar views, such as this Za krov nad glavom.[17] These guys may just be able to learn something from them about that relationship of law and property and everything they are doing but don't know how to. And maybe through that connection, they could mobilise, and maybe in that way come up with a way to solve the problem. So, I mean, I don't have a specific program what I would do in their place, but if I took part in it, I would look to the side of connecting with initiatives that deal with similar problems, but I guess that connection is not so obvious if you grow up watching Utisak nedelje[18].* (M, 36, software developer)

The above-cited informant recognizes and shares the dissatisfaction with the problems that the ZNK is committed to solving, since he attended some of the open meetings organized by this activist group. However, his dissatisfaction and criticism stem from his political position. Being a leftist, for him the

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17   *United Action for a Roof over Your Head* (*Združena akcija za Krov nad glavom*) is an anti-eviction movement in Serbia established in 2017. The movement operates in three major cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad and Subotica.

18   Long-running political talk show "Impression of the Week" has been broadcast intermittently since 1991. The show is often criticised by both the left and the right for its image. By "growing up watching *Utisak nedelje*" the informant refers to his impression that prominent members of the ZNK are shaped by liberal ideology and thus not radical nor progressive to his taste.

issue of illegal floating objects does not stem from "institutions being captured" and "not doing their job". On the contrary, this respondent believes that the issue of access to the Sava river bank is inseparable from the conflict between public property and private capital, characteristic of an entrepreneurial city, and therefore cannot be solved through institutional mechanisms ZNK relies on. Therefore, he considers it naive to sign petitions and rely on institutional mechanisms that are (thanks to corrupt networks, but also the state's attitude towards the public good) supporting private property and profit. For him, a more adequate way to fight for the goals that ZNK stands for, as well as one that he would more actively support, would be radicalization and networking with other social movements that more critically examine the relationship between the state and private property. Such attitude, dominant on the left, has been questioning the progressive character of middle-class activism since the 1960s, criticizing it for its conservative role in reinforcing the power of the existing elites (Chomsky 1969; Goldthrope 1982).

While several respondents expressed the need for sharper criticism and radicalisation of the ZNK approach labelling it as "lukewarm and hermetic" (F, 61, municipal clerk), others reproached this activist group for "polarising the public" (F, 20, student) and interfering in daily political issues, thus antagonising the vast majority of the population who are sympathisers of the ruling party.

From membership to management

In the following section, we argue that the previous three factors, lack of information, apathy, and disagreement over methods affect the development and orientation of this activist group. Namely, these factors create conditions for this local, single-issue activist group to become a mediator between citizens and institutions, rather than grow into a social movement. A clear causal link between the previously listed reasons for passive support and the educational and mediating role that ZNK has taken on in the community since its founding cannot be determined with absolute certainty based on the methodology used and the material collected. Relying on the concept of "membership to management shift" (Skocpol 2003), in this section we will offer one of the possible explanations for this dynamic, densely woven into the Serbian contemporary political context.

The shift "from membership to management" (Skocpol 2003) and professionalisation are already well noted in studies of social movements (Cohn et al. 2003; Duyne Barenstein, Pfister 2019; Polletta et al. 2021), political parties (Rogers 2005) and non-profit organisations (Vetta 2009; Spade 2013, 2020). This shift implies that membership associations are transforming into advocacy groups and social service providers, building their supporters and donors, rather than members (Skocpol 2003). "This historical insight presses academics and politicians alike to relinquish nostalgia for an idealized mythical past in which civil society was small, community-based, and organic" (Sobieraj 2005: 1763).

Given this, it becomes clear that ZNK informs and directs its activities based on the wishes and needs of the local community, which does not translate into membership. The online community survey was the second large-scale space ZNK opened for the community members to deliberate about community development. The survey was conducted only a year after an initial petition was signed by 5,823 community members. ZNK is aware that its advocacy of quay landscaping affects the whole community. Therefore, the group's members sought to challenge their own standpoints by considering the opinions of other members of the community.

After the survey, ZNK organized an exhibition at the quay.[19] The exhibition presented the environmental, communal and urban problems in the neighbourhood, together with ZNK's previous, current and future plans for the quay landscape. The duration of the exhibition was over a month in the summer of 2020, and it served as the platform for educating citizens. As previous research suggests, urban activism in the region is characterised by "small or medium scale activities focused on various aspects (cultural, economic, environmental, and communal) of everyday urban living" (Petrović 2019: 173–174). Furthermore, their activities tend to be peaceful and organized in a carnival and do-it-yourself fashion (Jacobsson 2015:14), and ZNK activities only confirm this thesis.

As ZNK is centred around issues surrounding the quay, in the online community survey, participants chose issues they found most alarming. "A large number of unlicensed floating objects on the quay" and "illegal construction and traffic on the embankment" received 30% more attention (chosen by 1,217 and 1,077 respectively) than "danger to the embankment posed by flooding (from drilling and destruction of installations, driving, etc.)"; "neglect of the quay (greenery, promenade, benches, bins...)"; "driving and parked vehicles on the quay"; and "noise (especially music from the floating objects at night and connected traffic)". Responding to most of the community saying "We want to see the river", ZNK focused on the issue of unlicensed barges. As there has been no reaction from the city authorities to ZNK's calls to reduce the number of unlicensed barges, the organisation shifted its focus at the beginning of the 2021 to a lack of objects and activities on the quay.

In the survey, participants could rank by personal preference seven broad activities or objects lacking on the quay. The most frequent answer was: "cultural events" (1,170 out of 1,920), while all other answers were half as common (around 500), and included "sports and entertainment events for children", "painting some parts of the quay", "public toilets", "running tracks", "sports programs"), with "exhibition panels" receiving the least attention (388). In response to the community being nostalgic for annual cultural events that took place on the quay, such as "New Belgrade Summer of Culture" (*Novobeogradsko*

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19   ZNK won the public competition in the program "Active communities" by a community foundation, Trag Foundation. Facebook event of the exhibition is at this link: https://www.facebook.com/events/555426985151974/?active_tab=discussion (viewed 20.2.2022). Content is available at: https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.940245963245787&type=3 (viewed 20.2.2022).

kulturno leto), ZNK wrote a project proposal for a half-day festival in 2021, received funds for it[20] and carried it out. Entitled "See you at the quay?" (*Vidimo se na keju?*),[21] the festival took place on September 11, 2021 and involved several local primary school groups, activists and artists who worked together in five educational workshops on the same topic: recognition of local environmental problems and ways to solve them.

However, a year and a half after the survey, ZNK has not created a place for deliberation or debate, even though it had ongoing projects, activities and advocacy initiatives. Rather, in its decision making, ZNK relies on a single survey and acts as if having a mandate to represent the local community to the local authorities. Citizens were only invited to participate in projects as volunteers.

Furthermore, it is particularly interesting that respondents who generally give reserved and passive support to ZNK, as well as those who lack familiarity with the organization still believed in the need for a mediator between citizens and institutions. Indeed, they recognised ZNK as a substitute for a self-governing community institution:

> *I don't think it's a question of transparency. It's not like they are hiding something, but they just don't manage to reach every building entrance, for example. So that, for example, we knew that when we have a problem in the area or something happens, we had someone to call. If that kind of "institution" existed, I think a lot more things would be happening in [apartment] blocks and we would together demand to change* (M, 35, lawyer)

> *And I think that it would be best… if the local community[22] was real, and if someone sits there all day, that when you ask him, he has the right information, that he regularly informs, puts up posters or whatever. But like this, what do I know? It's not bad, but it doesn't have much of an effect, it's a little hermetic, you see the same people all the time. Nobody to approach, nobody to ask…* (F, 61, municipal clerk)

Moreover, some supporters already trust ZNK to solve emerging problems. For instance, in October 2021, a woman wrote via Facebook Messenger:

> *"Hi, two quads [motorised vehicles] drove along the Sava quay a half an hour, among walkers, children and the elderly, I have photos, but I didn't know who else to approach."*

A study of the political positions of Serbian citizens, conducted in 2017, confirms the well-established theses (e.g., Spasić 2013) on the prevailing belief

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20   ZNK once again won the public competition in the program "Active communities" by a community foundation, Trag Foundation. Members fundraised additional resources in the community.
21   Video footage of the Festival, Internet. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3593948917509473   (viewed 13 January 2022).
22   The informant is referring to the local community (*mesna zajednica*, srb) or a neighbourhood district as the smallest governance unit, implying the legacy of Yugoslav self-governing socialism.

"that collective mobilisation and action for the sake of some general goal and improvement is not within the "competence" of citizens and their associations, but is someone else's business, primarily the state" (Fiket et al., 2017: 34). This view of collective mobilization and the role of institutions in preserving the public good is shared by interview respondents:

> *I think that there should be people to deal with it*[23] *at the municipal level, at the community level – people should receive a salary for that. I personally don't have time for that, really.* (M, 28, journalist)

If ZNK does not change its approach, the possibility of collective mobilisation and a more radical struggle for the right to the city and environment will be significantly reduced. In the context of general apathy and distrust in the political system and institutions (Stanojević, Stokanić 2014), when a local organisation that does not have a strong foothold in the base and does not invest in its capacities to work with citizens, but rather reduces its activities to communication with relevant institutions, expecting them (naively) to solve problems deeply embedded in corrupt networks – there is no prospect of mass mobilisation and citizen participation. If ZNK does not increase its presence in the field but continues to predominantly engage in promotional and advocacy activities, the only way to remain relevant as an activist group is to accept the role of mediator between (uninterested) citizens and (corrupt) institutions.

On the one hand, shifting ZNK activities to serve the needs of the local community may seem like abandoning the critical stance and could contribute to further resignation of citizens. On the other hand, building political trust, promotion of civic participation and self-management practices could open up space for deliberation and local organising, which would certainly be important for exercising the right to the city.

Therefore, a significant contribution of this activist group to the local community, although at first glance inconspicuous and insufficiently valued by the group members, is of an educational nature. In the context of "complete ignorance and misunderstanding of the mechanisms of civic participation, except party activities, which could be used in social engagement" (Fiket et al. 2017: 32), continuous education of citizens on how cities are planned, how political decisions of urbanism and the environment are made and implemented in cities is a significant contribution to the development of political literacy and democratic culture.

In 2019, in cooperation with the non-profit organisation Ministry of Space,[24] ZNK organised a public forum and discussion with experts on how the new General Plan of Regulation would negatively affect the quay's green areas. Afterwards, these two groups encouraged mobilised citizens to file their

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23   Barges on the Sava quay and the noise they produce in the residential zone (authors' note).
24   The Ministry of Space is a Belgrade-based research-activist collective founded in 2011, with the desire to contribute to the democratic and fair development of cities. Website: https://ministarstvoprostora.org/ (Viewed: February 21, 2022)

complaints and suggestions to the City's Urban Planning Office, educating them along the way about the public oversight. However, those were small-scale attempts, with fewer than thirty citizens engaged.

Finally, despite the failure to mobilise a wider group of citizens for their goals, several respondents recognised ZNK as a local actor, whose public and community engagement leads to a more democratic society.

> *Just as we are members of the same Facebook group, we are a community here as well. Because if we need the same electrician, if we don't have water at the same time, if we have the same problems, the same needs – we are connected to each other. And I see, I see that awareness is growing, that we can't pretend we're not a community and that we can do nothing in that community (...). Yet those groups are pushing that awareness. And now these regressive phenomena... Serbia is really currently on a regressive course of civilization, not to mention politics now. But as a civilization, we are going backwards. Well, this goes ahead. There are more and more neighbourhood clean-ups, more and more actions are directed towards institutions, more and more requests are being submitted, more and more often there are warnings of those who violate something. It's great. It can't go any faster.* (F, 50, freelance copywriter)

Although this comment indicates the importance of the activities that ZNK practices locally with optimism and hope, the absence of any response from city authorities to their demands indicates that this type of political action - apart from empowering and educating citizens about participation mechanisms and their rights - is often insufficient. However, the responsibility for the fact that the local activist group during several years of its activity fails to mobilize the wider population or to radicalize the methods of struggle cannot be attributed only to the group itself. An adequate question, which, however, exceeds the scope of this paper, could also be whether the residents of these housing estates are eager to take on a more active and committed role in struggling for their own, as well for the interest of the wider community. From the perspective of the New Social Movements theory the activities of the ZNK can be seen as "a defensive reaction against the encroachment of invasive capitalism" (Rose 1997: 471). However, the majority of surveyed citizens do not see the issue of illegal floating objects as a reflection of the way the state and city authorities treat the public good, nor they demand a more radical changes that would lead to interventions that are not only aesthetic or procedural in nature. Their interest in activities such as exhibitions, planting, neighbourhood clean-ups and bike tours, paradoxically, can also be seen as "a positive affirmation of new values resulting from growing affluence" (Ibid). In that sense, this type of sporadic, mediated and often depoliticized self-interest engagement suits the dominant population of New Belgrade housing estates, offering them a platform to express dissatisfaction in a way that does not take too much time and, more importantly, does not jeopardize their social position. Therefore, the membership to management shift "is great" as it is "pushing that awareness" (F, 50, freelance copywriter). Although it does not achieve much more than that, it still meets the needs of the community.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper we presented the insights and attitudes of the local community about the activist group *Za Naš Kej*, gained through three independent lines of research. Citizens' perceptions were collected throughout two years (2020 and 2021) and analysed comparatively with the data about ZNK's activities. We did not observe significant qualitative changes in that period, neither in the political context, in the citizens' perceptions of ZNK nor in its activities. Therefore, we rely on collected perceptions as if they are valid for any point in time of ZNK's operations analysed in this paper. The data indicates that this activist, single-issue group, despite its local character, does not have a strong foothold in the community, and thus receives only passive and partial support.

Further, we categorised the reasons for such passive support into three groups: lack of information (indicating insufficient familiarity), apathy (following a global decline in political and civic participation and well-documented political mistrust among Serbian citizens) and strategic and/or ideological disagreements (regarding ZNK's advocacy and insisting on institutional mechanisms). Relying on the concept of "membership to management shift" (Skocpol 2003) in civil society studies, we argued that these three reasons create the conditions for such a shift in both the approach and the activities of ZNK.

Despite the failure to mobilise a wider group of citizens and unfavourable prospects for mass political mobilisation for their cause, this activist group continues to be a relevant (political) actor in the local community. It continuously works on raising the level of political literacy and empowering citizens to practice the available mechanisms of political participation and communicate their demands to local authorities. Furthermore, it enjoys the trust of the local community to be a mediator between institutions (primarily municipal and city authorities, but also utility departments) and residents of the Sava apartment blocks, and tailor its activities to meet some citizens̓ needs. However, there is a threat that taking on the role of a service provider will further contribute to the quieting of citizens, rather than empowering and encouraging them to take a more active part in the political and social life of their local communities.

Nevertheless, it is possible to speculate that the homogeneous middle-class structure of the activist group itself, as well as of the housing estates in which the ZNK operates, also has a stake in the group's strategy and shift from the desire for wider local mobilization in the beginning, to the later mediating role between citizens and institutions. In the collected material, as a consequence of the used methodological apparatus, we do not have enough arguments for this bold statement. However, we consider it an interesting direction for future research.

Two of three authors (Iguman and Mijatović) that are ZNK activists themselves, found these results particularly useful for understanding strengths and weaknesses in functioning of their activist group. However, these research findings might be insightful for other similar activist groups and social movements too. Further research might lean on others that focus on the way that

pandemic influenced the activities of activist groups as well as the involvement of citizens in this peculiar period (Pleyers 2020; Pinckney, Rivers 2020).

Another important factor in contemporary and future analysis of citizens̀ engagement and social movements is that 2022 is the elective year in Serbia, which implies a special political and social atmosphere that must be approached with caution. Recent dynamics have put the most active groups of the mentioned area in a close collaborative position that could ease the future research on a wider sample of citizens following and supporting these groups. Deliberative mini publics presented in the introductory article of this issue (Fiket and Djordjevic) are potentially a very good mechanism that could strengthen this collaborative position and engage citizens in democratic innovations as a means to increase their participation in decision-making about their neighbourhood.

Finally, a strong wave of ecological and other social movements in Serbia that have particularly risen in 2021 and 2022, presumably because of the elections in spring 2022, triggered spontaneous, neighbourhood activist groups and put them in more visible political and social context. At this point, we can only assume that a hypothetical political shift might bring some changes in functioning of existing local activist groups as well as in social movements, however that is intended for further research.

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Sanja Iguman, Nevena Mijatović i Sara Nikolić

„Samo napred, *Za naš Kej!*" Pasivna podrška građana lokalnoj aktivističkoj grupi

Apstrakt

Duboko ukorenjene političke turbulencije, zajedno sa sadašnjim hibridnim režimom, dovele su do nepoželjnog društvenog, ekonomskog i političkog miljea u Srbiji. Takva atmosfera je plodno tlo za sivu ekonomiju, korupciju, nepotizam i ograničavanje medijskih sloboda. Ovi „nekonvencionalni" načini društvenog funkcionisanja, izazvali su smanjivanje poverenja u državne institucije i srazmerno tome, porast učešća građana u vaninstitucionalnim modelima angažovanja.

Cilj ovog rada je da se analizira jedan takav model vaninstitucionalnog angažovanja: lokalna aktivistička grupa *Za naš kej*, koja deluje u Savskim blokovima na Novom Beogradu. Autorke su analizirale percepciju lokalnog stanovništva o aktivističkoj grupi *Za naš Kej* u poređenju sa narativima i akcijama grupe. Korišćenjem utemeljenog teorijskog pristupa autorke su objasnile ulogu grupa kao što je *Za Naš Kej* u razvoju participativne i deliberativne demokratije u lokalnoj zajednici.

Naši podaci govore da *Za naš kej*, i pored svog lokalnog karaktera, nema čvrsto uporište u zajednici, pa stoga dobija samo pasivnu podršku. Građani vide *Za naš kej* kao posrednika između lokalnih institucija i stanovnika stambenih blokova pored Save. Uprkos neuspehu da mobiliše širu grupu građana, ova aktivistička grupa nastavlja da bude relevantan (politički) akter u lokalnoj zajednici.

Ključne reči: građanski angažman, politička participacija, aktivističko-istraživački rad, lokalna zajednica, Srbija, Novi Beograd

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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

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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

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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 non-existent 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

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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),

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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

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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.

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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]

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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.

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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

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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).

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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

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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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Valida Repovac Nikšić, Jasmin Hasanović, Emina Adilović i Damir Kapidžić

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 spriječiti 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. Također, 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

Nenad Markovikj and Ivan Damjanovski

THE REVOLUTION THAT ATE ITS OWN CHILDREN: THE COLOURFUL REVOLUTION FROM CONSENSUS TO DISCORD

ABSTRACT
The main goal of this essay is to provide an in-depth analysis of the trajectory of the Colourful Revolution (CR) in North Macedonia as a social movement. From a more general perspective, the paper engages with the growing interest in the literature that explores the correlation between social movements and democratisation processes, especially in societies that fall into the category of hybrid regimes. The Colourful Revolution is a good example of a protest movement that has created effective regime change. It presented a complex social movement encompassing many fragmented social and political groups gathered around the idea of a common adversary.

Additionally, the Colourful Revolution has one particularity: it is a social movement that has undergone a full developmental circle – formation through utilization of political opportunity frameworks, a period of activity and success and dissolution. Drawing on literature of the political process, opportunity frameworks and cycles of social movements, the paper argues that social movements such as the Colourful Revolution are not just temporary and unstable structures but are also highly dependent on the existence of a common target of the social activism in question. The removal from power of political actors that have been the reason for mobilisation of a complex and diverse network of social and political activism resulted in an absence of an adhesive factor holding together all the parts of this complex system. The absence initiated gradual discord and dissolution of different factions within the social movement (CR in this case) and reveals its true nature – temporary, ideologically diverse, conflictual, and even undemocratic in some respects.

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Introduction

Since the turn of the century, the world has witnessed a proliferation of social movements in both established democracies and authoritarian states. From protests aimed at challenging economic inequality (the Occupy movement in the U.S.), anti-austerity measures (the Indignados in Spain and the Aganaktismenoi in Greece), to the rise of pro-democracy, anti-government protests, such as the Coloured Revolutions in Eastern Europe, the Arab spring in the Middle East and the pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong – the surge of protest energy has reinvigorated scholarly interest in contentious politics and the impact of social movements on democratisation.

A similar outpouring of dissatisfaction with the status quo and massive mobilisation has also manifested in the countries of Southeast Europe. Notable examples are the anti-austerity protests in Slovenia (Topliše, Thomassen. 2017), the 'Right to the city' movement in Croatia (Dolenec et al. 2017), the 'Social Uprising' and 'Bosnian Spring' movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Murtagh 2016; Stefanovski 2016; Milan 2017; Repovac Nikšić et al., this volume), and the 'One in a Million' and other local movements in Serbia (Draško et al. 2019; Iguman et al., this volume). In most of these cases the common denominator has been the dissatisfaction with the experiences of the public with the effects of democratic transition in their countries (Brentin, Bieber 2019).

In this sense, one of the most prominent cases of anti-governmental, pro-democracy mobilisation has been the Colourful Revolution in North Macedonia. Triggered by a succession of political crises in the country and notable democratic backsliding, what initially started as an assembly of several divergent movements in 2014, was transformed into an electrifying movement of massive mobilisation of resources across ethnic and ideological alliances gathered under the pretext of demands for democratic reform and regime change. Eventually, the Colourful Revolution achieved its goal, as it became one of the key factors for the fall of Nikola Gruevski's government, unlocking (if temporarily) potential for further democratisation of the country.

In this respect, the main goal of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the trajectory of the Colourful Revolution (CR) in North Macedonia as a social movement and to assess its effect on democratisation and regime change. From a more generic perspective, the paper engages with the growing interest in the literature that explores the correlation between social movements and democratization processes, especially in societies that fall into the category of hybrid regimes. The Colourful Revolution is a good example of a protest movement that has induced an effective regime change. It appeared as a complex social movement encompassing many fragmented social and political groups gathered around a common adversary and expectations of democratization.

More specifically, our study aims to empirically map and deconstruct the contributing factors for the emergence, development and dissolution of the movement. Drawing on the literature on contention, active citizenship and political process theory, this study argues that the initial success in mobilization

and subsequent expansion of the movement is based on political opportunity structures emanating from the volatile political context and the succession of political crises in the country. On the other hand, drawing on the literature on cycles of contention, our analysis aims to uncover the main factors for demobilization. We argue that social movements such as the Colourful Revolution are not just temporary and unstable structures but are also highly dependent on the existence of a common target of the social activism in question. The removal from power of political actors that are the reason for the mobilization of a complex and diverse network of social and political activism results in the absence of an adhesive factor holding together all parts of this complex system. Such absence initiates gradual discord and dissolution of different factions within the social movement (CR in this case) and reveals its true nature – temporary, ideologically diverse, conflictual and even undemocratic in some respects.

Our study employs a qualitative approach based on process tracing. The analysis of the case study is based on primary data from media reports and secondary data based on expert and academic observations. The text is organised as follows: we start with a theoretical discussion on the concepts of contentious politics, active citizenship, political process theory and democratization. We continue with an in-depth analysis of the trajectory of the Colourful Revolution, which we chronologically classify in four phases of development: embryonic, gradual consolidation, engagement and repositioning, and antagonization. The paper closes with a discussion of the findings.

Social Movements, Contention, Political Process and Democratization – Theoretical Considerations

The story of the development of social movements and their impact on political change has amassed a substantive academic literature in the last half century. Originally confined to inquiries of collective action in the 'old' democratic venues of the West, the social movement research agenda has gradually expanded to analysis of the impact of social movements in authoritarian, illiberal and democratizing societies across the world. Our point of departure is Tilly's (1984: 306) classic definition of social movements as "a sustained series of interactions between powerholders and persons successfully claiming to speak on behalf of a constituency lacking formal representation, in the course of which those persons make publicly visible demands for changes in the distribution or exercise of power and back those demands with public demonstrations of support". This definition emphasises an understanding of social movements as collective actions in an interactive framework of power and politics that perceives social movements as political performances (Passy 2009: 353). In this sense, the study of social movements has been predominantly driven by political conflict in society (della Porta 2014b) and power relations between institutionalised authority and challengers to those seats of power, seeking modifications of the political regime to accommodate their voices, demands and values.

Hence, the literature has emphasised the importance of contention when analysing modern social movements and protest groups. The notion of contentious politics is particularly important for our analysis of the Colourful Revolution as an anti-government, pro-democracy movement. Defined as an "interpretative framework that brings together three important areas of social life: contention, collective action, and politics", contentious politics encompasses the channels of expression of popular struggle outside mainstream politics (Mew 2013: 104). While conflict between loosely organised masses of socially/politically underrepresented ordinary people and institutionalised authorities and organised political elites has been a reoccurring historical phenomenon, not every example of contentious politics is equivalent to social movements. As Tarrow (2011: 7) argues, the unique feature of the social movement is its ability to sustain and coordinate contention in a durable framework based on "underlying social networks, on resonant collective action frames, and on the capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents". Social movements as expressions of contention, he continues, are defined by four properties: collective challenge, as an expression of disruptive action against institutionalised power; common purpose, as an expression of overlapping interests and values that bond the challengers in a common grouping, social solidarity, as the main factor for mobilizing consensus among the challengers; and sustained interaction that enables the durability of the movement. In this sense, the instrumental side of contentious politics becomes particularly significant, as the performative dimension of protest within the movement's repertoire of collective action expressed through innovative methods of opposition is seen as a key factor for the cohesiveness, durability and the disruptive power of the social movement (Tarrow 2011).

In this respect, our study draws on Isin's (2008, 2009) influential concept of activist citizenship. Isin distinguishes between two types of citizenship. On one hand, there is the mainstream, formal connotation of 'active citizenship' which is legally defined and expressed through institutionalised patterns of fulfilling rights and obligations, such as voting, paying taxes and law abidingness. In addition, Isin introduces the conception of 'activist citizenship', which occurs in an informal setting, as acting outside of the mainstream *de jure* frameworks of the state. Thus, the activist citizen is defined through acts of citizenship that can "happen without being founded in law and responsibility" to the extent that in seeking justice they may question and even go against the law (Isin 2009: 382). In other words, "they disrupt habitus, create new possibilities, claim rights and impose obligations in emotionally charged tones [and] pose their claims in enduring and creative expressions" (Isin, Nielsen 2008: 10). Thus, collective actions of protest are justified as venues for citizens to make claims to justice, even if they become means of disruption of pre-existing orders, practices and statuses (Isin 2009: 384). These acts shift the focus from the normative, conforming framing of citizenship to the political, social and symbolical practice embedded in collective or individual deeds that rupture social-historical patterns (Isin, Nielsen 2008: 2).

Much of the debate on collective action has focused on analysis of the trajectories and cycles of social movements. Hence, there is an extensive literature that explores the conditions under which social movements emerge, develop and eventually disappear. Our study draws from the political process approach which focuses on the influence of resources, networks and political incentives on the establishment, mobilisation and success/failure of social movements. Central in this discourse are the theories of political opportunity structure (Eisinger 1973; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 2011) and resource mobilisation (McCarthy, Zald 1977; Jenkins 1983; McCarthy, Zald 2002), which emphasise the exogenous character of the processes of formation and facilitation of social movements.

In this sense, the external factors that are derived from the political context are perceived as key variables that determine the trajectories and success of social movements (Jenkins, Klandermans 1995), but also more specifically "the choice of protest strategies and the impact of social movements on their environments" (Kitschelt 1986: 58). This line of reasoning has inspired numerous studies on political opportunities and constraints that have identified several clusters of determinants of the trajectories of social movements (Tarrow 1991; McAdam 1996; Tilly 2008). The most obvious dimension is the level of openness of the formal institutional system of the state for the demands of the challengers, i.e., the availability of venues for access to policy making. Another key dimension is the political environment, i.e., the constellation of power between political elites/parties, interest groups and other societal actors. In this respect, the degree of cohesiveness/instability of the political milieu and the propensity for alliances can be an important facilitating dynamic in the development of social movements. For example, alliances with opposition parties can be particularly significant. As Maguire (1995: 100) puts it: "an opposition movement facing a strong hostile government shares an interest with friendly opposition parties in putting the government on the defensive and possibly ejecting it from office". So, an alliance serves the mutual interests of both sides in their aspirations to defeating a common enemy.

Political opportunity structures (and constraints) have been extensively studied in the context of functioning democracies. However, they can have a considerable explanatory power for cases in non-democratic or hybrid polities as well. As Shock (2005: 30) has argued, they might be even more important in these cases, since due to the restrictive character of the state, the opportunities for dissent are rare, so when they manifest, there is a high probability that they will generate opposition. In this sense, political crises (Skocpol 1979) in nondemocratic or democratising regimes can become considerable windows of opportunity for the emergence and mobilisation of revolutionary social movements as they weaken the grip on institutionalised power of the ruling elites and make them more vulnerable for contention.

While the emergence of social movements can be initiated and facilitated by favourable opportunity structures, their trajectories are galvanised by the ability of protest groups to mobilize. Resource-mobilisation theory assumes

that the mobilisation capacities of social movements are one of the key determinants of their success or failure. Ingrained in the rational choice approach, resource mobilisation sees social movements as goal-oriented organisations seeking resources to enhance their efforts and mobilise challengers and publics. The notion of resources is multidimensional. Edwards, Mcarthy (2004) distinguish between five types of resources: moral, cultural, social-organisational, human and material resources. In this sense, forming alliances with other like-minded societal groups and political forces that would lead to increased mobilisation of challengers is a key aspect of the political process approach.

However, power relations and rational choices might not be sufficient to sustain alliances. Banaszak (1996) has rightly argued for the role of ideology, identity and common values that encourage contention as a crucial factor that enables social movements to amass supporters that oppose the status quo. As she puts it, "without a movement 'community' and intense social interaction among activists, a social movement will remain divided, impeding the flow of information and reducing its capacity for effective innovation and action" (Banaszak 1996: 223). Equally, if the social movement lacks or outgrows its sense of community (because of massive mobilisation of opposition groups, for example in revolutionary movements), the variation/polarisation in values within the movement could lead to its dissolution.

This leads us to the last phase of the trajectory of social movements in our study, and that is the notion of their diffusion. A majority of movements share the same destiny, as much as they can be captivating at points in their development, over time they suffer from burnout and lose their contentious, activist edge. As Tarrow (2011) argues, the cycle of social movements inevitably ends with their decline, even in cases when they have been able to achieve a significant level of organisation and mobilisation. As they grow, the transactional costs within the movement grow as well, while on the other hand political externalities might accommodate some of the movement's demands. So, as they lose their zeal, they usually end up either in being co-opted by the institutional structures or radicalised. In his far-reaching analysis of the trajectories of social movements, Tarrow (2011: 190) identifies several mechanisms that contribute towards demobilisation of movements: repression or control of contention by the authorities; facilitation, at least of some movement demands; exhaustion, in terms of weariness and disillusionment of challengers; radicalisation; and institutionalisation, as in incorporation of social movement organisations or parts of them into the formal political arenas. Regarding the latter, the process of politicisation of social movements could also morph into absorption of the social movement or parts of it by opposition political parties. Finally, in new and transitional democracies, there is a potential for another specific pattern of the social movement cycle. As Meirowitz, Tucker (2013) have argued, the potency of social movements might significantly diminish after the removal of a non-democratic regime as the challengers develop perceptions that either their goal for democratisation has been achieved, or, more likely, their goal is no longer that valuable. So, even though the subsequent regimes might still

be democratically flawed, citizens still deem them better or else consider the costs of a new wave of protests too high.

This notion is important for our study, as it is embedded in the discussion on the role of social movements in democratisation. Surprisingly, the relation between social movements and democratisation has been neglected for decades by both the social movement and democratisation scholarship. While the social movement literature has been primarily focused on studying the outlook and impact of mass mobilisation in the well-established democracies of North America and Western Europe, the democratisation literature has put emphasis on structural/economic factors (Haggard, Kaufman 1995) or elite driven top-down processes (O'Donnell, Schmitter 1986; Przeworski, 1991; Linz, Stepan 1996). However, following the proliferation of cases of regime changes instigated (at least partially) by popular mobilisation (Brancati 2016; Chen, Moss 2019), the study of the democratising properties of social movements has picked up in the 1990s and started to pay more attention to bottom-up, movement-oriented approaches to democratisation (Bermeo 1997; Giugni et al. 1998; Rossi, della Porta 2009; della Porta 2014a) that highlight the role of mass political contention and its relation to transition cycles and political change (Shock 2005).

These accounts consolidate the perception of a firm corelation between democratisation and social movements. As Tilly (2004: 131) argues, this correspondence is based on three phenomena. (1) Both democratisation and social movements are independently caused by mostly the same processes; (2) democratisation encourages the formation of social movements; (3) social movements themselves promote democratisation (albeit in a limited way). Conversely, the emergence of effective pro-democracy movements is conditioned on their capacity to create broad coalitions and alliances in order to gain greater access to public politics (Tilly 2004). The literature has also highlighted the impact of external factors on the democratising effects of social movements. Especially in the post-communist context, external actors, such as the EU and the U.S., have continuously employed differential empowerment of civil society (through providing political support and resources) as their dominant strategy of democracy promotion (Steward 2009; Beitcheld et al. 2014; Noutcheva 2016).

Explaining the Colourful Revolution

The Colourful Revolution in the Republic of North Macedonia was, above all, a complex and very diverse social movement, or a patchwork of movements for that matter, which in academic literature has been given different, even opposing characterisations. Perspectives on the Colourful Revolution vary from a social movement that was a response to a highly illiberal regime, revolt addressing widespread corruption in society, a movement with subversive potential expressed through specific art forms, to a revolution based on a template and was anything but spontaneous.

One of the most widely accepted perceptions in the literature is that the Colourful Revolution was a gradual effort of creating a collective politicised identity from diverse social grievances (Ahn 2017: 1), which were scattered throughout society during the decade-long rule of Nikola Gruevski's regime. Topuzovski (2017: 16) defines the Colourful Revolution as a specific art form, artistic practice "intertwined with activist forms of action that undermine the institutional and corrupt system in the Republic of North Macedonia". Furthermore, Milan (2017) places the Colourful Revolution within the context of anti-corruption movements in Southeast Europe emphasizing that "the demonstrators targeted, in particular, buildings and monuments that symbolised the urban renovation project launched by the government in 2010, known as 'Skopje 2014', said to have been a source of criminal capital and money laundering". For Stefanovski (2016: 44) the gradual build-up of political and social dissatisfaction leading to social movements preceding the Colourful Revolution originated in economic deprivation and permanent breaches of human rights by an extensively authoritarian regime.

From a more general viewpoint, without denying the massive mobilization and the authentic social energy organised, Way (2008: 60) speaks on behalf of coloured revolutions in general, linking the effectiveness of the efforts of civil society to combat authoritarianism to the more general context of 1) ties of society to the West and 2) the strength of the incumbent regime's autocratic party or state. However, Vankovska (2020: 2) gives a completely opposite assessment of the Colourful Revolution by stating that "in spite of the apparent authenticity and compliance with the key elements of a grassroots social movement (...) the CR was more of a template revolution", where the "protesters employed an already existing template for fostering government change that also preserved the existing system for ethnic power-sharing and a neoliberal model of government". For Vankovska, the Colourful Revolution "relies on elites bargaining and continuous international state-building interventions rather than on people's sovereignty" (ibid). Both approaches link coloured revolutions to international actors but give them opposite values.

The complexity of the phenomenon of the Colourful Revolution arises from both the diversity and the incrementality of its formation. The very process of emanation of the Colourful Revolution to the level where it became one of the decisive factors for regime change in 2017, was a process of build-up of social dissatisfaction. Although it started as a very incoherent and diffuse assembly of topically diverse social movements, they gradually connected into one social energy with a clear common adversary, as well as clear differences and even animosities between its constitutive elements. It is the very process of the formation of the Colourful Revolution that sheds light on its later dissolution and the reasons for its vanishing. In order to understand the process fully, one needs to explain the phases through which the Colourful Revolution was formed, utilised and more or less spontaneously dissolved.

Embryonic Phase (2009-2014)

The initial, embryonic phase of the Colourful Revolution was at the same time the longest phase of its formation. One could even problematize whether the phase of scattered, diverse and sporadic social movements that appeared as a reaction to the policies of the Government of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski could be considered a "phase" of the Colourful Revolution due to the incoherence and lack of any significant connections between the movements and protest structures. However, these movements were in fact the initial core of what later grew into a full-scale protest movement that brough about the downfall of Gruevski's government in 2017. It is questionable whether the Colourful Revolution would have been possible if these movements did not form the initial construction of a political opportunity structure.

The period between 2006 and 2008 is typically viewed as the "golden era" of the VMRO-DPMNE[1]-led government where rarely did anyone post the question of its democratic capacity and success. This period of relatively good governance led to pre-term parliamentary elections in 2008, in which VMRO-DPMNE was once again given a four-year mandate. However, the democratic standing of the country started to deteriorate at this time. The political prioritizing of topics turned from economic to national, and foreign policy questions, which gave rise to the spatial restructuring of the capital. Before the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia announced the infamous "Skopje 2014" project in 2010, there was a "test case" in the form of a proposal to build a church on the main square in Skopje (Makfax 2010). Immediately, civil society groups opposed such spatial and ideological interventionism (A1 2009).

Civil unrest and protests started as early as 2009. The first organised and publicly promoted group of protesters consisted of students and professors from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Skopje who directly opposed the idea of changing the aesthetic and political narrative of the main square. In March 2009, the movement "Prva Arhibrigada" (First Archbrigade) held protests in the main square to raise public awareness and possibly try to stop the project using peaceful means (Prva Arhibrigada 2009). However, during the protests, they were challenged by a group of counter-protesters wearing visible religious iconography who engaged in violent clashes with the "Prva Arhibrigada" protesters (Ignatova 2009). It immediately became clear that the counter-protest was orchestrated by the government, which would aggressively intercept any possible effort to express public opposition.

However, the violent response via a proxy counter-protest group, as well as the already visible deterioration of democratic standards in the country, led to a mushrooming of social movements and proliferation of pressure points against the governing parties. "Prva Arhibrigada" was joined by a more structured social movement, "Plostad Sloboda" (Freedom Square), and together the

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1   Vnatresno – Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija – Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) – henceforth VMRO-DPMNE.

movements became even more active upon the announcement of the "Skopje 2014" project. "Skopje 2014" was meant to be the largest architectural (and symbolic) revamping of the city centre since the Skopje earthquake in 1963 (Plostad Sloboda 2010). Civil society protests against it were soon accompanied by a new social movement, "Aman", whose focus was predominantly social, addressing mainly energy poverty and representing economically-endangered citizens (Aman 2012). This took the political struggle to a whole new battleground, displaying serious potential for further deterioration of the relations between the government and civil society groups.

The tipping point, however, was the 2011murder of a young man, Martin Neskovski, during the celebration of the electoral victory of VMRO-DPMNE in the pre-term parliamentary elections. Neskovski lost his life in a brutal attack by a member of the Prime Minister's security team (Jordanovska 2015). The attempt of a coverup of the case by the government led to massive outrage, predominantly among the youth, and triggered the biggest protest movement to date under the slogan "Stop za policiskata brutalnost" (Stop police brutality). The protesters showed their revolt in the streets, with daily protests seriously challenging the authority of the system and the government (Apostolov 2015). This gradually grew into "#Protestiram" (I protest), one of the most enduring and well-organised social movements that contributed to the Colourful Revolution (DW 2021). "#Protestiram" was the first social movement that integrated many of the members of all previous anti-government actions, and it presented a base of all further political protests, especially in the period of the biggest democratic decline in North Macedonia between 2011 and 2016. The outlines of the Colourful Revolution were becoming visible.

Gradual Consolidation Phase (2014-2015)

It is very hard to separate the early emergence of the various social movements that later formed the core of the Colourful Revolution from the consolidation phase for two reasons. The first is the incrementality of the process that over time produced a more structured and coherent social energy, with a political, rather than merely policy target. The second reason is the overlapping structure of the various constitutive social movements, which at times blurred the lines between the Colourful Revolution and previous anti-governmental movements. However, there is a clear line of events that dictated the level of consolidation and activity of the anti-government social movements. This line can be taken as marking points, although remains highly subjective.

If the Neskovski case initiated public outrage and was the inspiration for the formation of the "#Protestiram" movement, the motives for further consolidation of the still scattered social energy lie in the general democratic backsliding of the state.[2]

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2   We have extensively analysed the democratic backsliding of the country in Damjanovski, Markovikj 2020. As an illustration: 1) Freedom House's (2018) report "Nations

In addition to the cumulative downgrade of the quality of democracy in the country, the event that triggered the final set of events leading to the downfall of the regime of Gruevski was the Law on Higher Education adopted in 2014 (Ministry of Education and Science 2018). It envisaged wide-ranging state control over higher education, unrealistically strict criteria for career advancement of professors in academia, as well as the introduction of state exams after every other year for the students. The Law was a classic example of violation of academic freedom and an attempt by the regime to twist the arm of the intellectuals in the country.

The resistance that emanated as an answer to the Law on Higher Education led to a specific phenomenon in the country known as "plenumisation" (Stefanovski 2017; Pollozhani 2016; Štiks 2015). Namely, high school students, professors, but mostly university students started organizing into plenums whose main goal was to oppose this Law, as well as strongly resist the rapid regression of democracy. The students' and professors' plenums[3] were the forefront of the resistance. Daily protests led to probably the most massive mobilisation the country had seen to date, when on the 17 November 2014 over 10,000 students protested on the streets of Skopje (Meta.mk 2016). Furthemore, the protests that took place in December 2014 became much larger in reach, as the protesters in Skopje were joined by predominanly ethnic Albanian students from the two universities in Tetovo (Radio Slobodna Evropa 2014). Such occurences displayed that the protests have started expanding beyond ethnic lines. At the same time, smaller scale protests emerged in other cities throughout the country.

The protests against the Law on Higher Education culminated in early 2015, when students "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University occupied the Faculty of Philosophy and created an autonomous zone (Faktor.mk 2019), from which they demanded changes to the Law. Daily demonstrations continued in front of the Government building, with public opinion showing unpreceded solidarity with the protesters (Fokus.mk 2015).

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in Transit" index indicated a significant drop (reverse scoring – lower is better) in its Democracy score in the period between 2010 and 2017 (from 3.79 in 2010 to 4.43 in 2017. 2) The Bertelsmann Transformation Index (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2018) noted a similar decline in the Democracy status of the Republic of North Macedonia (from 7.95 in 2010 to 6.45 in 2018) as well as the rule of law (from 7.3 in 2010 to 6 in 2018). In terms of media freedoms, the situation was even more dramatic. 3) Freedom House in 2016 decided to change its score for media freedoms in North Macedonia from "partly free" to "not free" (Freedom House 2016). Cumulatively speaking, in only eight years, the Republic of North Macedonia fell on the World Freedom of the Press index from 46th place in 2006 to 123rd place in 2014 (Reporters Without Borders 2018). 4) Freedom House lowered the score (reverse scoring – lower is better) on the electoral process from 3.25 in 2010 to 3.50 in 2015 (Freedom House 2016), expressing "concern over the accuracy of the voter registry, the inadequate separation between the ruling party and the state prior to the elections, and overwhelming media bias in favor of VMRO-DPMNE and its presidential candidate during the campaign" (ibid).

3   As expected, counter-plenums were immediately formed under the control of the ruling party.

In parallel to the major upset caused by the students and the professors in the country, the leader of the opposition Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), Zoran Zaev, published wiretap material of high-level government officials (acquired from security personnel within the regime) admitting to illegally wiretapping over 20,000 citizens (Fokus.mk 2015b). In a series of bombastic revelations, the opposition party released scandalous material that confirmed the deeply undemocratic operations of Nikola Gruevski's regime, thus ushering in the final phase of the Colourful Revolution – open animosity and pressure against the sitting government.

The Engagement Phase (2016-2017)

It would be inaccurate to completely equate the social movements that existed prior to the Colourful Revolution with the Revolution itself. Rather, the protest energy that was created over several years, starting circa 2009, erupted in 2016 as cumulative dissatisfaction with a regime gradually pushing North Macedonia into autocracy. However, besides the accumulated discontent, there were several specific circumstances that led to the first protests of the Colourful Revolution.

The first reason was the already mentioned Law on Higher Education, which irritated two big social groups – the youth and the intellectual elite. The second reason were the wiretapped materials that were gradually but continuously released by the opposition, revealing the scandalous and highly undemocratic rule of the parties in power. The third reason was the attempt of the President of the Republic of North Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, to acquit 56 persons, among whom a number of highly ranked government officials, under investigation for serious crimes (SDK 2016). This led to an immediate reaction by civil society, where on the very first day of protests, (12 April), some 4,000 people turned up on the streets of the capital. The next day, a group of protesters escalated the situation by setting fire to one of the field offices of President Ivanov. However, the signature move of the Colourful Revolution, pelting buildings with balloons filled with pigment, first occurred on 16 April 2016 – this can be considered the official start of the Colourful Revolution (DW 2021).

The protests grew by the day and spread to almost all cities in the country, putting immense pressure on the government to resign. Nor were the protests limited to the Macedonian ethnic community; indeed, they appeared with equal intensity in the predominantly Albanian cities (Lokalno.mk 2016). In fact, they demonstrated an unpreceded ethnic solidarity, something that would have been difficult to foresee North Macedonia. The multiethnic character of the Colourful revolution was preserved throughout the complete period of its existence as a movement.

The Colourful Revolution comprised ethnically diverse and ideologically distinct, even conflicting groups, who nevertheless shared a common goal. It became very clear that their sheer size demanded diversity, with left, liberal

and even moderately conservative groups joining.[4] During the many march-
es, public addresses were made by a number of protesters, both party activ-
ists and non-partisan, coming from very ideologically diverse and previously
even conflicting backgrounds. It was clear that the mobilised social energy was
snowballing and that the Regime would continue to face pressure. The gov-
ernment of course tried to match the emerging social outrage by organizing
parallel demonstrations, organised around the movement symbolically named
"Gragjansko dvizenje za odbrana na Makedonija – GDOM" (Citizens' move-
ment for the defence of Macedonia – GDOM). This movement held parallel
events throughout the country, as well as counterprotests, with their activi-
ties covered constantly by pro-government media. However, the potential and
the mobilizing energy of this movement could not match the Colourful Rev-
olution, presenting a rather transparent attempt of the government to 'stage'
public support (Radio Free Europe 2015).

Concomitantly, mainstream politics was undergoing significant change,
with the establishment of the Special Prosecutors Office (SJO) and the Przhino
process. The SJO was formed to deal with the continuous publication of the
wiretap material, its mandate limited to cases emerging from the audio tapes
(Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia 2015). High ranking of-
ficials were indicted, and the SJO was strongly backed up by the internation-
al community.[5] The Przhino process[6] was the name of political negotiations
in an informal setting, resulting from the stalemate of the Parliament. Most
important of the many issues discussed and negotiated was the setting of yet
another pre-term election, initially set for 5 June 2016.

The elections ended up being held in December 2016, with the govern-
ing VMRO-DPMNE gaining only a slim advantage over the Social-Demo-
crats (State Election Commission 2016). With the balance of power now con-
siderably shifted, the decisive factor in the formation of a new Government
would now be the party representing ethnic Albanians – the Democratic Union
for Integration (DUI). The DUI opted to form a new government with the

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4   The division and deep disagreements between ideologically diverse faction was ini-
tially visible in the Students' Plenum and especially after the formation of the autono-
mous zone at the Faculty of Philosophy. On several occasions there were serious dis-
agreements and even verbal and physical conflicts between the left-wing of the student
protests (later on forming the party called Levica – the Left) and the liberal and so-
cial-democratic wing (some of them joining the social-democratic Government after
the downfall of Gruevski). This was the first indicator that the plenum has a very diverse
structure prone to disagreements and conflicts. This ideological cleavage will later on
dictate one of the main lines of dissolution of the social energy gathered around the
Colourful Revolution.
5   In relation to the role of the international community, Stefanovski's research (2020)
indicates that the movements' leadership has considered the international community
as one of its strongest allies, especially as a facilitator in the achievement of a common
primary goal of re-democratization of the country and consolidation of human rights.
6   For a more detailed analysis of the Przhino process, refer to Markovikj, Damjanovs-
ki 2018.

Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), which effectively meant the end of the VMRO-DPMNE and Nikola Gruevski's rule. However, VMRO-DPMNE had no intention of leaving power, attempting to filibuster the election of the new parliamentary speaker and organizing protests in front of the Parliament. With the new Speaker of the Parliament due to take office, the protests spiralled out of control and protesters stormed the Parliament Building on 17 April 2017 (SDK 2017). This was an unpreceded act of political violence and the first attempted coup d'état since the country's independence, resulting in several MPs injured, and one almost killed. The violence stopped after police entered the Parliament and evacuated the MPs. A new Government was finally formed in May 2017.

After more than a decade, the regime of Nikola Gruevski ended. The new government, led by the Social-Democrats and the new Prime minister, Zoran Zaev, completely changed the political course of the country. However, the social energy mobilised around the Colourful Revolution started to encounter serious problems. Without a common enemy, the various parts of the social movement took different, even opposing political paths, and the latent serious ideological discord now coming to the fore. The dissolution of the Colourful Revolution was much quicker than its formation.

Repositioning and Antagonization Phase (2017-2020)

The downfall of the regime of Nikola Gruevski meant that the common target of all previous movements suddenly vanished. The breakdown of the regime was incremental and painful for Macedonian society, with political polarisation often on the verge of a civil conflict between opposition protests and counter-protest movements. Furthermore, the formation of the Social-Democratic government headed by Zoran Zaev meant that after the elections, power had to be distributed among many social structures close to the Social-Democrats, including many positions in Parliament, the Government and the like. The positions that were suddenly available in the political and administrative domain needed to be populated, while the new policies envisaged by the new government needed support from civil society, in both preparation and promotion. But not all structures of the Colourful Revolution or its preceding social movements supported all the new policies. Factions within the Colourful Revolution immediately started to reposition and over time divided into several clearly differentiated groups:

– The first group of protesters of the Colourful Revolution joined the structures of the newly formed government. Since the Colourful Revolution was a rather diverse movement, it was expected that some factions would be closer to political parties (then in opposition) than others. As a result, the new Government heavily recruited from the ranks of the protesters to fill the political and administrative positions gained in the elections (Stojadinovikj 2018).

Many of the participants in the Colourful Revolution and the social movements preceding it, became new MPs, PR officers in the Cabinet, local self-government administration officers (especially after the local elections in 2017, which the Social-Democrats won in a landslide, Puls24. mk 2017). It was clear that civil society once again played the role of a human resources base for the political arena that needed a thorough restructuring after the decade of VMRO-DPMNE domination.

– The second group of actors became disillusioned with both the legacy of the Colourful Revolution and the new Social-Democratic Government. The disillusionment came as a result of the new government policies, mostly related to the country's name dispute with Greece, taxation policies, corruption and nepotism scandals, inability to reform the judiciary and public administration, etc. The support for the Social-Democrats visibly declined over time mostly due to this second group of citizens that slowly started to distance themselves from the Social-Democrats but also from the legacy of the Colourful Revolution.[7]

– The third group is quite similar to the second, but with one major difference. It consists of actors disillusioned by the Social-Democratic government, but who have not given up the legacy of the Colourful Revolution. Although there is no fundamental difference in terms of political support for the new government (or the lack thereof), this group does realize and acknowledge the importance of the Colourful Revolution for the gradual democratization of Macedonian society.

– The last group of actors includes political parties and individuals who have become fierce enemies of the new government. Although initially belonging to the same protest movement, even during the early rallies of the Colourful Revolution and the social movements preceding it (students' and teachers' plenums mostly), it became clear that serious political, ideological and programmatic differences exist between different factions. The most notorious example is the group around the political party Levica (the Left), which became probably the most vocal critique of the new Social-Democratic Government especially after the name change of the country and the Prespa Agreement with Greece in June 2018 (Levica 2018).

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7   The public support in every consequent turn of elections from 2016 onwards dropped significantly. Just as an illustration the Social-Democrats won 436981 votes on the parliamentary pre-term elections in December 2016, 322581 votes on the presidential elections in April 2019 and 327408 votes on the parliamentary pre-term elections in July 2020. Furthermore, the Social-Democrats convincingly lost the local elections in October 2021 with winning only 16 municipalities opposed to VMRO-DPMNE that won 42. For more detailed data on election results of parliamentary, presidential and local elections please visit the website of the State Election Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia – www.sec.mk.

The final act, the dissolution of the Colourful Revolution started and ended as soon as there was a change of political elites in the country in early 2017. Although the Colourful Revolution ceased to exist, it is interesting to analyse the relation between its constitutive parts in the *post-festum* period, after the change of the Gruevski regime. What effectively terminated the remaining social energy build-up during the Colourful Revolution, and even antagonised part of the former allies was the disillusionment with the new government in a vast part of society. It occurred because of specific political occurrences such as the country's name change, the inability to start the negotiations with the EU regarding joining the Union, corruption scandals, as well as the dissolution of the Special Public Prosecutors Office (SJO) that served as a strong tool of pressure against the Gruevski and VMRO-DPMNE regime. Unfortunately, joining NATO in March 2020 was perceived as an insufficient reward for the efforts that North Macedonia invested in its democratic advancement. In fact, the name dispute between North Macedonia and Greece can be said to be the final step in the dissolution of the energy accumulated through the Colourful Revolution. Moreover, the triple veto that North Macedonia received to initiating EU accession negotiations, as well as several high-level corruption scandals, led to a complete disappointment in the general public, significantly impacting the support for the new Government.

The three-decades long dispute between the Republic of North Macedonia and Greece finally ended with the signing of the Prespa Agreement in June 2019 (Government of the Republic of North Macedonia 2018). In the agreement, Greece finally recognised the existence of a Macedonian nation and a Macedonian language, and in return (now) North Macedonia changed the name of the country (*erga omnes*) and distanced itself from antiquity as part of an identity concession made to the Greek side. The governing Social-Democrats invested a huge amount of political energy to sign and implement the Prespa Agreement. On the other side of the political spectrum, part of their former protest allies deeply disagreed with the Agreement and also invested enormous political energy to block the signing of the Agreement by organizing a boycott of the upcoming referendum for the name change ("#Bojkotiram"). The boycott of the referendum was a more than a successful operation (the minimum turnout was not met), partly organised by a former structure that actively participated in the protests against the regime of Gruevski, the nominally left Levica.

After the Prespa Agreement, Greece lifted its veto to the accession process of North Macedonia to both EU and NATO. The Republic of North Macedonia joined the NATO alliance in March 2020. However, in the case of the EU, there were two more vetoes, an outcome that not even the biggest Euro-sceptics could have hoped for. In November 2019, France vetoed the beginning of the accession negotiations with the EU for Albania and North Macedonia, requiring serious changes in the accession methodology for candidate countries (European Council 2019). In 2020, France lifted the veto after its demands regarding accession path were met (tightened criteria for accession

and reversibility of chapter closures). At this point, North Macedonia hoped to finally start the accession negotiations, but another veto followed in November 2021 from neighbouring Bulgaria (European Council 2021). The third veto to the accession process of North Macedonia was the result of yet another identity dispute between two neighbouring Balkan countries. The result in North Macedonia was complete disappointment and disillusionment with the EU accession process.

The change of the government in April-May 2017 was probably already the end of the Colourful Revolution, not just in terms of its activity, but also in terms of the loose political consensus between its constitutive parts. However, the period after government change not only meant a lack of a common enemy, but also brough about the resolution of a number of sensitive political issues not subject to consensus by the different factions within the social movements. With the emergence of these politically divisive issues, the atmosphere became antagonistic, breaking the bonds between former allies much faster than they were established several years prior. The Colourful Revolution ceased to exist effectively in 2017, but the gradual antagonization of its various constituents is still ongoing.

Concluding Discussion

No social movement can be formed without two minimal preconditions – some sort of dissatisfaction regarding one or more social issues; and a minimal feeling of belonging by the members of the social movement to a common goal, defined either positively (inducing social change) or negatively (dismantling a corrupt regime, for instance), or both in most cases. The example of the Colourful Revolution and the analysis of its gradual growth and dissolution speaks to the fact that even though social or political grievances can have very different backgrounds, under certain conditions and with the aid of external factors, such scattered social energy can in relative unison produce social mobilisation against an undemocratic regime, although only of temporary duration. The main prerequisite for the growth of a social movement comprising a number of previously loosely connected protest groups, some of which have an unclear constituency, is the creation of a political structure that utilises windows of opportunity and creates alliances in order to target critical points of an undemocratic and corrupt regime.

The analysis of the early phases of the Colourful Revolution does not contribute much to theory, mostly due to the isolated approach of the scattered social movements that advocated for separate goals focused on policy issues (energy poverty, spatial organizing, etc.). In the embryonic phase, the social movements that later constituted the Colourful Revolution presented typical focal points of contentious politics, challenging the regime via collective frames of activist citizenship, mostly in informal setting (streets, squares, performative acts in public spaces, etc.). The subsequent phases of the Colourful Revolution, however, are much more illustrative, especially from the perspective

of political process theory and resource mobilisation theory, explaining the phenomenon of gradual snowballing of social energy, resource mobilisation and creating at least a minimal ideological platform for action through political opportunity structures.

The gradual consolidation of the social movements and the ultimate aggressive engagement in toppling the regime was dictated by several factors. The feeling of impotence many citizens had regarding political participation actually drove the radicalization and the formation of alliances between various social movements in Macedonian society. Furthermore, the approach of the Gruevski government to directly confront the protesters via, often violent, counter-protests made the challengers of the regime feel completely excluded; but it thus also created a significant connecting point for all disenfranchised actors. The confrontational and destructive strategy of Gruevski only facilitated the network building between unlikely allies, which was only affirmed first by the Neskovski case and then even more by the wiretapping scandal. At this point, a newly established alliance was formed between social movements and opposition political parties. This unpreceded act of social and political snowballing encouraged much of the passive segment of society to engage and display its dissatisfaction. The revelation of the highly undemocratic nature of the regime caused instability that opened up a political milieu favourable to forming alliances and was thus the crucial factor for facilitating the dynamic in the development of the Colourful Revolution.

The hostility of the regime only further incentivised the political and social actors to unite and bridge social capital between ideologically diverse, even conflictual, groups. The newly established political opportunity triggered by a succession of political crises (Skopje 2014, Law on Higher Education, wiretapping scandal) found a big window of opportunity to challenge the regime and recruit public discontentment, which only grew larger, especially with the release of each subsequent audio material by opposition parties. This concentration of social energy was further backed up by the international community via the Przhino process and the formation of the Special Prosecutors' Office (SJO) which only additionally challenged the regime, especially on legal grounds. These occurrences correspond to Way's assumptions on the role of Western support and ties to society and the weakening of the ruling elites. The expectations for getting back on track of the Europeanization process in the country as well as the already visible vulnerabilities of the elite in power led to a spontaneous mobilisation of moral and human resources, resulting in a better organised and more mass movement, which was no longer possible to ignore. Indeed, the mobilisation was fatal to the regime, especially when it became clear that there was at least a minimal ideological platform for collective action among the protesters, as well as a communal spirit created through everyday protests and collective iconography.

However, as soon as regime change happened in early 2017, the Colourful Revolution dissipated due to a combination of factors, but primarily the lack of a common goal. First, a vast proportion of the protesters considered the goal

of the Colourful Revolution achieved and any further engagement pointless. Further, many of the actors who were at the forefront of the movement were accommodated in the new political structures, while others simply suffered from "revolutionary fatigue." The now ruling Social-Democrats simply incorporated a portion of members from the Colourful Revolution. This began the process of repositioning actors who previously constituted a relatively united social movement. Furthermore, other social movements that were part or close to the Colourful Revolution became organised politically or even radicalised, especially after circumstances rapidly evolved to display vast and conflicting differences. After the country name change and the Prespa Agreement, a number of high-profiled corruption scandals and the three consecutive vetoes of the EU accession, former allies simply took different political courses, ultimately ending in total conflict over the preferred outcomes. As one part of the Colourful Revolution pulled towards painful compromises on the verge of social acceptability, another moved towards radicalisation and political populism in antagonism with its former allies.

Regardless of their temporary nature, social movements such as the Colourful Revolution play a very important role in the democratisation processes in transitional countries. As practice has shown and academic literature has analysed, democratisation is not a linear process and democratising societies all over the political landscape of east and southeast Europe are prone to democratic backsliding and long periods of political recessions. It is in these periods that social movements can play a significant role in democratising the political milieu and, in the right circumstances, lead to effective regime change. This by no means implies that the new political structure will immediately and radically improve the democratic context of a country, but the very fact that a specific society has displayed potential for overthrowing a political regime via political and social mobilisation serves as a reminder to every subsequent government – at least for a given period of time.

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Nenad Markovikj i Ivan Damjanovski

Revolucija koja je pojela svoju decu: Šarena revolucija od konsenzusa do razdora

Apstrakt

Glavni cilj ovog rada jeste da pruži detaljnu analizu putanje Šarene revolucije (ŠR) u Severnoj Makedoniji kao društvenog pokreta. Iz opštije perspektive, rad se bavi rastućim interesovanjem za literaturu koja istražuje korelaciju između društvenih pokreta i procesa demokratizacije, pogotovo u društvima koja spadaju u kategoriju hibridnih režima. Šarena revolucija predstavlja dobar primer protestnog pokreta koji je stvorio efektivnu promenu režima. Predstavljala je, tačnije, složen društveni pokret koji je obuhvatio mnoge fragmentirane društvene i političke grupe koje su se okupile oko ideje postojanja zajedničkog protivnika.

Povrh ovoga, Šarena revolucija ima jednu posebnost. To je, naime, društveni pokret koji je prošao pun razvojni krug: formiranje kroz korišćenje političkih prilika, period aktivnosti i uspeha, te period raspada. Oslanjajući se na literaturu o političkom procesu, okvirima mogućnosti i ciklusima društvenih pokreta, u ovom radu se tvrdi da društveni pokreti poput Šarene revolucije nisu samo privremene i nestabilne strukture, već da oni u značajnoj meri zavise od postojanja zajedničke mete društvenog aktivizma. Uklanjanje sa vlasti političkih aktera koji su bili razlog za mobilizaciju složene i raznolike mreže društvenog i političkog aktivizma rezultiralo je odsustvom spajajućeg faktora koji drži na okupu sve delove ovog složenog sistema. Ovo odsustvo pokrenulo je postepeni razdor i raspadanje različitih frakcija unutar društvenog pokreta (u ovom slučaju ŠR), te je otkrilo njegovu pravu prirodu – privremenu, ideološki raznoliku, konfliktnu, pa čak i nedemokratsku u nekim aspektima.

Ključne reči: šarena revolucija, Severna Makedonija, društveni pokreti, politički proces, demokratizacija, protest, politike razdora, formacija, rastvaranje, politički aktivizam

II

STUDIES AND ARTICLES

STUDIJE I ČLANCI

Federica Porcheddu

NATURE AND FOOD COMMODIFICATION. FOOD SOVEREIGNTY: RETHINKING THE RELATION BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE[1]

ABSTRACT
The article aims to explore the link between commodification of nature and commodification of food. The latter is in fact one of the most negative and controversial aspects of nature commodification. The examination of food commodification represents fertile ground for investigating the relationship between humans and nature. In this context, food sovereignty provides a useful paradigm that not only serves as an alternative to the current food regime, but also allows for the experiencing a different kind of relationship between humans and nature. Food sovereignty represents a unique social movement in which community, political, and cultural rights are intertwined with the issue of food. Through its multidisciplinary approach and its strongly ethical component, food sovereignty constitutes an opportunity in order to contrast the progressive commodification of nature and of the environment.

Introduction

Food is an essential element for the survival of human beings and the most basic human need. However, access to food is still one of the most serious problems in contemporary society. As reported by the FAO:

> The latest edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, published today, estimates that almost 690 million people went hungry in 2019 – up by 10 million from 2018, and by nearly 60 million in five years. High costs and low affordability also mean billions cannot eat healthily or nutritiously. (FAO 2020)

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1   This article is the result of my 3 months research as a post doc researcher at the Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS SEE) of the University of Rijeka in 2020.

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The global outbreak of Coronavirus has made the contradictions of the current food regime even more evident. Social and political inequalities have emerged even more clearly as the no longer negligible symptom of a seriously ill society, which, although advanced and evolved, does not seem to be able to guarantee the freedom and fundamental rights of the individual. The access to food during the pandemic turned out to be one of the biggest problems still unresolved at a global scale.

As reported in the UNSG Policy brief:

> The COVID-19 pandemic is a health and human crisis threatening the food security and nutrition of millions of people around the world. Hundreds of millions of people were already suffering from hunger and malnutrition before the virus hit and, unless immediate action is taken, we could see a global food emergency. In the longer term, the combined effects of COVID-19 itself, as well as corresponding mitigation measures and the emerging global recession could, without large-scale coordinated action, disrupt the functioning of food systems. Such disruption can result in consequences for health and nutrition of a severity and scale unseen for more than half a century. (UNSG Policy brief 2020)

The commodification of food is at the root of the problems of malnutrition and hunger in the world.

As Magdoff points out "The contradiction between plentiful global food supplies and widespread malnutrition and hunger arises primarily from food being considered a commodity, just like any other" (Magdoff 2012: 15). As amply demonstrated by the theory of food regimes developed by McMichael and Friedmann, food as a mere commodity is the result of an economic and political process typical of capitalist society. The birth and expansion of neoliberalism have completely transformed the global food regime, resulting in the near absolute commodification of food and its transformation from a vital component of life into an instrument for speculative investment and profit at any cost, which do not benefit the producer or the consumer (Zerbe 2019).

The commodification of food is one of the most negative and controversial aspects of the commodification of nature, having a devastating impact not only on the life of human beings but also on the entire ecosystem.

In this regard, for many years now, food sovereignty has been fighting for democratic access to food as a strategy to reduce hunger, malnutrition and rural poverty. As it is well known, food sovereignty constitutes a completely different paradigm from food security. In fact, the concept of food sovereignty emphasises that the issue related to access to food is not at all a problem of insufficient trade, a simple problem of distribution or allocation, rather a matter of rights. This is a crucial point because the distinction between the two concepts rests on a diametrically opposite conception of food. Avoiding the issue of social control within the production and consumption system, the concept of food security remains tied to a vision of food as a mere commodity. Defining food as the fundamental right of every human being, food sovereignty, proposes a

de-commodified vision of food and represents an alternative paradigm both to food security and to the current food system.

The article aims to examine the concept of food commodification starting from the more general concept of commodification and neoliberalisation of nature. The first section will be devoted to analysing the traditional concept of commodification and neoliberalisation of nature in the academic literature. The second section will deal with examining the concept of food commodification through the lens of the theory of food regimes, showing how the commodification process is closely interconnected with the economic and political mechanisms of the current capitalist society.

Finally, the last section will examine the fundamental concepts of the food sovereignty movement showing how it is able to propose a de-commodified vision of food and a different perspective on the relationship between man and nature which relies on a Rights-based approach emphasising at the same time the most delicate aspect (i.e the concept of sovereignty) for its concrete application on a global approach.

1. Commodification of Nature. Definitions

> *A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another. The nature of such wants, whether for instance they spring from the stomach or from folly makes no difference.*

Karl Marx

The commodification and neoliberalisation of nature can be considered as the two sides of the same coin resulting from the capitalist system of production. The commodification and neoliberalisation of nature are, in fact, the two main processes through which the relationship between man and nature is experienced and conceived in the capitalist system of production.

To penetrate these two processes has a twofold function: (i) to highlight the negative effects of commodification of food and nature; (ii) to identify possible alternatives in order to promote a sustainable development and an equitable distribution of natural resources.

Due to a rich and growing literature on commodification it is difficult to find a single definition or conceptualisation. The same goes for the concept of nature's neoliberalisation, "a new and fast-growing geographical research about neoliberal approaches to governing human interactions with the physical environment" (Castree 2008a: 131), for the most part based on case study[2].

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2   As the recent research by critical geographers shows so well, the last thirty years have seen an ever greater variety of biophysical phenomena in more and more parts of the world being subject to neoliberal thought and practice. To offer some examples: Mansfield (2004a; 2004b) has investigated new fisheries quota systems in the North

According to Appadurai's more generic notion of commodification: a commodity is anything exchanged or exchangeable. (Appadurai 1986). Other scholars, such as Ben Page for example, insist on the role of money in the commodification process. He states that commodification is "the process during which a thing that previously circulated outside monetary exchange is brought into the nexus of a market" (Ben Page 2005: 295). Similarly, Castree defines commodification as "a process where qualitatively different things are rendered equivalent and saleable through the medium of money" (Castree 2003: 278) and, Peter Jackson (Jackson 1999: 96) argues that commodification refers "literally, to the extension of the commodity form to goods and services that were not previously commodified". On the contrary, in her study of water supply in England and Welsh, Karen Bakker argues that "private ownership and markets do not necessarily entail commodification", rather resource commodification is a contested, partial and transient process, commodification is distinct from privatisation" (Bakker 2005: 543).

However, despite the existence of several definitions, it bears noting that all scholars agree that the commodification process is not something intrinsic to the things, but is rather an assigned quality brought about through an active process. As Kopytoff puts it, commodification:

> is best looked upon as a process of becoming rather than as an all-or-none state of being. Its expansion takes place in two ways: (a) with respect to each thing, by making it ex-changeable for more and more other things, and (b) with respect to the system as a whole, by making more and more different things more widely exchangeable. (Kopytoff 1986: 73)

This means that the use value of anything is systematically displaced by the exchange value. Prudham distinguishes two fundamental and interconnected aspects in the commodification process: *stretching* and *deepening*. The former is "the development of relations of exchange spanning across greater distance of space and time", the latter is "the systemic provision of more and more types of things in the commodity-form" (Prudham 2009: 125).

Pacific as a form of marketisation and enclosure; Bury (2005) has examined the sell-off of mineral resources in Peru to overseas investors; Bakker (2004; 2005) has scrutinised the post-1989 privatisation of British water supply and sewage treatment, and also water mercantilisacion in Spain (Bakker, 2002); Robertson (2000; 2004; 2006) has looked at the recent sale of wetland ecological services in the mid-western USA; Nik Heynen and Harold Perkins (2005) have explored why and with what effects public forests have been privatised in 'post-Fordist' Milwaukee; McCarthy (2004) has investigated the new 'right to pollute' among certain firms in the NAFTA area, and also community forest projects in North America (McCarthy 2005b; 2006); Prudham (2004) has traced the dire consequences of 'regulatory rollback' in the area of drinking water testing in Ontario; Kathleen McAfee (2003) has examined corporate attempts worldwide to commodify the genetic material of plants, animals, and insects; Haughton (2002) has examined the differential character of national neoliberal water governance frameworks globally; and Laila Smith (2004) has explored the effects of implementing cost recovery measures in the management of Cape Town's water supply. (in Castree 2008a: 136–137)

In his article 'Commodifying what nature?' Castree develops a synthesis of the concept of commodification which essentially refers to a Marxist approach. According to his analysis commodification is a process through which qualitatively different things are made equivalent and exchangeable through the medium of money. By taking on a general quality of exchange value, they become commensurable (Castree 2003: 278).

On a deeper level, as Castree aptly showed, commodification implies several interconnected aspects, which cannot be considered independently of one another. These aspects can be summarised as follows: a) privatisation, which is the assigning of a legal title over a commodity to a particular actor; b) alienability, described as the capacity of a given commodity to be physically and morally separated from sellers; c) individuation, separating a commodity from supporting context through legal and material boundaries; d) abstraction, which is the consideration of individual things as equivalent based on classifiable similarities; e) valuation, monetising the value of a commodity, and finally, f) displacement, spatiotemporal separation, obscuring origins and relations. The commodification process is produced as an interrelation of all these aspects and therefore implies a dynamic process and not a static quality of things. (Castree 2003).

Similarly, Appadurai writes that "the commodity is not one kind of thing rather than another, but one phase in the life of some things ... things can move in *and* out of the commodity state, that such movements can be slow or fast, reversible or terminal, normative or deviant" (Appadurai 1986: 14–17).

Considerable scholarship has explored the various ways in which highly specific, lively and unruly, material and contested 'natures', including water (Bakker 2003; Swyngedouw 2005); fish (McEvoy 1986; Mansfield 2003); trees (Prudham 2003; 2005); wetlands (Robertson 2006); fossil fuels and minerals (Bridge 2000; Bridge, Wood 2005); genes (McAfee 2003); organic foods (Guthman 2002; 2004) are extracted, cultivated, refined, processed, represented and made to circulate in the commodity-form, and with all manner of political and ecological implications (Prudham 2009: 129).

It therefore seems fair to state that, despite the different meanings through which the term of commodification is understood by various scholars, it is possible to isolate a fundamental aspect which – in my opinion – represents the fundamental constitutive feature of this concept: namely, the notion of abstraction.

Through abstraction it is in fact possible to dissolve the qualitative differences between things by making them equivalent or commensurable while, at the same time, dissolving their specificity. As Prudham put it, "*social relations of abstraction* are necessary in order for discrete things to be rendered commensurable and exchangeable, particularly where money is involved" (Prudham 2009: 129). Moreover, difference "is both dissolved but also renegotiated and reproduced in legible forms" (Prudham 2009: 129). It is through this mechanism that nature becomes governable, calculable and legible**.**

The commodification of nature involves a change in the way nature is conceptualised, and therefore, discursively represented. This process implies that the ecosystem is transformed by and for production. (A striking example is the

conversion of forests into plantations for fiber or other products). This entails that nature is treated as a capitalistic value. Natural entities become a vehicle for the realisation of profit and are subject to the pressure of the market, where the accumulation of wealth overrides other concerns. This results in putting a price on the ecosystem while forgetting to put a price on its exploitation. According to this perspective, nature is not conceived as an essential element for human life, but rather as a means to be possessed in order to be guaranteed the greatest possible profit. The commodification of nature implies a violent act of appropriation by human beings as well as an intrinsic denial of its systemic structure that systematically separates most of us from a real contact with the biophysical world on which we are, nonetheless, utterly dependent. This in turn obscures the social and environmental relations of production, allowing for nature's homologation. As Kopytoff points out, the production of commodities is also a cognitive and cultural process … differences in whether and when a thing is a commodity *reveal a moral economy* that stands behind the objective economy of transactions (Kopytoff 1986: 64).

Thus, from a normative and ethical standpoint, one of the most negative implications is that the consumer is often not aware of what kind of social, environmental and power relations are being reproduced and supported trough the purchase of any commodity. As David Harvey says, "the grapes that sit on supermarket shelves are mute; we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation upon them or tell immediately what part of the world they are from" (Harvey 1990: 423). This phenomenon has been defined by Marx as the "fetishism" of the commodity. Similarly, another essential aspect that is obscured in the commodification process is the amount of human labor required to produce a certain commodity. The exchange value, thanks to which the circulation of commodities is made possible, never reflects the human labor necessary to produce a particular commodity.

Particular attention must be paid to this aspect, since the reverse process, defined as de-commodification, can only be achieved by reversing the terms of this relationship. In fact, according to Sayer, consumption is a form of de-commodification in so far as it reverses the ontology of things from exchange value back to use value.

With all this in mind, and going beyond the purely formal aspects of the commodification process itself, it is necessary to contextualise the commodification of nature in a broader spectrum of relations that involves both the political and the economic aspects.

As Appadurai writes: "economic exchange creates value. Value is embodied in commodities that are exchanged. Focusing on the things that are exchanged, rather than simply on the forms or functions of exchange, makes it possible to argue that what creates the link between exchange and value is *politics,* construed broadly" (Appadurai 1986: 3).

Politics, private ownership and power relations play indeed a fundamental role in the process of commodification of nature; in fact, "politics is the link between regimes of value and specific flows of commodities" (Appadurai 1986: 57).

1.2 Neoliberalisation of Nature

As for commodification of nature, the neoliberal approach or market environmentalism is the specific policy, governance, that involves natural regulation through forms of commodification (e.g. Ecotourism, territorialisation). According to this perspective natural resources are more efficiently allocated if treated as economic goods, thus, market is the principal mechanism of allocation. In particular, as we will see later, the market, corporations, play a fundamental role in the process of commodification of food.

Nature is protected through investment and consumption (Hartwick, Peet 2003), and conservation cannot be achieved without addressing the difficult and systemic inequities and power relationships that are inextricably linked to so many of our global environmental problems today (McAfee 1999).

> Finance capital in the neoliberal era has penetrated Braudel's 'structures of everyday life' and in so doing has sought to remake human and extra-human nature in its own image. Beginning in the 1970s, finance capital has decisively reshaped the rules of reproduction for the totality of nature–society relations – extending, horrifically, to the molecular relations of life itself. (Moore 2011: 14)

Prudham and McCarthy claim that "neoliberalism is also an *environmental* project, and that is *necessarily* so" (McCarthy, Prudham 2004: 277, their emphasis). According to their study this nexus is better understood through a historico-geographically specific perspective. "Only specific case studies can unpack the complex interplay between neoliberal projects, environmental politics, and environmental change" (McCarthy, Prudham 2004: 279).

The issue of nature's neoliberalisation has been mostly addressed by scholars on the basis of specific empirical case studies. This method makes it more difficult to identify a single definition of this concept.

Notwithstanding, as Castree has shown in his study, it is possible to identify commonalities in the various studies that can be summarised as follows: privatisation; marketisation; deregulation; market proxies in the residual public sector and, finally, the construction of flanking mechanism in civil society (Castree 2008a: 142).

As Bakker has shown, "neoliberalisation unfolds as a range of strategies, which vary depending on the target and type of socio-nature" (Bakker 2010: 725).

This therefore means that neoliberalisation, as a multiple dimensions process, varies according to the type of nature that is considered (i.e. private property rights are more difficult to establish for some types of resources – such as flow resources – than others). Each resource, as Bakker points out, implies a differentiated neoliberalisation strategy. "Specific neoliberalisation processes will have very different trajectories and effects when articulated with different types of socio-natures" (Bakker 2010: 726).

A crucial element of the neoliberalisation of nature, from a strictly environmental point of view, is the fact that it is constituted by an apparent paradox. In fact, as Castree points out:

These logics show that 'neoliberalism' is, in environmental terms, an apparent paradox: in giving full reign to capital accumulation it seeks to both protect and degrade the biophysical world, while manufacturing new natures in cases where that world is physically fungible. In short, nature's neoliberalisation is about conservation and its two antitheses of destroying existing and creating new biophysical resources. It is not reducible to one or other rationale alone. (Castree 2008a: 150).

Similarly, Bakker argues that:

The neoliberalization of socio-nature must thus be understood as, simultaneously, a disciplinary mode of regulation, and an emergent regime of accumulation that redefines and co-constitutes socio-natures. A central irony of these processes is that they purport to present a solution to environmental crises which capitalism has played a role in creating. (Bakker 2010: 726–727).

Framed this way, neoliberalism would then be the way in which capitalism faces and tries to resolve its internal contradictions as well as the way the way in which our relationship with nature is experienced. In the words of Heynen and Robbins, neoliberalism capitalism "drives the politics, economics and culture of the world system, providing the context and direction for how humans affect and interact with non-human nature and with one another" (Heynen, Robbins 2005: 5).

Commodification and neoliberalisation are not the same thing, but two interconnected aspects, two internal processes of the same capitalistic system.

The commodification of nature constitutes a pivotal moment of capitalist society, an emblem of what Marx has defined as a metabolic rift, an irreparable rift between nature and society, "in the interdependent process of the social metabolism, a metabolism prescribed by the natural laws of life itself" (Marx 1981: 449).

The metabolic rift underlies both the material and epistemic relations of capitalism. In separating agriculture from its natural foundations, the metabolic rift informs the episteme through which we analyse the value relations of commodity production. The abstraction of agriculture, and therefore the foundations of social production, means that value relations organise agriculture, and it comes to be understood in these terms. (McMichael 2009: 162)

Covering 4.4 billion hectares, over 50 percent of the earth's surface, agriculture remains today the dominant nexus between human society and nature (Kareiva et al. 2007).

For this reason, it can be said that the commodification of food constitutes one of the most evident and negative aspects of the commodification of nature, although, unfortunately, not the only one.

2. Food Commodification through the Lens of Food Regimes Theory

The commodification of food is perhaps one of the most problematic and controversial aspects of the commodification of nature and a determining factor of the current global food crisis.

According to the FAO report, in 2018 more than 820 million people suffered from hunger. Nine million more than in 2017. The Global Report on Food Crises 2020 appears even more dramatic due to the covid emergency; here we read in fact:

> The number of people battling acute hunger and suffering from malnutrition is on the rise yet again. In many places, we still lack the ability to collect reliable and timely data to truly know the magnitude and severity of food crises gripping vulnerable populations. And the upheaval that has been set in motion by the COVID-19 pandemic may push even more families and communities into deeper distress. (Global Report on Food Crises 2020)

An increase that has proven steady over the past three years. These data highlights the fragility of the global food system and the need for its urgent reform. According to some Scholars the food system is broken (Vivero-Pol 2017). To others, instead, "the food system is not broken, rather, it is working precisely as a capitalist food system is supposed to work". (Holt-Gimenéz 2017: 56).

The current crises in the globalising food system "are clearly connected, then, to the persistence of neoliberalism as a motivating ideology legitimating the unfettered commodification of food production and distribution and undermining national and local control over food policies" (Andrée, Ayres, Bosia, Massicotte 2014: 34).

Grasping the reasons and dynamics behind the commodification of food is of primary importance for at least two reasons. Primarily, to propose an alternative food regime that can tackle world hunger and allow us to redefine and rethink our relationship with nature in a way that is not that of domination or possession, based primarily on the superiority of the human being over the natural world.

Secondly, to shed light on how food is produced, consumed, allocated and wasted is also a way of understanding our relationship with the natural world, the position of man in relation to nature and therefore, to rethink it. Perhaps this might mean getting rid of the traditional anthropocentric vision and "interrogate the status of non-humans as political subjects" (Bakker 2010: 718).

But let's proceed step by step.

At the outset, it can be said that the commodification of food occurs according to the same process as the commodification of the natural world. It is the same dialectic according to which the use value is systematically displaced by the exchange value. As we have seen in the previous pages, the commodification process is not a static process, rather a process of becoming characterised by several interconnected phases. These aspects were thus identified by Castree in his article 'Commodifyng what nature?' in the following way: privatisation;

alienability; individuation; abstraction; valuation and displacement. All these aspects show how the notion of commodification implies a dynamic process, as acutely shown by Kopytoff, which take place in two ways: '(a) with respect to each thing, by making it exchangeable for more and more other things, and (b) with respect to the system as a whole, by making more and more different things more widely exchangeable' (Kopytoff 1986: 73).

In the recent Literature the issue of food commodification has been addressed through the lenses of the theory the theory of food regimes (FRT)[3] proposed by Mc Michael and Friedmann. This theory represents a fundamental contribution but, as we will see, it is not the only way to deal with the phenomenon of food commodification. According to this theory, the concept of food as a mere commodity is the result of an economic and political process.

In fact, food regime analysis emerged to explain the strategic role of agriculture and food in the construction of the world capitalist economy (McMichael 2009: 139).

According to McMichael:

> Food regime concept is a key to unlock not only structured moments and transitions in the history of capitalist food relations, but also the history of capitalism itself. That is the food regime is an important optic on the multiple determinations embodied in the food commodity, as a genus fundamental to capitalist history. As such, the food regime concept allows us to refocus from the commodity as object to the commodity as relation, with definite geo-political, social, ecological, and nutritional relations at significant historical moments. (McMichael 2009: 163)

For the purposes of this article, I find it particularly useful to address the commodification of food through the FRT for two reasons. The first is that, as with the commodification of nature, most of the literature on food commodification is based on case studies, thus it is not an easy task to identify a single definition. The second reason is that the theory of food regimes allows us to highlight the crucial link between economics and politics in the commodification process.

More recently the most programmatic and extensive (re-)statements of food regime analysis have come from McMichael in his article *A food regime genealogy*.

According to his analysis, it is possible to identify three food regimes in the history of capitalism. A first food regime from 1870 to 1914, a second regime from 1945-1973, and a third corporate food regime from the 1980s proposed by McMichael within the period of neoliberal globalisation and described as the 'corporate-environmental' regime by Friedmann (2005).

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3   The concept of food regime was first articulated by Harriett Friedmann and Philip McMichael in 1989 in their essay *Agriculture and the State System. The rise and decline of national agricultures, 1870 to the present*.
The existence of a third, neoliberal food regime is contested among some food regime theorists – see McMichael (2009), Friedmann (2009) and Burch and Lawrence (2009) for an overview of this debate

What – according to McMichael – constitutes the distinctive feature of the various food regimes is:

> the instrumental role of food in securing global hegemony – in the first, Britain's 'workshop of the world' project linked the fortunes of an emergent industrial capitalism to expanding cheap food supply chains across the world; in the second, the United States used food politically to create alliances and markets for its agribusiness. (McMichael 2013: 276)

The 'corporate food regime' is another moment. It defines a set of rules institutionalising corporate power in the world food system (McMichael 2009: 153). As the current food regime, it expresses a new moment in the era of capitalism and its distinguishing mark lies in the the politics of neo-liberalism.

This process began with the "European enlightenment and the transition to capitalism, accelerated under the British imperialism and the colonial project, and reached its zenith in the contemporary era with the financialisation of food itself" (Capra, Mattei 2015; Vivero-Pol 2017, as cited in Zerbe 2019: 157). The third corporate food regime, as Holt-Giménez points out:

> emerged from the global economic shocks of the 1970s and 1980s ushering in the current period of neo-liberal capitalist expansion.During the 1980s Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) broke down tariffs, dismantled national marketing boards, eliminated price guarantees and destroyed national agricultural research and extension systems in the Global South. These policies were embedded in international treaties through bilateral and international Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). The establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, and its Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), institutionalized the process of agricultural liberalization on a global scale by restricting the rights of sovereign states to regulate food and agriculture. (Holt- Giménez 2011: 111)

Framed in this context, the commodification of food as a theoretical and material process was accelerated by two recent developments: the expansion of intellectual property rights and the dramatic acceleration in the financialisation of food and agricultural markets (Zerbe 2019: 157).

As De Schutter observed:

> What we are seeing now is that these financial markets have developed massively with the arrival of these new financial investors, who are purely interested in the short-term monetary gain and are not really interested in the physical thing – they never actually buy the ton of wheat or maize; they only buy a promise to buy or to sell. The result of this financialisation of the commodities market is that the prices of the products respond increasingly to a purely speculative logic. This explains why in very short periods of time we see prices spiking or bubbles exploding, because prices are less and less determined by the real match between supply and demand. (De Schutter cited in Livingston 2012)

According to Bursch and Lawrence "the dominance of finance capital, which is symptomatic of the latest phase of capitalist development, has led to the emergence of a financialised food regime" (Bursch, Lawrence 2009: 275).

In the corporate food regime food has both an exchange value (as commodity) and a use value (to feed people). The prioritisation of exchange value to foster accumulation over the use value to feed people becomes the central goal of the commodification of food (Zerbe 2019: 156).

As it can be seen, the question of commodification is substantially traced back to the more general but at the same time fundamental phenomenon of abstraction in this case too. The use value, food as an essential element for human beings, is constantly overshadowed by the exchange value.

This brings out a fundamental consequence, acutely pointed out by Harvey:

> When you go to the supermarket you can see the exchange values [prices] but you can't see or measure the human labor embodied in the commodities directly. It is that embodiment of human labor that has a phantom-like presence on the supermarket shelves. Think about that the next time you are in a supermarket surrounded with these phantoms! (Harvey 2018: 59)

What makes food a commodity is the reduction of its multiple values and dimensions to that of market price, being profit maximisation the only driving ethos that justifies the market-driven allocation of such an essential element of human survival (Vivero-Pol 2017).

This means that food, instead of being considered as an essential element for the life of human beings, is a commodity that can only be purchased by those who have enough money.

In the globalised food regime, food as a commodity is connected to injustice, labour, lack, hunger, discrimination and violence.

The abstraction of agriculture through its incorporation and reproduction within global capital circuits imparts a 'food from nowhere' (Bové, Dufour 2000) character to the corporate food regime (McMichael 2013: 287). As I pointed out above, abstraction constitutes the fundamental trait of commodification. In this case, the abstraction of agriculture implies a constant disavowal of natural biodiversity. This means that any food can be grown anywhere in the world through the use of intensive agriculture, greenhouses, or genetically modified products, regardless of the effects such methods have on ecosystems and climate change.

This abstraction cannot be disentangled from the power of corporations[4] which have long played a central role in the international food system. With an ever greater amount of food crossing international borders, it is not surprising that global food corporations have become central actors in the system (Clapp 2011). The power of corporations led to what McMichael defined a 'world agriculture', namely not the entirety of agriculture across the earth

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4   Grain giants ADM, Cargill, and Bunge took control of 80 percent of the world's grain (Vorley 2003). Chemical corporations Monsanto and DuPont together appropriated 65 percent of the global maize seed market (Action Aid International Ghana 2006): four companies – Tyson, Cargill, Swift, and National Beef Packing Company control 83.5 percent of the US beef supply (Hendrickson, Heffernan 2007)

but a transnational space of corporate agricultural and food relations integrated by commodity circuits. Corporate circuits, in fact, frame the global transformation of social, bio-political and ecological relations (McMichael 2013).

Value relations organise not only the agricultural sector, rather almost everything which turns into commodity form. As Moore argues " theory value identifies a 'deep structure' of historical capitalism that gives priority to labor productivity, and mobilises extra-human nature without regard for the socio-ecological conditions of its (uncapitalised) reproduction, we have more than a simple restatement of the problem" (Moore 2011: 19–20**)**.

Food as a commodity is totally emancipated from any relation with space and time. But this emancipation from space and time generates a paradox of no small importance. On the one hand, and without any limitation, food is constantly available regardless of what season it is. On the other, it is totally isolated from the social and environmental context. In this way the food is not only removed from the local and temporal context in which it was produced but, at the same time, any relationship between the food and the consumer and between the consumer and the producer is lost, canceled. This means that "consumers are unable to look back on the food's production history, and consequently they are equally unable to see how their own food consumption influences nature and society. The relations are lost" (Coff 2006: 89). We eat information. Consumers' knowledge about food is in most cases reduced to what can be read on food declarations (Coff 2006: 92).

But the corporate food regime is a political construct rather than an inevitable condition.

As McMichael once again aptly showed:

> The corporate food regime is a political construct, and its beneficiaries constitute only about a quarter of the world's population, despite the widening effects of social exclusion, through the appropriation of resources (material, intellectual, and spiritual), and the privatization of public goods. At the same time, these effects generate the conditions for overcoming the social and ecological crisis of the corporate food regime, in resistance movements dedicated to the social re-embedding of markets. (McMichael 2013: 290)

As it can be seen, McMichael's approach tends to primarily enhance the political aspect in the formation and reproduction of food regimes. Thus, this approach identifies stable periods of capital accumulation associated with particular configurations of geopolitical power, conditioned by forms of agricultural production and consumption relations within and across national spaces (McMichael 2013).

2.2 New Perspective on Food Regimes Theory

In the extant debate, Mark Tilzey has recently proposed a different reading of the food regimes theory in his article "Food Regimes, Capital, State, and Class: Friedmann and McMichael Revisited" (2019). According to the author,

although the theory developed by McMichael and Friedmann has been pivotal to our thinking about the relation between capitalism, the state, and agriculture, it is possible to encounter some problems that would undermine the solidity of their theory.

Specifically, Tilzey states that there are some aspects that are not entirely explicit in the theory of food regimes but which are of particular importance for understanding the formation and reproduction of food regimes.

First, they provide no explicit definition of capitalism. Second, and conjoined to the above:

> their conceptualisation of the relation between capitalism and the modern state is seriously under-theorised. This concerns their neglect of the twin aspects of this relation that enable us to make sense of both entities in their dialectical co-constitution: the 'separation in unity' of the institutional spheres of the 'economy' and 'polity', and the complementary accumulation and legitimation functions of the state in relation to capital. (Tilzey 2019: 234)

Third, "Friedmann and McMichael either neglect, or deploy, a deficient class analysis, especially concerning inter-class 'struggle'" (Tilzey 2019: 234).

As Tilzey states, in the FRT there is an unresolved tension between structure (which defines positions to the social practices of those occupying these positions) and agency (conceived primarily in terms of the decisions and actions of individual land managers) that implies an abstract conception of capitalism. This means that in the FRT there is a dichotomy between terms rather than a dialectical relationship between the state-capital relations from which derives an understanding of the modern state as nothing but the contingent outcome outcome of a sectoral articulation between agriculture and industry. He suggest by contrast, "that the modern state is better conceptualised itself as a social relation" (Tilzey 2019: 234).

> This unresolved tension and their omission to present a theoretical basis for conceptualising the dialectic between 'structure' and 'agency', underlies, to a considerable degree, the great schism that emerged in the 1990s, within rural geography and sociology, between the 'structuralism' of 'abstract globalism' and the 'post-structural' frame of 'abstract localism'. Further, it was this 'abstract globalism' which mandated, and continues to mandate, its mirror image 'abstract localism'. Below, and through the development of 'Political Marxian' and related approaches, we will attempt to vitiate this dualism of the two 'abstractions' by means of revised conceptions of capitalism, class, agency and state. (Tilzey 2019: 232)

The core hypothesis supported by Tilzey is that class relations play a fundamental role in order to understand the FRT.

Tilzey's position aims to pinpoint a new causal basis for food regimes through the use of Political Marxism', in alliance with neo-Gramscian International Political Economy. This approach is aimed at supporting the idea that the modern state and capitalism must be conceived in terms of class relations,

making a different periodisation possible. This new and revised theorisation is conceivable through an eminently Marxian understanding of capitalism "which takes as its starting point Marx's desire, non-reductively, to understand capitalism in terms of the totality of social relations" (Tilzey 2019: 233).

This is the fundamental novelty brought by Tilzey to McMichael and Friedmann's theory. Not only the hypothesis of the existence of a fifth food regimes characteristic of contemporary society, but above all the idea that the formation and reproduction of food regimes steams from social-property relations in the hegemonic state (in the world system) and the international articulation of these relations with receptive and complementary class interests in other states.

A different periodisation of food regimes derives from this interpretation: 1) The First *National* Capitalist Food Regime 1750-1846; 2) The First *International*, or 'Liberal', Food Regime 1846-1870; 3) The Second International, or 'Imperial', Food Regime 1870-1930; 4) The Third International, or 'Political Productivist', Food Regime 1930–1980; 5) The Fourth International, or 'Neoliberal', Food Regime 1980-2010; 6) The Fifth International, or 'Post-Neoliberal', Food Regime.

The conceptual core of Tilzey's proposal is based on a different reading of the radical political economy that informed Friedmann and McMichael's theory, privileging the role of class relations in the relationship between state and capitalism and between states but also, favouring the economic moment over the political one. There is a need, writes Tilzey: "to specify modern capitalism in terms of class relations, composed of owners of the means of production counter-posed to an expropriated class 'free' to sell its labour power, in which, for the first time, power over production is exerted 'economically', not 'politically" (Tilzey 2019: 237).

The post-neoliberal food regime arises from the dialectical understanding of capital, state, and class, and the dynamics of combined and uneven development; and because of this existence of a 'post-neoliberal' food regime has not been seriously or systematically broached hitherto (Tilzey 2019). The key feature of the post-neoliberal food regime are identified by Tilzey as follows: (a) the appearance of 'land-grabbing' and neo-extractivism in the peripheries; (b) the emergence of China, particularly, as a sub-imperium; and (c) the rise of the Latin American pink tide states as a response to neoliberalism, and within the favourable international conjuncture defined by China's ascendance.

According to Tilzey's interpretation the post-neoliberal food regime is characterised by a fragmentation of neoliberal hegemony that involves a return to to heightened inter-state competition and antagonism reminiscent of the Imperial Food Regime.

As Claimed by Tilzey, precisely from this fragmentation would arise an epochal crisis of the neoliberalism, if not yet of capitalism in general: "Imperial monopoly finance capital has escalated its accumulation of land and natural resources in the peripheries. Money alone, however, is becoming no longer adequate to ensure continuing, and cheap, supply of food and energy to these consumption heartlands of neoliberalism" (Tilzey 2019: 244). To understand

this relation Tilzey proposes a different key relationship between capital and state in which the state-capital nexus deploys to secure economic growth and political stability, framing the form and function of food regimes.

The instability of the Post neo-liberal regime hinges, according to Tilzey's interpretation, on the deep ecological and political contradictions across the inter-related dynamics of imperium, sub-imperium, and periphery. This interpretation stems from Tilzey's particular approach to the FRT, which has its roots in a re-reading of a non-reductive Marxian theory in the form of 'Political Marxism' and a neo-Gramscian thinking used to comprehend the concept of capitalism, state and class dynamics. This interpretation is neglected, according to the author, in the traditional interpretation of the food regimes developed by McMichael and Friedmann.

According to Tilzey, it is precisely this reinterpretation that would allow to shed light on the current food regime which "may mark the endgame of capitalism in general, as it encounters an epochal crisis defined by spiralling political and ecological turmoil" (Tilzey 2019: 248).

Thus, according to Tilzey, this perspective allows:

> to present a revised and more comprehensive periodisation of capitalist food regimes, extending from the birth of the first capital-state nexus in England in the late eighteenth century through to the current re-emergence of overt state management of, and inter-state competition around, flows of food and resources in what we have chosen to call the 'Post-Neoliberal' regime. (Tilzey 2019: 249)

The fundamental conceptual core of Tilzey's proposal is that the FRT elaborated by McMichael and Friedmann fails to identify the internal relations between state and capital, and therefore the understanding of both as class relations. This perspective therefore eliminates the dichotomy between structure and agency cited above. The concept of class constitutes in fact the bridging concept that encapsulates both structure and agency, or class position and positionality (Potter and Tilzey 2005).

Hence the neo-gramscian concept of 'structured agency' adopted by Tilzey, which makes it possible to identify "the class fractional interests that comprise capitalist social relations and directs attention to strategies and understandings deployed by political agents in the defence or promotion of their interests" (Tilzey 2019: 234).

As we have seen, the analysis of food regimes allows to frame the commodification of food within an economic and political context.

Nevertheless, I believe that this analysis does not take into consideration a fundamental aspect of the question which, as we shall see, will instead be central to the movement of food sovereignty. This aspect is what allows the assumption of a perspective that is no longer only political or economical, but ethical, and which considers food commodification as dependant on not recognising food as a natural element essential to the life of human beings, and as a cultural element and fundamental right to each of these beings. In this regard,

food sovereignty can offer a fundamental contribution since it does not only constitute a challenge and an alternative to the current food regime, but also represents a different way of understanding the relationship between humans and nature as well as the relationship between human themselves.

3. Food Sovereignty: Rethinking the Relation between Humans and Nature

The concept of food sovereignty was formulated for the first time during the International Conference of Via Campesina in Tlaxcala, Mexico, in 1996, in opposition to the concept of food security as a universal ideal to prevent world hunger. "Food security, at the individual, household, national, regional and global levels [is achieved] when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". (FAO 1996 cited in FAO 2003).

In contrast to this definition La Via Campesina claims:

> We, the Via Campesina, a growing movement of farm workers, peasant, farm and indigenous peoples' organizations from all the regions of the world, know that food security cannot be achieved without taking full account of those who produce food. Any discussion that ignores our contribution will fail to eradicate poverty and hunger. Food is a basic human right. This right can only be realized in a system where Food Sovereignty is guaranteed. (Via Campesina 1996b)

Compared to the notion of food security, the concept of food sovereignty affirms that social control within the food system constitutes a fundamental aspect in order to guarantee food security. This certainly represents one of the most critical aspects of the concept of food security. In fact, as Patel rightly points out: "as far as the terms of food security go, it is entirely possible for people to be food secure in prison or under a dictatorship" (Patel 2009: 665).

According to Via Campesina:

> Long-term food security depends on those who produce food and care for the natural environment. As the stewards of food producing resources we hold the following principles as the necessary foundation for achieving food security [....] Food is a basic human right. This right can only be realized in a system where food sovereignty is guaranteed. Food sovereignty is the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productive diversity. We have the right to produce our own food in our own territory. Food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security. (Via Campesina 1996)

Thus, the concept of food sovereignty emphasises that the question of food is not at all a problem of insufficient trade, a simple problem of distribution or allocation, rather a matter of rights. This is a crucial question because the distinction between the two concepts rests on a diametrically opposite conceptions of food. Avoiding the issue of social control within the production and

consumption system, the concept of food security remains tied to a vision of food as a mere commodity. Recognising food as the fundamental right of every human being, food sovereignty, proposes a de-commodified vision of food and represents an alternative paradigm both to food security and to the current food system. Food sovereignty affirms the human right to food as extended by Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, but not simply through access to food but through the right of democratic control over food and food- producing resources (Holt-Giménez 2011: 128).

Although there is no single definition of food sovereignty, Windfuhr and Jonsén (2005) identified seven principles that underlie the subsequent elaborations of the concept of food sovereignty (Tab. 1)

Table 1: Summary of Via Campesina's 'Seven Principles to Achieve Food Sovereignty'

1. **Food: A Basic Human Right** – Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity. Each nation should declare that access to food is a constitutional right and guarantee the development of the primary sector to ensure the concrete realization of this fundamental right.
2. **Agrarian Reform** – A genuine agrarian reform is necessary which gives landless and farming people – especially women – ownership and control of the land they work and returns territories to indigenous peoples. The right to land must be free of discrimination on the basis of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology; the land belongs to those who work it.
3. **Protecting Natural Resources** – Food Sovereignty entails the sustainable care and use of natural resources, especially land, water, and seeds and livestock breeds. The people who work the land must have the right to practice sustainable management of natural resources and to conserve biodiversity free of restrictive intellectual property rights. This can only be done from a sound economic basis with security of tenure, healthy soils and reduced use of agro-chemicals.
4. **Reorganizing Food Trade** – Food is first and foremost a source of nutrition and only secondarily an item of trade. National agricultural policies must prioritize production for domestic consumption and food self-sufficiency. Food imports must not displace local production nor depress prices.
5. **Ending the Globalization of Hunger** – Food Sovereignty is undermined by multilateral institutions and by speculative capital. The growing control of multinational corporations over agricultural policies has been facilitated by the economic policies of multilateral organizations such as the WTO, World Bank and the IMF. Regulation and taxation of speculative capital and a strictly enforced Code of Conduct for TNCs is therefore needed.
6. **Social Peace** – Everyone has the right to be free from violence. Food must not be used as a weapon. Increasing levels of poverty and marginalization in the countryside, along with the growing oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, aggravate situations of injustice and hopelessness. The ongoing displacement, forced urbanization, repression and increasing incidence of racism of smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated.

7.	**Democratic control** – Smallholder farmers must have direct input into formulating agricultural policies at all levels. The United Nations and related organizations will have to undergo a process of democratization to enable this to become a reality. Everyone has the right to honest, accurate information and open and democratic decision-making. These rights form the basis of good governance, accountability and equal participation in economic, political and social life, free from all forms of discrimination. Rural women, in particular, must be granted direct and active decision making on food and rural issues.

Nowadays the Nyéléni Declaration for Food Sovereignty of 2007 (see Tab. 2) is the main platform for citizens groups supporting Food Sovereignty around the world, and an international reference point for discussions on Food Sovereignty (Tab. 2)

Table 2: SIX PILLARS OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY
(Nyéléni Declaration) (Nyéléni Forum, Mali 2007)

1.	**Focuses on Food for People**: Food sovereignty puts the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples and communities, including those who are hungry, under occupation, in conflict zones and marginalised, at the centre of food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries policies; and rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity or component for international agri-business.
2.	**Values Food Providers**: Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programmes that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them.
3.	**Localises Food Systems**: Food sovereignty brings food providers and consumers closer together; puts providers and consumers at the centre of decision-making on food issues; protects food providers from the dumping of food and food aid in local markets; protects consumers from poor quality and unhealthy food, inappropriate food aid and food tainted with genetically modified organisms; and resists governance structures, agreements and practices that depend on and promote unsustainable and inequitable international trade and give power to remote and unaccountable corporations.
4.	**Puts Control Locally**: Food sovereignty places control over territory, land, grazing, water, seeds, livestock and fish populations on local food providers and respects their rights. They can use and share them in socially and environmentally sustainable ways which conserve diversity; it recognises that local territories often cross geopolitical borders and ensures the right of local communities to inhabit and use their territories; it promotes positive interaction between food providers in different regions and territories and from different sectors that helps resolve internal conflicts or conflicts with local and national authorities; and rejects the privatisation of natural resources through laws, commercial contracts and intellectual property rights regimes.

5.   **Builds Knowledge and Skills**: Food sovereignty builds on the skills and local knowledge of food providers and their local organisations that conserve, develop and manage localised food production and harvesting systems, developing appropriate research systems to support this and passing on this wisdom to future generations; and rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, e.g. genetic engineering.

6.   **Works with Nature**: Food sovereignty uses the contributions of nature in diverse, low external input agro-ecological production and harvesting methods that maximise the contribution of ecosystems and improve resilience and adaptation, especially in the face of climate change; it seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us; and, rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices and other industrialised production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming.

Food sovereignty is a complex and multifaceted reality that combines a political and ethical perspective. "Food sovereignty is a historical wedge in a crisis conjuncture to recognise and promote alternative socio-ecological relations to feed citizens rather than long-distance consumers" (McMichael 2014: 938). It is not just a resistance movement "It is a process of accumulation of forces and realities coming together from the citizens of the entire planet. Food sovereignty is not just resistances, as there are thousands of resistances, but also proposals that come from social movements, and not just peasant movements" (Wittman 2009: 678–680).

> The strength of this global movement is precisely that it differs from place to place [...] The world is a complex place, and it would be a mistake to look for a single answer to complex and different phenomena. We have to provide answers at different levels – not just the international level, but local and national levels too. History shows that each phase of political development has a corresponding institutional form: France's response to the Industrial Revolution was the nation-state; the WTO is the expression of this phase of the liberalization of world trade. (Bové, Dufour 2001: 145)

The food sovereignty approach can be distinguished as an "epistemic shift" in which value relations, approaches to rights, and a shift from an economic to an ecological calculus concurrently challenge the rules and relations of a corporate or neoliberal food regime (Wittman 2011: 90).

By focusing on ecologically sustainable food production and reconnecting producers and consumers via the localisation of "food from somewhere", food sovereignty as part of an "agrarian regeneration movement" is increasingly presented as having theoretical potential to rework (Wittman 2009c), repair (Schneider, McMichael 2010), or heal (Clausen 2007) the metabolic rift (Wittman 2011: 93).

If 'food from nowhere' is the peculiar trait of the current global food regime, 'food from somewhere' (McMichael 2009b; Wittman 2009c) can be identified as the peculiar trait of the food sovereignty approach.

Food sovereignty then represents not only an alternative to the current food regime but also outlines a different approach to nature, a different relationship between humans and nature as well as a different ethical perspective.

The implementation of sustainable agricultural practices aimed at preserving the land, seeds, water and all other natural resources, provides for a vision of nature as a common heritage of humanity. Nature is not considered as a means from which to obtain the greatest possible profit, but is rather a fundamental element of human life and is essential for its survival.

This constitutes a central element of agro-ecology:

> the holistic study of agroe-cosystems, including all environmental and human elements. It focuses on the form, dynamics and functions of their inter-relationships and the processes in which they are involved . . . Implicit in agroe-cological research is the idea that by understanding these ecological relationships and processes, agro-ecosystems can be manipulated to improve production and produce more sustainably, with fewer negative environmental or social impacts and few external inputs. (Altieri 2002: 8)

Through this practice becomes possible to improve production through more sustainable practices, respecting the biodiversity of the environment and, more importantly, engaging in a relationship with nature that is based on knowledge and not on possession and which therefore takes into consideration the need for regeneration of the land, aimed at conservation for future generations.Furthermore: "Agro-ecology also brings in other principles: circular, social and solidarity economies building alternatives to linear and continuous economic growth, cooperation and care (for people and ecosystems), and the critical role of local, Indigenous, and co-produced knowledge" (Duncan 2020: 5)

Cooperation between man and nature is certainly the most characteristic and fundamental aspect of the food sovereignty approach. Food sovereignty conceives cooperation in two ways: rediscovering the relationship of immanence that binds man to nature, but also as an enhancement of human interdependence in order to guarantee sustainable development and build community. In this sense, cooperation does not only happen during the practice of agro-ecology as a sharing of techniques and knowledge, but is also intertwined with community gatherings, sharing food, and establishing solidarity through new friendships.

Nature and humans represent the same side of the same coin. This is why the movement of food sovereignty also has a strong ethical component. It is not only a matter of rediscovering the role of man within nature and the environment, but also a rediscovering of the value of the social relationships that establish the community we live in. All this is made possible thanks to a different consideration of food which ceases to be understood as a commodity, becoming instead an essential right of every human being. Food as what is donated by nature becomes the medium through which it becomes possible to establish a new relationship with the natural world subtracted from the mortgage of man's absolute dominion over nature. In fact, food relations "become

the medium, and product, of an alternative, political ontology. "Sovereignty" is the means by which this political ontology is to be secured" (Andrée, Ayres, Bosia, Massicotte 2014: 350)

This same attitude translates into social practices oriented towards well-being and sharing rather than competition. As Patel observes, "Food sovereignty offers a sophisticated attempt at developing a grounded, localised and yet international humanism around the food system" (Patel 2005: 81). It promotes a different concept of humanity which is based on the respect for human diversity, mutual well-being, traditions and cultural values.

Thus, what is at stake in the concept of food sovereignty is not only food as a natural resource, as an integral part of nature, rather how people choose to live, what and how they choose to produce and consume, and how to construct a more just, equitable, and democratic world. Against the reduction of the human being to the 'homo economicus', typical of the neoliberal model, food sovereignty fights for an alternative conception of human being. As Schanbacher points out, "it represents a drastically different understanding of human relationship [...] a clear alternative to purely economic understanding of human relations – both human-to-human relationships and our relationship to the natural environment" (Schanbacher 2010: 108).

Food sovereignty represents a unique social movement in which community, political, and cultural rights are intertwined with the issue of food.

Through its multidisciplinary approach and its strongly ethical component, food sovereignty constitutes an opportunity in order to contrast the progressive commodification of nature and of the environment.

In the current international political scenario, the issue of food sovereignty appears as a necessity that can no longer be sidestepped. Indeed, it is clear that current policies to reduce malnutrition and hunger are not having any effect.

Insisting that food sovereignty becomes the common global policy means trying to deconstruct a food regime that is no longer able to satisfy the needs of the world population, and at the same time, rethinking our relationship with nature.

Conclusion

As I tried to show above, the idea of food sovereignty represents a unique movement in which politics, economics and ethics are closely intertwined. The fundamental assumption that food, far from being a mere commodity, is an inalienable right of every human being, allows us to undermine the vision of 'food from nowhere' and replace it with that of food 'from somewhere'. The use value of food (to feed people) becomes the main mechanism for going beyond the vision of food as a pure commodity.

Proposing food as an essential right radically changes not only the way of understanding food but also the relationship between man and nature.

Food is a natural and cultural element, which cannot be dissociated from either the human work necessary for its production or from biodiversity,

necessary to maintain the balance of the ecosystem and to reduce the effects of climate change. The concept of food sovereignty was not developed by politicians or economists, but by those on whom world's food supply still depends: small scale food producers themselves. For these reasons it is not based on the theory of maximum profit typical of capitalist society, but on a relationship of harmony between man and nature.

The concept of cooperation as a fundamental element of food sovereignty does not only concern the relationship between producer and consumer, but also the relationship with the natural world. Through the practice of agro-ecology it is possible to preserve the health of the ecosystem by enhancing the biodiversity of the food produced and consumed.

For these reasons:

> Food Sovereignty is thus a more holistic system than Food Security. It recognizes that control over the food system needs to remain in the hands of farmers, for whom farming is both a way of life and a means of producing food. It ensures that food is produced in a culturally acceptable manner and in harmony with the ecosystem in which it is produced. This is how traditional food production systems have regenerated their soils, water, biodiversity and climactic conditions, for generations. (Fao 2014)

Thus, "Food sovereignty presents us all with an ethical choice, a choice that invariably challenges both how we see the world and what we think constitutes a just world" (Schanbacher 2010: 119).

The de-commodified perspective of food emphasised by food sovereignty depends in a non-secondary way on an ethical approach to food, which constitutes the fundamental trait of food sovereignty.

Through its right-based approach, food sovereignty could promote a global change in the current food regime as it: respects the rights of people; understands food to be more than a commodity, but a commons and a human right; promotes agro-ecological food systems; maintains solidarity with food producers and consumers around the world.

In my opinion, it is precisely the ethical approach that clearly distinguishes the concept of food sovereignty from that of food security, in which where and how food is produced is not a fundamental question.

As for me, I think that food sovereignty can really help to promote a new global food regime. In particular, I believe that the ethical approach constitutes its real core that could provide a new starting point for a new education on nature and human relations. Food sovereignty can constitute a new paradigm for a new idea of a society removed from the dynamics of capitalist economic power. If nature and food are understood as common goods to be preserved, as essential rights of every human being, it becomes possible to inaugurate a society, a politics and an economy based on solidarity and mutual well-being rather than on the maximisation of profit.

However, for this to become possible, a more concrete and precise definition of its political component is necessary.

If it is true that food sovereignty can represent a valid alternative to current food policies, I believe it is necessary to underline the most delicate aspect for a concrete application of food sovereignty on a global scale.

Furthermore, while it is undeniably clear that food sovereignty is an eminent political project, it is nevertheless complex to establish how such sovereignty, at the local, regional and national level, should be exercised.

In this sense, I think that, perhaps, the most problematic aspect of the concept of food sovereignty is precisely the status of sovereignty as such.

It is a core that has never fully been made explicit, which might explain why in more recent definitions of food sovereignty, increasing levels of inconsistency can be found. A striking example can be found, among others, in this sentence: 'those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations'(Via Campesina 2007). The phrase 'those who produce, distribute and consume food' refers, unfortunately, to everyone, including the transnational corporations rejected in the second half of the sentence. As Patel points out, there are, of course, many ways to get out of this impasse. One of these could be to interpret the phrase 'those who produce, distribute and consume food' as subjects in flesh and blood rather than legal subjects. However, even accepting this naive definition, what remains unexplained is precisely the question of sovereignty, as it must be admitted that even among human beings power and control are unevenly distributed (Patel 2009).

The matter does not seem to be easily clarified by referring to another equally significant aspect either, that is the right based approach. As it is well known, food sovereignty offers a totally different vision of food compared to the current global food regime. In fact, food is not a commodity among others but a right that must be ensured for every human being on earth. Accordingly, the matter of food turns into a political one. Nevertheless, assuming food as an inalienable right of each individual, does not directly allow us to clarify which institution or body has the guarantee of this right.

Affirming a right is indeed not a sufficient condition for that right to be guaranteed. For the language of rights to have any meaning, a guarantor of these rights must be identified.

Among the most relevant issues in this regard it is possible to identify the layering of different jurisdictions over which rights can be exercised, which constitutes a central aspect of food sovereignty. This call includes a whole series of figures ranging from nations to peoples, passing through regions and communities and reaching the state institution. But necessarily this call implies a concomitant call for the spaces of sovereignty which vary according to the different geographies of food sovereignty. But precisely on this point, "by pointing to the multivalent hierarchies of power and control that exist within the world food system, food sovereignty paradoxically displaces one sovereign, but remains silent about the others" (Patel 2009: 668).

The issue of sovereignty is therefore not only one of the constitutive aspects of food sovereignty but it is also the most problematic and delicate one.

It is the fundamental nucleus around which the entire system of food sovereignty revolves and, at the same time, the keystone for such a system to work.

A political and philosophical questioning about the status of food sovereignty is necessary. It is no coincidence that the name 'food sovereignty' necessarily refers to a political question. In fact, it suggests the idea that food is inextricably bound to the political realm.

Identifying the political nature of sovereignty with respect to basic control over whom has access to food or healthy food, is therefore indispensable in order to propose an alternative to the current global food regime.

Food as an essential right of every human being cannot be guaranteed without a clarification of the concept of sovereignty. Understanding who should exercise sovereignty, how it should be exercised, under what conditions, is perhaps the main knot for the project of food sovereignty to be realised globally.

To clearly define the concept of sovereignty, both in theoretical and practical terms, is the only way for food sovereignty to become a concrete and effective political practice. For these reasons, one of the future challenges for scholars should be to provide a theoretical framework for the concept of sovereignty.

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Federika Porčedu

Priroda i komodifikacija hrane. Prehrambeni suverenitet: promišljanje odnosa između čoveka i prirode

Apstrakt

Ovaj članak ima za cilj da istraži vezu između komodifikacije prirode i komodifikacije hrane. Komodifikacija hrane je u stvari jedan od najnegativnijih i najkontroverznijih aspekata komodifikacije prirode. Ispitivanje komodifikacije hrane predstavlja plodno tlo za istraživanje odnosa između čoveka i prirode. U ovom kontekstu, prehrambeni suverenitet predstavlja korisnu paradigmu koja ne samo da služi kao alternativa trenutnom režimu ishrane, već koja takođe omogućava da se iskusi drugačija vrsta odnosa između ljudi i prirode. Prehrambeni suverenitet predstavlja jedinstven društveni pokret u kojem su prava zajednice, kao i politička i kulturna prava isprepletena sa pitanjem hrane. Svojim multidisciplinarnim pristupom i snažnom etičkom komponentom, prehrambeni suverenitet predstavlja priliku da se suprotstavi narastućoj komodifikaciji prirode i okruženja.

Ključne reči: čovek, priroda, hrana, komodifikacija, prehrambeni suverenitet, etika

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ANIMAL DIGNITY AND SYMPATHETIC IMAGINATION: MARTHA NUSSBAUM AND AN ANALYSIS OF THE TREATMENT OF NON-HUMAN ANIMALS

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I analyse Martha Nussbaum's view of how we should treat non-human animals, which she links to her capabilities approach. This approach offers a conception of justice or, as Nussbaum puts it, a collection of fundamental rights that specify some of the necessary elements for a just society. In addition to justice for human beings, this approach includes animal rights. The basis for the discussion consists of two elements that justify the claim that every animal deserves to live a life that is characteristic of a member of its species. The first element is dignity, and the second is sympathetic imagination. The intention of Nussbaum's approach is to represent an improvement on the social contract tradition (in particular, in the Rawlsian version), by offering a more encompassing theory of justice. In her view, the capabilities approach, contrary to the theories of social contract, has principled resources that allow it to include, among else, non-human-animals in the domain of justice. However, the contribution of my paper consists in showing the problems I observe in Nussbaum's theory. These problems are related to the insufficient definition of basic concepts and to the fact that in Nussbaum's theory, non-human animals remain, across various situations, only a means of serving human needs. The consequence is that non-human animals are not included in the domain of justice which, after all, is Nussbaum's fundamental ambition.

KEYWORDS

dignity, justice, capabilities approach, non-human animals, Martha Nussbaum, Christine Korsgaard, sympathetic imagination

Introduction

Martha Nussbaum (2006a) emphasizes the importance of the social contract tradition in the history of disputes that aim to establish theories of justice. This importance is particularly visible since, being a valuable alternative to utilitarianism, the social contract tradition insufficiently protects individual differences. A further merit of the social contract tradition consists in establishing

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the basis of the affirmation of some fundamental rights, as well as equality, as opposed to hierarchical societies. Yet, she notices the problem of social contract theories of justice in that they cannot account for subjects who are not free, equal (in their abilities) or independent. Among them, there are non-human animals, which I discuss in the present paper. That is why Nussbaum believes that an alternative paradigm needs to be developed and adopted. She calls this alternative the capabilities approach. The disadvantage of social contract theories is that, in a system of justice, they can only include beings that are able to make an approximately equal contribution to cooperation that is inspired by mutual advantage, or that is rational. She says that her proposal may be more inclusive because it is able to recognize a wide range of types of animal dignity and corresponding needs for prosperity, which form the basis for inclusion of animals in the domain of justice. Thus, the approach is specific, as it recognizes the diversity of activities and goals of different species by adopting subtle norms of interspecies justice, which include the fundamental rights of creatures of different types (Nussbaum 2006a: 327). Like John Stuart Mill, who insists on the qualitative heterogeneity of pleasures and is interested not only in pleasure and pain but also in complex forms of life and functioning, Nussbaum states that the capabilities approach seeks to see every being develop as it is [as it flourishes] (Nussbaum 2006a: 346).

The general thesis of Nussbaum's capabilities approach is that no animal should be denied a chance to live with a kind of dignity relevant to that species and that all sensitive animals should enjoy certain (positive) opportunities to flourish (Nussbaum 2006a: 384).

Once the importance of the notion of dignity for the inclusion of animals in the domain of justice has been established, Nussbaum needs to determine how we will establish *what* constitutes animal dignity and *how* we will respect it. Despite our approach to animals being negatively affected by our interference and greed, we can transcend selfish interests and experience the inner life of a non-human animal – a sympathetic imagination. In this way, we view them as potential subjects of justice. By using sympathetic imagination, Nussbaum argues, we expand and refine our moral judgments, and then, by using theoretical insights into dignity, we correct, refine, and expand both judgments and imaginations (Nussbaum 2006a: 355).

I think that Nussbaum's criticism of the social contract tradition, in this domain, is successful. In particular, I will focus on her discussion of the Kantian paradigm. However, in my view, Nussbaum's proposal is facing difficulties, as well. Its notion of dignity in non-human animals seems to remain, still, in need of a more detailed definition. Furthermore, the approach of sympathetic imagination is problematic. Contrary to Nussbaum's intention, her attempt can seem paternalistic and potentially used to benefit humans to the detriment of non-human animals, which I will discuss in more detail later.

In the paper, I will proceed as follows. First, I will discuss Nussbaum's notion of dignity. I will follow her argumentative structure that is based on a comparison with Kant's notion of dignity. After that, I will compare Nussbaum's

proposal with the influential contemporary Kantian theory of Christine Korsgaard. Again, I will show that Nussbaum is successful in her criticism of the Kantian paradigm. However, at that point I shall demonstrate that even Nussbaum's employment of the notion of dignity is not sufficiently satisfactory. I will support my claim in two ways. Firstly, I offer general reasons to show that the model of justification of a theory of justice that Nussbaum endorsed, a specific variation of political liberalism, is excessively concessive to the human perspective. Secondly, I will elaborate several illustrations represented by Nussbaum's evaluations of specific case that confirm my general assessment. Finally, I will discuss the notion of sympathetic imagination that is crucial for the accomplishment of Nussbaum's project of offering a fully satisfactory theory of justice for non-human animals. As I have indicated, I believe that this approach does not entirely cover Nussbaum's intention to establish a proper position of non-human animals in a theory of justice.

1. Nussbaum's Notion of Dignity, as Opposed to Kant's Notion of Dignity

Nussbaum introduces the notion of dignity in non-human animals as a contrast to the notion of dignity that Kant wrote about (Nussbaum 2006a: 159). The main objection to Kant is based on a critique of his theory of the social contract, as well as of that paradigm in general. In Kant's formulation, social contract theory is incapable of accounting for non-human animals in the context of justice, because it assumes that the human form of rationality is the only foundation of dignity and because it describes the political principles arising from contracts among equals (Melin, Kronlid 2016: 55).

Contrary to Kant's social contract theory, Nussbaum argues that individual beings have a form of dignity that is tied to their animal characteristics, which is different from that dignity to which the concept of *rationality* is tied (Sunstein, Nussbaum 2004: 281). She goes on to state that the core of the theory she advocates, that is, the capabilities approach, is that it shows that non-human animals are entitled to a wide range of capabilities in their natural lives, appropriate to the dignity of every creature, and that their rights are based on justice (Bilchitz 2009: 63). Extending the reach of justice, which includes non-human animals, is possible in Nussbaum's theoretical framework given the basis for attributing the moral status she emphasizes. Contrary to Kant, who finds this basis in rationality, and therefore cannot include non-rational beings in the reach of justice, Nussbaum establishes the dignity of non-human animals, and thus their protection through justice, in specific opportunities that must be provided for all members in virtue of their particular species belonging. Thus, Nussbaum does not limit the scope of justice by possessing a trait specific to the particular human species. Such, in Kant's conception, is rationality. Instead, she says that the basis of dignity, and thus of justice and the basis for attributing rights, when non-human animals are concerned, is

specific to each species. Simply put, Nussbaum does not limit the reach of justice by possessing a trait specific to the human species, such as rationality, but seeks to base dignity on the capabilities that are characteristic of each species (Nussbaum 2006a: 326).

In short, Nussbaum argues that non-human animals, as well as humans, have the right to follow the good that is *specific to them*, and the harm that prevents a being from seeking such good represents injustice. This view opposes social contract theories because they do not take non-human animals as subjects of justice, as they do not have the qualities that allow them to participate in the contract. This incapability excludes them from the domain of justice, since the social contract tradition identifies the subjects involved in the formation of the contract with those to whom the contract applies. The consequence is that Kant's theory lacks a sense of the non-human animal itself as an agent and subject, a being to whom something is owed, a being who is an end in himself. This is a disadvantage, since animals as well as humans want to develop and search for the good (Nussbaum 2006a: 337).

To protect the dignity of non-human animals, in addition to stopping the fur trade and other cruel practices, Nussbaum argues that human beings should let (or ensure appropriate surroundings for) the non-human animals practice their predatory nature.[1] (Nussbaum 2006a: 370). In order to show a case of positive respect attributed to non-human animals, she says that, perhaps zoos should provide large predators with equipment to practice their predatory capabilities, but so as not to give them the prey of animals to kill them (Nussbaum 2006a: 371). Nussbaum explains this using the example of a tiger in a zoo:

> A tiger's capability to kill small animals, defined as such, does not have intrinsic ethical value, and political principles can omit it (and even inhibit it in some cases). But a tiger's capability to exercise its predatory nature so as to avoid the pain of frustration may well have value, if the pain of frustration is considerable. Zoos have learned how to make that distinction. Noticing that they were giving predatory animals insufficient exercise for their predatory capacities, they have had to face the question of the harm done to smaller animals by allowing such capabilities to be exercised. Should they give a tiger a tender gazelle to crunch on? The Bronx Zoo has found that it can give the tiger a large ball on a rope, whose resistance and weight symbolize the gazelle. The tiger seems satisfied. Wherever predatory animals are living under direct human support and control, such solutions seem the most ethically sound. (Nussbaum 2006b: 6)

Citing the example of a tiger in a zoo, Nussbaum argues that it indicates how to meet the needs of a non-human animal in specific circumstances, so as not to violate its dignity – defined through the development of species-specific capabilities.

I find that Nussbaum makes well-founded criticisms of Kant's notion of dignity. However, before concluding that her proposal is superior in contrast to

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1 Thanks to a reviewer for this point.

the Kantian paradigm, I will discuss the sophisticated contemporary Kantian proposal of Christine Korsgaard (2018). She argues that Kant's interpretation of dignity does not prevent non-human animals from being able to be subjects of justice. Namely, as a Kantian, Korsgaard establishes that only rational beings, and, thus, in the world as it is, only humans can be moral legislators. However, there is no reason why they must limit the inclusion in the domain of justice to themselves, and see only in rationality a source of normative claims. As rational beings, humans legislate through universal laws. But, the scope of universal law may include someone who has not been able to actively participate in the creation of a system of moral legislation (Korsgaard 2018: 240).

We, humans, consider ourselves a source of legitimate normative requirements. In this way, we bring a world of normative reasons and values. However, these normative reasons and values are not limited to our rationality and autonomy. Since we are animals, there is also a natural good for us. Therefore, our animal nature is also our ultimate goal, not just our nature linked to our rationality. Even when we engage in activities that involve our rationality, we also value our animal nature because we assign it a normative value. But the moral law is universal, and, thus, we cannot limit normative value exclusively to our own animal nature. Thus, Korsgaard argues that when we consider our nature as a source of normative claims, we see that the nature of non-human animals is also a source of normative claims. To the extent that we pass laws in favour of natural goods, we are morally obligated to non-human animals. Thus, Korsgaard accepts the Kantian notion of dignity and nevertheless concludes, unlike Nussbaum, that humans have moral obligations to non-human animals, in the Kantian paradigm (Leukam 2011: 20).

Furthermore, Korsgaard includes in the normative space values that are specific for non-human animals, and, not only, universalisations of what have we identified as values. She argues for this peculiar Kantian inclusion of non-human animals in the scope of justice, through a denial of the absolutization of sources of normative claims. Namely, Koorsgaard argues that nothing can be important without it being important *to* and *for* someone - some person or animal (Korsgaard 2018: 41)**.** Given that everything that matters must be important to someone, the question of which beings are more important in an absolute sense, is, simply, not reasonable. A variety of things and beings can be important, depending on who sees them as important. All normative importance is relative – subjectively, certain things are important to us, but there is nothing that is important absolutely. For example, things that would not be important to a non-human animal, such as social status, may be important to humans. On the other hand, it will be important for a non-human animal (as a minimum of what is important to it) at least that it has enough space to spread its limbs and not live a boring life doomed to just consume food that is being brought to them. We demonstrate our inability to empathize with other beings by claiming that animals do not care about their lives as much as we do. In order to avoid this defect, we must recognize that non-human animals are sources of values, and, precisely, of specific values (Martinić 2020: 56).

Through the denial of the absolutization of the sources of value, Korsgaard refuses a hierarchy of the importance of beings, as well. By this, Korsgaard does not mean that non-human animals are as important as humans, but that such a comparison is simply incoherent. Judgments about the comparative importance of humans and non-human animals make no sense if everything that matters is important to someone – human or non-human animals (Martinić 2020: 57). In this way, Korsgaard rebuts the denial of rights to animals.

Despite the fact that Korsgaard provides an improved version of Kantian theory, it is insufficient to address Nussbaum's criticism of the Kantian paradigm. The difficulty is that Korsgaard's version of Kant's interpretation of the notion of dignity does not recognize non-human animals as the primary subjects of justice. Instead, they are included in the scope of justice, only because humans recognize a moral obligation to them based on their own recognition of the value of vitality. Here we see the problem of a constructivist foundation of values and normative claims. That is to say, as a Kantian, Korsgaard is not a moral realist, in the sense that she does not endorse the idea that values and normative claims are objective, in the sense that they have an existence that is independent of some subjects that discovered them. Thus, we need to identify some subjects that discovered values and normative claims. Such subjects must be, in some sense, qualified, in virtue of their capacities. The obvious candidates for this role are human beings. To be sure, Korsgaard avoids the criticism that Nussbaum directs to the social contract tradition, that those subjects that construct justice, are the only ones that are beneficiaries of justice. She, also, remarks the variety of normative sources, and that non-human animals are among such sources. But human beings establish what has value for non-human animals. In general, Korsgaard's moral legislators extend justice to other beings, and are careful about what is valuable for them. Still, their role is crucial, and this opens the door to the possibility that all normative work will be strongly influenced by the legislators' perspective. The problem with Korsgaard proposal is that, by basing values and normative claims from a primarily human perspective, we block the possibility of a fair consideration of non-human animal normative claims.[2]

1.A. Undefined Notion of Dignity in Non-human Animals

In the previous part, I have shown that the Kantian paradigm, even in the sophisticated contemporary version of Korsgaard is not able to address Nussbaum's challenge. In other words, non-human-animals are not adequately included as subjects in the scope of justice. Their inclusion derives from the moral legislation of human beings. However, in my view, Nussbaum's appeal

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2   A similar argument about the acceptability of a certain perspective, having in mind those properties that are evaluated in central cases in accepted moral practices, can also be found in the article *Morally Relevant Features and Experimentation on Animals* (Baccarini 2017: 33–45).

to dignity is not sufficiently efficacious for the inclusion in the scope of justice of non-human animals that she intends to obtain.

The notion of dignity plays a major role in Nussbaum's approach, but it seems insufficiently defined. Namely, based on her texts, we cannot say with certainty how exactly, in the full sense, humans could determine what dignity is for a non-human animal. As Nussbaum herself sees, non-human animals will not be directly involved in shaping political principles, so there is a great danger that a way of living would be imposed on them, such that they would not themselves opt for it. The danger is present, as our assessment of the dignity of the lives of non-human animals is difficult for two reasons. Firstly, because we evaluate the life of a being that is largely different from our own, and, secondly, because most non-human animals cannot be expected to give up or suppress undesirable instincts simply because they do not attain the ethical level (Nussbaum 2006a: 352).

The main problem with interpreting the dignity of non-human animals is that the recommendations on how to treat them are derived from the basic list of capabilities that Nussbaum has elaborated in relation to humans. Consequently, the list of capabilities reflects a human perspective. This can represent the basis to reflect on more specific issues for the coexistence of non-human and human animals, such as how much light they need, how much food and what conditions are needed for the life of a non-human animal, under human care, to be considered dignified (Nussbaum 2006a: 352). However, clearly defined answers are missing and Nussbaum does not indicate how to look for them.

The problem with identifying dignity in non-human animals is that they do not have the equivalent of certain capabilities that humans have. The tiger example arouses the question of why the capability to kill small animals has no intrinsic ethical value and does not represent the dignity of the tiger that we need to acknowledge (Wissenburg 2011: 398). Consequently, it is not clear that the ball on the rope is a genuine substitute for the gazelle, in the sense that it can genuinely satisfy the tiger's capability for hunting. In general, in the cases of most non-human animals under human control we have arbitrary representations of the selection of capacities created by humans to meet human needs, i.e., replicating man-made habitats and systematically modified accordingly and drawing attention to their responsibilities to the natural world (Momand 2016: 227).

Thus, Nussbaum's position has the same shortcoming as that of Korsgaard. In both cases, the notions of dignity rely on humans who should give value to non-human animals in the context of justice. Therefore, I believe that her interpretation does not represent a solution to the problem of the defining dignity of non-human animals as subjects of justice. The reason why Nussbaum's proposal is not fully satisfactory is similar to that present in Korsgaard case, although in a different context. Like Korsgaard, Nussbaum does not offer a realistic (in the sense described above) foundation of values and normative claims. This is essential for her theory, since she want to situate her approach in a political-liberal context. In such a context, values and normative claims are

established because qualified beings can accept them as freestanding in relation to engrained/deep metaphysical and doctrinal foundations. Still, some agents play the role of those who count in the identification of values and normative claims. Again, here, humans are privileged. This is the cause of the limits of the approach, that is not entirely satisfactory for Nussbaum's goal of parietical inclusion of animals' dignity in considerations of justice.

We can, further, see that Nussbaum's approach is not entirely satisfactory for the protection of animals in her discussion of cruel practices in the treatment of non-human animals. This discussion shows that her proposal does not confirm her claim that the capabilities approach is founded on species-specific capabilities, i.e. that the realization of non-human animal goods is derived from their (non-human) specific needs rather than human expansion. I will explain the problem in the next section of the paper.

1.B. Cruel Practices in the Treatment of Non-human Animals and the Capabilities Approach

To clarify the consequences of the insufficiently strong foundation of non-human animals' status in the context of justice in Nussbaum's theory, I show her attitude toward cruel treatment of non-humans.

Namely, Nussbaum claims that humans are respectful of important values present in the lives of non-human animals when they treat them in accordance with the capabilities approach (when they care for them, show interest in them and pay attention to their needs and feelings). Such respect expresses the idea that non-human animals' individual lives are intrinsically valuable. In fact, Nussbaum does not explicate this idea coherently, since she says that we should be able to experiment on non-human animals and that we should continue to kill and eat them. (Schinkel 2008: 51). To explain her position, Nussbaum states that the world we live in contains lasting and often tragic conflicts between human and animal welfare. Some mistreatment of animals can be eliminated without serious loss to human well-being: such is the case with the use of animals for fur and the brutal and limited treatment of animals used for food (Nussbaum 2006a: 402). However, the view expressed by Nussbaum is that we do not necessarily need to condemn the practices of using and killing non-human animals for food absolutely.

I believe, however, that this is not a consistent solution within her theory. Namely, these practices cannot be consistently allowed within the framework of Nussbaum's capabilities approach, which implies a thorough respect for the dignity of non-human animals. As noted earlier in the paper, Nussbaum's capabilities approach implies that no creature is used as a means to achieve the goals of others or society as a whole (Schinkel 2008: 60-61).

Nussbaum's position is evident in the following quote:

> Killing for luxury items such as fur falls in this category, and should be banned. So, too, should all cruel practices and painful killings in the process of raising

animals for food. On the other hand, intelligently respectful paternalism supports euthanasia for elderly (and younger) animals in irreversible pain. (...) It seems wise to focus initially on banning all forms of cruelty to living animals and then moving gradually toward a consensus against killing at least the more complexly sentient animals for food. (Nussbaum 2006: 393)

Given that, in Nussbaum's view, non-human animals have an interest in their continued existence; it is not clear why their premature death could be justified at all. It is in their interest to continue to exist, and thus, premature death harms them (Pepper 2017: 129). In addition, the quote shows that Nussbaum describes the more complexly sentient as those entitled to higher respect for dignity (in terms of the urgency of their protection, in the case of cruel practices). It is unclear why this should be the case, or why an animal's dignity would be worthy of higher or more urgent human respect in the treatment of cruel practices if the capabilities approach argues every being should "flourish" as it is, given the species to which it belongs.

Some of the policy recommendations expressed by Nussbaum are not well founded from the point of view of coincidence with empirical facts. Namely, in favour of certain instrumental behaviours towards non-human animals, Nussbaum states that banning the use of animals for food is problematic because it is not known what impact a complete switch to vegetarian protein sources would have on the world's environment or to what extent such a diet could be compatible with the health of all the world's children (Nussbaum 2006a: 402). This viewpoint could be quickly dismissed because the impacts of the environment and plant nutrition are nowadays very well researched. According to research, meat is not necessary for health, especially not in the western parts of the world, where the choice of a number of plant-based, vegan and vegetarian products is increasing and becoming more accessible. Moreover, one study suggests that factors associated with meat proteins may increase morbidity and mortality of coronary heart disease (Kelemen 2005).

Furthermore, authors from Oxford University investigated what the environmental consequences would be if there was a universal transition to veganism. It is predicted that the lower the share of food of animal origin in our diet, the greater the health benefits and the benefits of climate change. Moreover, the transition to a plant-based diet, in line with dietary guidelines, is estimated to reduce global mortality by 6–10% and food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 29–70% compared to the 2050 reference scenario. In addition, research found that the monetized value of health improvements would be comparable to or greater than the value of environmental benefits, and the authors estimated the overall economic benefits of improving nutrition to be $1-31 trillion, equivalent to 0.4-13% of global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2050 (Springmann et al. 2016; Martinić 2020: 54)we couple for the first time, to our knowledge, a region-specific global health model based on dietary and weight-related risk factors with emissions accounting and economic valuation modules to quantify the linked health and environmental consequences of

dietary changes. We find that the impacts of dietary changes toward less meat and more plant-based diets vary greatly among regions. The largest absolute environmental and health benefits result from diet shifts in developing countries whereas Western high-income and middle-income countries gain most in per capita terms. Transitioning toward more plant-based diets that are in line with standard dietary guidelines could reduce global mortality by 6–10% and food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 29–70% compared with a reference scenario in 2050. We find that the monetized value of the improvements in health would be comparable with, or exceed, the value of the environmental benefits although the exact valuation method used considerably affects the estimated amounts. Overall, we estimate the economic benefits of improving diets to be 1–31 trillion US dollars, which is equivalent to 0.4–13% of global gross domestic product (GDP.

Also, a recent study in the journal Science, which included data on nearly 40,000 farms in 119 countries, confirms the positive effect of a plant-based or vegan diet on the environment. The results reveal that meat and dairy production is responsible for 60 percent of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, while the products themselves provide only 18 percent of calories and 37 percent of protein levels worldwide. The researchers examined a total of 40 agricultural products covering 90 percent of all food eaten and analysed how each of them affected the environment by analysing climate change emissions, water pollution and air pollution (Poore, Nemecek 2018).

In addition, the amount of water required for the production of protein by industrial animal production including that directly consumed by animals and approximately 1000 tons of water needed to grow 1 ton of cereals for feeding the animals (Walker et al. 2005)diabetes mellitus and some cancers. Affluent citizens in middle- and low-income countries are adopting similar high-meat diets and experiencing increased rates of these same chronic diseases. The industrial agricultural system, now the predominant form of agriculture in the USA and increasingly world-wide, has consequences for public health owing to its extensive use of fertilisers and pesticides, unsustainable use of resources and environmental pollution. In industrial animal production there are public health concerns surrounding feed formulations that include animal tissues, arsenic and antibiotics as well as occupational health risks and risks for nearby communities. It is of paramount importance for public health professionals to become aware of and involved in how our food is produced.","container-title":"Public Health Nutrition","DOI":"10.1079/PHN2005727","ISSN":"1368-9800, 1475-2727","issue":"4","journalAbbreviation":"Public Health Nutr.","language":"en","page":"348-356","source":"DOI.org (Crossref. To paraphrase Singer - as long as we support the meat industry and industrial breeders, we support cruelty that is only recognized when profitability falls (Singer 1998: 114).

I have shown some problems linked to Nussbaum's proposal that are present due to her wrong consideration of empirical facts. However, this dispute is not part of my central argument. My intention is primarily to show that

her approach is, in general, insufficiently sensitive to the status of non-human animals in a discussion about justice, because they have, in principle, a lower-level status. Namely, imagine that she is correct in indicating our (humans) need for animal meat for food (although I have shown reasons to think that she is not). By justifying, from the standpoint of justice, our legitimacy in using it, she clearly privileges our moral status. This is because, it is permissible, for us, to treat some non-human animals as mere means. In this way, she, clearly, favours our higher status from the point of view of justice. If we start from Nussbaum's idea of equal dignity of all species, accepting a diet that includes meat leads to two contradictions. The first is manifested by one species of non-human animals being perceived as pets while others being considered food. Non-human animals bred and killed for food are unfortunately often treated as machine parts rather than creatures that deserve to flourish and be dignified (Momand 2016: 235). The first contradiction within the idea of equal dignity of all species is, thus, represented by our uneven treatment of various species. The second contradiction is represented by our self-attribution of the status of privileged beings who are allowed to treat members of other species like mere means, as well as to make such distinctions among other species, to establish which species can be treated like mere means, and in which cases.

It is contradictory to claim that we must stop blood sports like bullfighting, bait and dog fighting, and allow other cruel practices like raising animals for food thus directly reducing them as an exclusive means to human ends. Thus, this is particularly problematic because Nussbaum's original claim is that non-human animals become subjects of justice and, as such, represent an end in themselves, and yet seem to remain instruments for human needs (Pepper 2017: 132).

In this section, I have shown that Nussbaum does not provide us with a coherent picture of the status of non-human animals in a theory of justice. Part of the defect is represented by the assumption of wrong empirical premises. But part of the discussion, that represents my central concern, reflects Nussbaum's foundation of justice. As I have already shown, this foundation is political liberal, and is not based on the direct appeal to morally relevant matters of fact. It is based on judgments that can be shared independently of the variations in metaphysical, and other divisive beliefs. This, for reasons shown above, implies that positioning non-human animals in the theory of justice is not entirely based on their characteristics, but improperly reflects the human perspective. In this section, I have shown the consequence represented by contradictory evaluative judgments.

Maybe such contradictory consequences, and mistreatment of non-human animals, could be avoided by a proper employment of sympathetic imagination. However, I do not think that Nussbaum gives us that the appeal to such resource leads to satisfactory results. In the continuation of the paper, I will direct the critique towards Nussbaum's notion of sympathetic imagination.

2. Sympathetic Imagination

Nussbaum argues that only in our own imagination can we experience someone else's inner life. Given this, she believes we should apply our imagination, as Rawls did with the idea of the original position.[3] She calls it sympathetic imagination and compares it to a complex holistic method to expand and refine our moral judgments in the realm of non-humans (Nussbaum 2006a: 354).

Namely, Nussbaum claims that by imagining in this way, we are informed about the asymmetries of power that we would have missed if we had not explored the structure of life of other subjects and relationships in more detail. Imagining animal life makes them real in the primary sense. That is, in this way, we view them as potential subjects of justice. By using sympathetic imagination, Nussbaum argues, we expand and refine our moral judgments, and then, by using theoretical insights into dignity, we correct, refine, and expand both judgments and imaginations (Nussbaum 2006a: 355). I believe that this approach of sympathetic imagination brings about an important problem.

The problem of sympathetic imagination concerns that imagining can be paternalistic and potentially used for the benefit of humans, and to the detriment of non-human animals. Nussbaum acknowledges this when she claims that the sympathetic imagination is easily corrupted by our desire to protect our own comfort by using other animals as a means of satisfaction.

Although, she is confident in our ability to move beyond our individual biases and create a list of capabilities for a dignified life (Momand 2016: 223), as we have seen in the paper, this confidence is not well supported by evidence, because humans are often contradictory in their treatment of non-human animals, as well as in attributing to themselves a privileged status. This is because their attempts to employ sympathetic imagination are corrupted by human specific *cognitive* capabilities as value conferring (Fulfer 2013: 26–27).

Of course, we should also consider human-centred assumptions. But by emphasizing the role of the thinking capability we value *in humans* as our principal resource for establishing conditions for understanding justice, Nussbaum's theory neglects her original claim about fairness and what we consider a crucial aspect of justice: relationships. In order to accomplish its role satisfactorily, sympathetic imagination would have to satisfactorily put and answer to questions such as "How do our actions affect the well-being of others?" "Does this entity have access to the capabilities it requires to fully thrive in accordance with the species' norm?". Instead, in Nussbaum's approach, it primarily favours capabilities that only humans can achieve (Fulfer 2013: 27).

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3   The original position is a thought experiment in which justice is achieved by assuming that rational workers are behind *the veil of ignorance.* That is, they do not know what their gender, race, nationality are, or what their social and financial status will be (See Rawls (2003), *A Theory of Justice*).

Conclusion

The relevant conclusions of the paper are, first, that Nussbaum's arguments are successful in showing that the social contract, and, specifically, the Kantian tradition, do not resolve satisfactorily the question of inclusion of animals in a theory of justice, and, second, that her positive proposal is not entirely satisfactory for this end, either. I have shown the difficulties in Nussbaum's proposal, by highlighting the problematic interpretation of the concepts of dignity and sympathetic imagination in her capabilities approach. Nussbaum's proposal aspires to find an appropriate consideration of non-human animals in a theory of justice, but it does not yet appear to be a solution, because, despite claims that her current theory see non-human animals as an end in itself, non-human animals remain a means to human needs and ends in many cases. Nussbaum is successful in criticising the social contract tradition. However, additional refinements are needed for perfecting her paradigm in accordance with the goals that she has herself attributed to a proper theory of justice.[4]

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Iva Martinić

Dostojanstvo ne-ljudskih životinja i saosećajno zamišljanje: Marta Nusbaum i analiza postupanja prema ne-ljudskim životinjama

Sažetak

U ovom radu analiziram stav Marthe Nusbaum o tome kako bismo se trebali odnositi prema ne-ljudskim životinjama, što ona povezuje sa svojim pristupom sposobnosti. Ovaj pristup nudi koncepciju pravde, ili, kako to Nusbaum navodi, zbirku temeljnih prava koja specifikuju neke od nužnih elemenata za pravedno društvo. Osim pravde za ljudska bića, ovaj pristup uključuje i prava životinja. Osnovu za raspravu čine dva elementa koji opravdavaju tvrdnju da svaka životinja zaslužuje živeti životom koji je karakterističan za pripadnika svoje vrste. Prvi element je dostojanstvo, a drugi je saosećajno zamišljanje. Namjera Nusbauminog pristupa je predstavljati poboljšanje tradicije društvenog ugovora (posebno u Rolsovoj verziji), nudeći sveobuhvatniju teoriju pravde. Prema njenom mišljenju, pristup sposobnosti,

suprotno teorijama društvenog ugovora, ima principijelne resurse za uključivanje, između ostalog, ne-ljudskih životinja u domenu pravde. Međutim, ne mislim da ona u potpunosti postiže ovaj cilj. Doprinos mog rada sastoji se u prikazu problema koje opažam u Nusbauminoj teoriji. Ti se problemi odnose na nedovoljnu definisanost temeljnih pojmova i, pre svega, na činjenicu da ne-ljudske životinje, u kontekstu Nusbaumine teorije, u različitim situacijama i dalje ostaju samo sredstvo služenja ljudskim potrebama. Posledica je da ne-ljudske životinje ipak nisu uključene u domen pravde, što je Nusbaumina temeljna ambicija.

Ključne reči: dostojanstvo, pravednost, pristup sposobnosti, ne-ljudske životinje, Marta Nusbaum, Christine Korsgard, saosećajno zamišljanje

Jelena Pavličić, Marija Petrović and Milica Smajević Roljić

THE RELEVANCE OF PHILOSOPHY IN TIMES OF THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS[1]

ABSTRACT
The current coronavirus pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) has presented many scientific disciplines, including philosophy, with various theoretical and practical challenges. In this paper, we deal with three philosophical issues related to the pandemic and specific approaches to them. The first part of the article is dedicated to the analysis of the term "expert," whose significance was highlighted at the outbreak of the pandemic. By examining Plato's ancient and Goldman's modern understanding of this concept, we will try to emphasize the importance of expert opinion in crisis circumstances. In the second part of the paper, we will deal with the issue of public mistrust of scientific authorities as well as the problem of the flourishing of so-called conspiracy theories. Goldenberg's and Cassam's approach to this topic will help us see where the source of these problems might lie and what potentially harmful consequences they can produce. In the third part of the text, we list some of the main moral dilemmas we have faced since the beginning of the pandemic. Special attention is paid to Kant's moral philosophy in which we find advice on how an individual should act in times of crisis.

The emergence of the coronavirus pandemic (SARS-CoV-2) has led to profound changes both in everyday life and in scientific research trends. Finding the most acceptable and effective ways to combat its spread is a task that has quickly

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become a priority of governments and experts around the world. However, the fact that, even at the height of the pandemic, there was still not enough reliable data on issues such as the prevalence of the virus in the entire population, predictions on when the pandemic will end, the effectiveness of various health measures (e.g. different measures adopted by different countries at different times under similar circumstances), and so forth, has contributed to an overall atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty. Given the long-run perspective, the wider debates in the field of public health have been joined by debates that analyze other aspects of the ongoing crisis, such as epistemological, ethical, social, and economic issues. Their aim is to re-examine whether, and in what way, it is possible to establish if the proposed measures bring more benefits than harm to society in the long run. That is, to what extent it is possible to achieve the desired public health results without jeopardizing education, economic growth and equality, democracy, social cohesion, and so forth. In this context, many solutions initially believed to be optimal have become subjects of discussions (e.g. "How has the temporary shutdown of schools and universities affected the pandemic and the way in which it is evolving, and how did it impact the development of skills which are typically attributed to traditional forms of schooling?"; "Have social and economic losses overshadowed the gains in terms of health outcomes?").

   In this paper, we will show that the pandemic highlights some questions that have been the subject of philosophical debates throughout the history of philosophy, but at the same time opens new questions that require answers. The first chapter of this paper is dedicated to the analysis of the term "expert" and the examination of the role of experts in the process of acquiring knowledge. Although interest in this topic is not new in philosophy, the pandemic era emphasized the importance of expert knowledge, especially in the field of medicine. To determine when we can say that someone is an expert in a certain field, we will first focus on Plato's philosophy, especially the Socratic notion of experts in Plato's early dialogues. After that, we will analyze Goldman's contemporary considerations of this issue. The second part of this paper examines the problem of mistrust of science and scientific authorities, which became an important topic with the beginning of mass vaccination and growing confidence in so-called "conspiracy theories". We will pay special attention to Maya Goldenberg's and Quassim Cassam's researchers, who have been dealing with this topic for several years. The last chapter of this paper tackles the ethical aspect of the current pandemic, which has faced many individuals with challenges related to making morally right decisions. We will list only some of the current moral dilemmas, and then see how the analysis of Kant's moral philosophy can help us to understand and solve them.

1. How Can We Recognize Who the Experts Are?

For the part of the general public that is willing to contribute to ending the pandemic, the above-mentioned debates raise many different issues, such as:

(a) What are the reasons to determine if an argument is reliable and if the advice given based on that argument is useful?; (b) How can well-grounded and reliable sources of information be distinguished from those that are not?; (c) Do decisions that are justified in the light of expert knowledge and expert judgment deserve unconditional acceptance of the general public, or are there cases when skepticism about their probity or quality is justified?; (d) Under what circumstances can public rejection and the lack of trust in scientific claims be expected?; (e) How can we criticize experts' recommendations constructively and transparently without undermining people's trust in the scientific community?; etc. The ability to recognize and adequately use scientific information is of great importance not only in the current crisis but also as a preparation for timely and efficient dealing with future challenges.

How can we know if someone claiming to be an expert actually is one? In most cases, when we consult an expert, we seek their help or advice because we know that we do not know what we suppose that they do know. For example, if we want to determine if a seamstress next door is good at their job, i.e. if they are an expert in their field, we could ask around and see if people are pleased with their services, we could ask for their credentials and check where they had learned to sew, or we could simply try out their services. That way we will know if they took our measurements correctly, if the clothes they made for us fit, if they made what we asked for, and wearing it will show us if it's made with quality, is it durable or not, and so forth. In some cases, we can know if someone is an expert by relying on our own resources, without risking too much. But most cases are not like this. We usually seek experts to help us with important things in life, where there is little or no room for mistakes, and trusting a layperson could come with a great cost. The asymmetric epistemic relation (Hardy 2010: 7) between experts and laypeople and the importance of trusting experts leaves us with very important questions: if we, as laypersons, don't know what we suppose an expert knows, how can we assess the truth of their statements?; if we do not know the truth of an expert's statements, what should be the basis for our reliance on those statements? To answer these questions, it is first necessary to specify what we mean by the term "expert", i.e. to determine who is entitled to speak from the position of expert and to determine their role in the production and distribution of knowledge. It is important to point out that the interest in experts is not a novelty in philosophy. Debates about what it means to be an expert and how one can achieve expertise can be dated back to ancient times.

The issue of expertise (τέχνη) is often discussed in Plato's dialogues and is an important part of his theory of the eudaimon life, especially in his early dialogues where virtue is regarded as a kind of expertise or a craft "whose goal is the production of a good life" (Brickhouse, Smith 1994: 6). The above-mentioned question is asked by Socrates in the dialogue *Charmides* when discussing how it is possible to distinguish someone who only pretends to be a doctor from someone who actually is one: "If the wise man or any other man wants to distinguish the true physician from the false, how will he proceed?" (*Charmides*

170e). Although Socrates does not give us a clear definition of what expertise is, Brickhouse and Smith gathered up a list of requirements it needs to meet. It needs to be rational, i.e. guided by knowledge; teachable, meaning that it needs to be something one can learn and pass to others; explicable, i.e. an expert should be able to give an account of what they are an expert at; inerrant, meaning that an expert does not make mistakes in their work or judgment about the subject they are expert at; unique, meaning that the expert's abilities are unique to them and other experts in the field, it has to have a distinct subject matter so it can be distinguished from any other expertises; finally, the expert has to possess knowledge or wisdom i.e. they have to be wise when it comes to their area of expertise (Brickhouse, Smith 1994: 6–7).

In his paper *Seeking the Truth and Taking Care for Common Goods – Plato on Expertise and Recognizing Experts,* Jörg Hardy also gives a list of qualities an expert should possess, found in various Plato's dialogues. According to this list, Plato's Socrates states that an expert: "(a) is always seeking the truth – trying to be "free from error" (*Charmides* 171d–172a; cf. *Theaetetus* 170a–179b), (b) makes caring for common goods her priority in practicing her expertise (*Gorgias* 464e–465a, 513d–e; *Alcibiades I* 126a–c), is able (c) to produce success in practicing her expertise (*Charmides* 171d–172a; *Euthydemus* 280a), (d) has a holistic understanding of a given subject matter S, which enables her (e) to give an account of the particular things that belong to S (*Gorgias* 464e–465a, *Phaedrus* 270a–272b, cf. *Theaetetus* 201c–d in conjunction with 145d–e, 147c–148e), and (f) to make reliable prognostic statements about the particular things that belong to S (*Theaetetus* 178b–e); an expert is also able (g) to provide evidence of her expertise (*Laches* 185a–186e; *Gorgias* 514d–e), (h) to teach her knowledge (*Laches* 185a–186c; *Meno* 87c; *Gorgias* 514a–515a; *Alcibiades I* 188c–d), (i) to recognize another expert in the same domain (*Ion* 531d); and finally an expert (j) agrees with other experts on the facts of her expertise (*Meno* 95b; *AlcibiadesI* 111b–d)" (Hardy 2010: 10–11).

Having all this in mind, he puts the Socratic definition of an expert as: "A person is an expert in a given domain if and only if she is always seeking the truth, makes caring for common goods her priority in practicing her expertise, is able to produce success in practicing her expertise, and has a holistic understanding of a given subject matter" (Hardy 2010: 11). More than Brickhouse and Smith, Hardy emphasizes the moral aspect of expertise. He points out that, for Socrates, an expert is not just a person who possesses technical knowledge of a certain field. In order to be considered an expert, one must not only have the knowledge but also use that knowledge in accordance with what is the common good.

One might notice that this does not answer the "*epistemological* question of who is an expert" because for Plato "epistemic authority is *moral* authority too" (Hardy 210: 11). From today's perspective, one could be considered an expert solely based on their knowledge level, and questioning their intentions would fall into ethical considerations. Plato may not give us *epistemologically* satisfactory answers to the questions we have, but practical advice can be drawn

from his dialogues – if we are not sure whether someone is an expert or not, we should ask someone we consider wise or someone who we presume knows more than we do, just as Lysimachus and Melesias asked for Socrates' help in deciding if they should trust Nicias or Laches (*Laches* 184d–185a). These considerations point to the extremely complex task of defining and identifying objective epistemic authority and an important "Socratic contribution to the prehistory of modern social epistemology" (Hardy 2010: 19).

Contemporary considerations of these issues can be found in Alvin Goldman's writing. When it comes to the epistemology of expertise, he seeks to point out the characteristic errors that occur when assessing expertise, such as identifying it with the reputation which one enjoys (Goldman 2018: 3–10; Goldman 2001: 85–110). Goldman warns that the only certain thing we can agree on is that the epistemic authority of the *expert* must be based on the *expert's knowledge*[2] reflected in their professional history or "track record" which, to an extent, laypersons or novices may be familiar with (Goldman 2018: 3). However, the problem of assessment of epistemic authority (or, in Goldman's words of finding a passable track record and relevant information necessary to form an adequate picture) is the subject of enduring and undergoing rethinking (see: Strevens 2010; Hardoš 2018; Goldenberg 2021; et al.).

The question "Who are the epistemic subjects on whose claims we should be relying on?"[3] is not only philosophically interesting but also has practical value, since it is closely related to the issue of public confidence in science and scientific recommendation—an issue that nowadays is of the greatest importance in the field of health care and public health (see: Brean 2020). In this sense, philosophical debates that have over the past decade seriously dealt with the problem of undermined trust in the claims of experts (which is manifested, among other things, in the reluctance on part of the public to undergo the vaccination, i.e. "vaccine hesitancy") can be of crucial importance for understanding the resistance that the recommendations of the scientific community are facing even in this crisis.

2. The Problem of Public (Mis)Trust of Scientific Authorities

Previous considerations bring us to one of the most relevant topics related to the pandemic, the issue of immunization. Questions that have over the last several years been the focus of Maya J. Goldenberg's philosophical studies, such as: Why does skepticism concerning vaccine effectiveness and safety exist and how should it be addressed? (Goldenberg 2016: 561); How and to what extent do "vaccine hesitancy" considerations bring forward new insights about public trust in science and scientific recommendations? (Goldenberg 2021) – are of central importance for our understanding of the various degrees of

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2   For more on the terms "expert" and "expert knowledge" see Pierson 1994: 398–405 and Scholz 2009: 187–205.
3   See more in Hoffmann 2012: 299–313.

individuals' readiness to engage in socially beneficial behavior necessary to defeat the pandemic.

The orthodox approach to the anti-vaccine problem takes the public's alleged poor understanding of and unfamiliarity with scientific knowledge to be a substantial part of the problem and, in general, of public resistance to scientific recommendations. In this regard, campaigns related to public health awareness have been predominantly designed under the presupposition that vaccine anxiety could be alleviated through education. Although over the last few decades many scholars in different fields (historians, sociologists, etc.) demonstrated its pitfalls and advocated for moving health strategies away from the so-called "knowledge deficit model", in *Vaccine Hesitancy: Public Trust, Expertise, and the War on Science*, Goldenberg indicates that this model has still not been superseded in practice (Goldenberg 2021: 40). Taking into account years of disciplinarily diverse research on the anti-vaccination movement, Goldenberg holds that, contrary to popular belief, "vaccine hesitancy and refusal sentiment" is not a sign of public ignorance but a symptom of faltering trust in scientific practice. According to her view, significant gains in terms of science trustworthiness and, accordingly, in improving the rate of vaccination, can be reached by recognizing the main sources of public mistrust of science. Discussions on the concept of trust and those concerning the appropriate relationship between trust and sciences received much coverage within the philosophy of science, epistemology, and social epistemology of science (see: Hardwig 1985, 1991; Hawley 2012; De Melo-Martin, Intemann 2018; et al.). The necessity of exploring the complex reasons for resistance to important policies which are firmly grounded in science is emphasized by philosopher Katherine Furman in her recent paper On *Trusting Neighbors More Than Experts: An Ebola Case Study* (2020). Viewed from the perspective of the COVID-19 pandemic, the uncovering and understanding of the aforementioned reasons are of great significance since many of the concerns that the pandemic brought to light are just a reflection of problems that were already present. No doubt, among them is the problem of conspiracy theories which calls for a richer understanding of their persistence, seductiveness, and impending danger (Van der Linden 2015; Van Prooijen, Douglas 2017).

Another side of the problem of the potential slowdown in adhering to and implementing the specialists' recommendations that aim to get the pandemic under control, is related to the widespread prevalence of conspiracy theories about the origin of the pandemic and its development, as well as the safety and efficacy of an immunization program (Jerit, et al. 2020; Gertz 2020; et al.). As a result of the above, it shouldn't come as a surprise that a great deal of papers has already been produced that focus on some of the following questions (see: Bolsen et al. 2020; Gray Ellis 2020, et al.): Why is the pandemic accelerating the emergence of conspiracy theories? How should they be understood? On what basis does a section of the public assess explanations based on such theories as very attractive? Does favoring conspiracy theories have epistemic value? How do these theories relate to the truth? Do their creators

really believe in them? How can we get rid of them and what would happen if they received political support? The prevailing opinion among the authors dealing with these issues is consistent with that advocated by epistemologist Quassim Cassam. He believes that conspiracy theories should be understood exclusively as a form of political propaganda, where *propaganda* refers to any form of speech, written or oral, that pretends to influence a person's beliefs by manipulating their emotions (Cassam 2019: 56). Cassam points out that one of the clear indicators of problems in intellectual and political life is that the majority of people accept conspiracy theories, whose harmfulness is mostly reflected in its disastrous consequences, i.e. in the direct threat to human life and health. Spreading these theories is dangerous and that is why scientists cannot afford to ignore them but must work to refute them. What presents a major obstacle in the process of suppressing conspiracy theories by providing grounded argumentation is the fact that conspiracy theorists reject evidence that refutes their theories (Cassam 2019: 72). If we accept Goldenberg's claim that the main source of vaccine hesitancy is not public ignorance but the eroding trust in scientific institutions, it does not come as a surprise that conspiracy theories cannot be suppressed by scientific evidence or rational explanation. The problem isn't the public's lack of knowledge or incapacity of ordinary people to understand scientific literature, but deteriorating trust in science itself. And witnessing how, *to an extent*, anti-vaccine sentiment is accompanied with endorsement and promotion of "The Big Pharma conspiracy theory", we can see how Goldenberg's set of points fit well with one that Cassam made: that it is a mistake to think of conspiracy theories primary in intellectual or epistemological rather than political terms (Cassam 2019, *Preface*).

Despite the difficulty of the task, philosophers are, in Cassam's opinion, obliged to try to find a solution to the problem we face. They should at least provide an overview of how conspiracy theories emerge, and then offer a proposal on how to most effectively stop their spread. Philosophers of science Cailin O'Connor and James Weatherall are taking a significant step in this direction. They point out that our actions are guided by our beliefs, while the latter is largely conditioned by social factors, more specifically, by who we know and with whom we are in day-to-day contact. This is just one example in a series of significant research in which philosophers, both independently and in collaboration with psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists, have taken on the task of providing deeper insights into what factors are responsible for spreading false information (O'Connor, Weatherall 2019; et al.). Given that the current pandemic has exposed the scientific community to the public eye more than ever, the work of these authors may be of importance for answering questions regarding the formation and transmission of false beliefs within the scientific community, organization and structure of scientific teams, as well as specific ways of communication between them (O'Connor, Weatherall 2019; et al.).

If we adopt Cassam's view that philosophers – primarily philosophers of science and epistemologists – are obliged to express their judgment on the

current pandemic situation, the question arises as to what extent they are and should be part of current international debates. In other words, the question is whether philosophers should offer their assessment of the arguments put forward by the medical profession and politicians. Although it may seem that the answer to this question is undoubtedly positive, immediately after the outbreak of the pandemic we did not see many public appearances by philosophers. The reasons for that can be numerous, and one of the main ones may be that philosophers today usually write and act retrospectively when analyzing past and completed events to offer criticism while participating in debates that have a direct impact on society is almost unheard of. Also, it seems that the status of philosophy has changed greatly in relation to the time of antiquity and the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when philosophers like the previously mentioned Plato or Kant were important figures of public life whose opinions were listened to and well respected.

Although they could present important and relevant arguments, especially when it comes to epidemiological models that generate predictions, philosophers of science more often decide not to be part of the so-called fast science. It seems that their restraint is the result of them not being accustomed to fast science and debates which have an immediate policy impact. Their field of research concerns problems that require long-term and highly elaborate analysis. However, even if this were to change, and if philosophers of science engaged more with fast science, some of the problems would still remain. First, for philosophers of science to have an impact on the general public, their expertise in pandemics and epidemiological models must be generally recognized. How do we get the general public to believe the predictions of a philosopher of science to the same or even greater extent as the predictions of a doctor or epidemiologist? Second, philosophers of science must publish their work on platforms and in journals that are accessible and known to a wider audience. Unfortunately, neither professional philosophical journals nor popular journals seem to be a good choice. The process of publishing in philosophical journals is often long because it is subject to double reviews, and the response from the editorial board is waited for several months or even longer, which makes it impossible for the published work to be relevant at the time of publication. Popular journals, on the other hand, are usually not interested in publishing papers on the philosophy of science because they are not in line with their editorial policy.

However, to understand the development of the pandemic and offer a critical discussion of public health policy we need further elaboration and reflections on epidemiological models. In this regard, numerous philosophers of science are perfectly capable of understanding the methodology behind epidemiological models. Not only are they trained to expose its shortcomings by carefully examining the proposed evidence but they are also able to audit and discuss the role of normative values and different biases in the development and dissemination of models of the pandemic. Having that in mind, it is important to recognize that in a decision context the path from acquired scientific evidence or that which is considered as a widely accepted scientific position,

to quality decision-making is rarely straightforward. And when we look at the question of trust in science that has been previously addressed in this chapter, this kind of scrutinization brought by philosophers in a public discussion can contribute to a better assessment of reliability, assertiveness, and credibility of relevant scientific works and communities.

3. The Ethical Dimension of the COVID-19 Pandemic

If the path from acquired scientific evidence to quality decision-making isn't straightforward, how do we make decisions in everyday life? When it comes to moral issues, since the very beginning of the pandemic, both experts and common people have had to make morally challenging decisions, with no prospect of simple solutions and outcomes. Questions such as that of the just distribution of scarce resources, including medical care, protective gear, ventilators, etc., is exactly the kind of question that during challenging times extends beyond the realm of philosophical thought experiments to the area of lived experience. How these and related challenges will be resolved depends on a multitude of factors, including the competence and integrity of the policy-makers, their capacity to appraise both current and long-term consequences, their ability and readiness to convey that information in a clear and accessible manner, etc. These challenges require several tools and diverse perspectives which philosophy is certainly capable of contributing to. Thus, for example, specifying the conditions under which a morally responsible risk communication is achievable, determining if and to what degree should we make discussions on the prevailing risks more transparent, inclusive, and democratic, might help contribute to their efficient mitigation. This is reflected in the growing number of philosophical works which aim to show that to be both effective and trustworthy, public health-related decision-making must be considered in an open and accessible manner, taking into account the most current results of scientific research as well as its ethical and democratic dimensions.[4]

Some of the other moral dilemmas that arise in the context of health risks and require philosophical reflection can be illustrated with the following questions: (a) Following which moral criteria should healthcare professionals decide who should and who should not have access to necessary healthcare, in situations with limited resources? (b) In times of crisis and uncertainty, is it justified to ask people to give up their individual rights and freedoms for the sake of the common good? (c) What principles should guide those trying to answer these questions and offer advice to policy-makers? (d) Are these principles universally binding or can they change over time? In other words, ethical, epistemological, and political issues related to medical research and healthcare practice

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4   That the legitimate policy requires not only groundedness in reliable data, but also making sure that the proposed policies are democratically accepted and, in the best-case, the result of a deliberative process which includes "political leaders, experts and all affected parties" is strongly argued in a philosophical paper written in the context of COVID-19 by Norheim et al (2021: 10–13).

are deeply intertwined. Therefore, it is necessary to offer answers that rely on different branches of philosophy. Theorists in the field of ethics, bioethics, philosophy of medicine, philosophy of biology, philosophy of science, philosophy of law, and other relevant fields can cast a critical perspective upon them and offer useful tools for finding innovative solutions, taking into account many different aspects of the considered problems so they can achieve deeper understanding and assessment of the challenges that the global situation brings.

The answer to some of the mentioned doubts can be found by examining Kant's moral philosophy. One of the main features of his ethical doctrine is the emphasis on the rational part of human nature and the explicit prohibition of putting the individual and their personal aspirations and goals in the foreground. The supreme principle of morality in Kant's ethics is derived from reason, and is therefore universal and applies without exception to all rational beings. Although its existence cannot be proved, Kant believes that it is the basis of the rational world and that awareness of it exists in every rational being endowed with will (Kant 1996a GMS 4: 403–404). Anyone who possesses "ordinary human reason" can understand what moral law is and how to act rightly. Kant also emphasizes the importance of the autonomy of human action, where he defines autonomy as "property of the will by which it is a law to itself" (Kant 1996a GMS 4: 440) and stresses the idea of self-legislation as the only possible basis of moral obligation.[5]

The supreme moral principle, which is expressed in the form of a categorical imperative, together with the test of universalization, can still serve us today in the morally challenging age of the pandemic, as a kind of guide for moral agency. If we follow Kant, before making any decision we should first ask ourselves what would happen if we all acted in a certain way, that is, would we indeed be content to live in the world that would arise in that case. If we find that we cannot will our maxim to become a universal law, then it should be rejected because "it cannot fit as a principle into a possible giving of universal law" (Kant 1996a GMS 4: 403). Otherwise, the proposed action should be accepted as moral.

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5   However, it would be wrong to conclude that Kant believed that the possession of reason and the ability to act freely and autonomously were sufficient for making morally right decisions. He emphasized the great importance of theoretical knowledge and education in general, and in his famous essay *On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory, but It Is of No Use in Practice* he claimed that "no one can pretend to be practically proficient in a science and yet scorn theory without declaring that he is an ignoramus in his field" (Kant 1996b TP 8: 276). This quote shows us that Kant considered practical agency to be closely related to theoretical knowledge. Onora O'Neill, who dealt with this topic, expressed Kant's idea in the following words: "Theory is the only available guide to practice. It can point us towards a more specific view of what we ought to do, although not to a particular act" (O'Neill 2007: 166). A more detailed treatment of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper, but it is important to point out that Kant's understanding of moral law, autonomy and freedom should not be viewed as a form of moral expertise nor does imply decision-making deprived of all external input (see: O'Neill 2007; Schneewind 2013).

To show how Kant's ethical principles can be applied to address specific concerns, we will provide a brief analysis of one problem that societies around the world have faced since the beginning of the pandemic. Namely, we will examine the problem of the shortage of basic medical and hygienic products (such as protective masks and toilet paper), which occurred due to their excessive purchase during the state of emergency. Although this problem may seem negligible compared to other, primarily medical problems we have encountered, we believe that its understanding is of great importance for the correct interpretation of human behavior in unusual conditions.

Suppose that individuals who over-purchase some of the listed supplies are guided by the following rule of conduct: "buy more than you need and make stocks in case of shortage". The maxim formulated in this way does not pass the test of universalization because we cannot will a situation that would arise if everyone adhered to it. Namely, if everyone would buy more than they need, then it would not be enough for everyone; some people would have unused supplies while others would lack basic medical and hygiene products. Such behavior is based on the irrational part of human nature (primarily on our fears), and therefore we cannot will it to be accepted as a universal rule of conduct. The problem that arises here is that people tend to take themselves as an exception when it comes to issues concerning self-preservation and survival. Kant points this out in *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (Kant 1996c: RGV 6: 95–100 and RGV 6:176). Although people are rational beings, when they feel that their survival is somehow threatened they tend to put themselves first. This behavior is caused by fear for one's future and the future of loved ones. However, only if we all buy only as much as we need, everyone can buy what they need. If each individual acted following their rational nature, excessive buying would never occur.

Although Kant did not explicitly address the topic of moral agency in the case of a pandemic, he believed that his moral principles were universal and could be useful in making decisions for any individual who follows the principles of reason. This leads us to the conclusion that, if reason was to determine our will, it would be easier to deal with at least some of the moral dilemmas we encounter and we would make the right decisions in potentially challenging situations. Similarly, Kant's moral principles can help us solve other important practical problems brought about by the pandemic era.

4. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we focused on various philosophical issues and the different ways in which philosophers can contribute to our understanding of the pandemic and guide our response to it so we can make sensible and just decisions. We saw that in addition to raising genuinely new questions, the crisis caused by SARS-CoV-2 has brought up some philosophical problems that are in normal times of lesser importance.

Although the interest in defining the term "expert" dates back to antiquity, in today's age of pandemics it has gained significant importance, mostly because the knowledge of experts can help us better understand the current crisis and its consequences. In this paper, we have not offered a final definition of this notion, but we have presented Plato's ancient and Goldman's contemporary view of this topic, which has given us very useful guidelines for a deeper understanding of this term and a basis for further research. We believe that the philosophical analysis of this concept is of great relevance since it can help us understand how to think of scientific authority in the context of decision-making, and in so doing, to explain our motivation for adherence to recommendations of scientists.

The need to understand the latter led us to the second part of the paper and a plausible idea that potential resistance to the recommendations of the scientific community during the coronavirus pandemic is just a reflection of pre-existing problems: the crisis of public trust in scientific practices and growing confidence in so-called "conspiracy theories". Hereof, we have tried briefly to illustrate the approaches taken by philosophers immediately prior to the pandemic to identify the sources of the aforementioned problems, their interdependence and potential harmful effects on society. Subsequently, we pointed out some of the significant insights philosophers of science could provide regarding the methodology of epidemiological models and their predictions of the further course of the pandemic, which are essential in the formulation and evaluation of epidemiological measures.

In the last part of this article, we presented some of the main moral dilemmas that societies, but also individuals, have been facing since the beginning of the pandemic. In the search for moral principles that could help us make morally right decisions in the challenging situations we encounter on a daily basis, we invoked the basic principles of Kant's ethics. If we follow Kant, then it is important that each individual tries to act in accordance with their rational nature, not out of fear or some other inclination. This would make dealing with moral dilemmas we encounter easier and we would be less inclined to make mistakes in potentially challenging situations.

We have shown that by addressing these problems philosophers can enhance our understanding of the epistemological, moral, and practical aspects of the pandemic, which in turn can hopefully yield to fairer and more beneficial strategies for dealing with the crisis that has largely defined our lives in the previous period.

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Relevantnost filozofije u doba korone

Apstrakt

Aktuelna pandemija virusa korona (SARS-CoV-2) suočila je brojne naučne discipline, među njima i filozofiju, sa različitim teorijskim i praktičnim izazovima. U ovom radu razmotrićemo tri filozofska pitanja povezana sa pandemijom i tri odgovarajuća pristupa njihovom rešavanju. Prvi deo rada biće posvećen analizi pojma „ekspert", čiji je značaj naglašen u vreme izbijanja pandemije. Ispitujući Platonovo antičko i Goldmanovo (Goldman) moderno shvatanje ovog pojma, pokušaćemo da istaknemo značaj stručnog mišljenja u kriznim okolnostima. U drugom delu rada bavićemo se pitanjem nepoverenja javnosti u naučne autoritete, kao i problemom ekspanzije takozvanih „teorija zavere". Goldenbergov (Goldenberg) i Kasamov (Cassam) pristup ovoj temi će nam pomoći da uočimo izvor ovih problema i potencijalno štetne posledice do kojih mogu da dovedu. U trećem delu teksta navešćemo neke od glavnih moralnih dilema sa kojima smo bili suočeni od početka pandemije. Posebna pažnja biće posvećena Kantovoj moralnoj filozofiji, koja nam može pružiti savete kako pojedinac treba da se ponaša u svakodnevnim životnim situacijama tokom krize.

Ključne reči: pandemija, pouzdanost, poverenje javnosti, pandemijska etika, eksperti, epistemički autoritet, nepoverenje u nauku, teorije zavere, brza nauka

Marko Simendić

CICERO AND HOBBES ON THE PERSON OF THE STATE

ABSTRACT
The importance of Thomas Hobbes's account of personation and representation can hardly be overstated. And his intellectual debt to one of his classical foes, Marcus Tullius Cicero, can hardly be ignored. This paper compares Hobbes's ideas on personhood of the state with Cicero's notion of persona civitatis, and attempts to describe how Hobbes reshaped Cicero's guidelines for (re)presenting legitimate authority into a prop for defending any effective authority. Hobbes absorbs Cicero's influential argument and builds on the idea of civic representation as guardianship done by role-playing, while tearing down Cicero's account's ethical foundations. In contrast to Cicero's magistrate, the social role of Hobbes's sovereign is not scripted by ethical constrains: its purpose is not to restrict license, but to present it.

Introduction

Plato's *Republic* introduced the idea of the *polis* as an enlarged man (Plato 1997: 1007–1008; 368d–369b). Endowed with a single body with different parts fulfilling their particular purposes in unison, the state as a man writ large became a prominent and widely used metaphor in Middle Ages (Kantorowicz 1997). Although individuals, both ordinary and those writ large, are also bearers of particular blends of psychological traits and social roles, Marcus Tullius Cicero was the first to relate these characteristics (*personae*) to the state by expanding the Stoic framework on personhood. His influential theory of duties from *De Officiis* emphasised the most important of them all – the magistrate's duty to "bear" the person of the state (*persona civitatis*). In the Middle Ages "*persona civitatis*" was seldom used, as "*persona*" took a different turn. "*Persona*" became an important part of the theological vocabulary in the second century, with Church Father Tertullian's account of the Trinity and in the sixth century with Boethius's influential definition of a person. However, in the thirteenth

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century Pope Innocent IV entrenched the idea of a collective person that has no soul – *persona ficta*.

Persona ficta became an important concept in early modern times, as a designator for an incorporated multitude. Authors like Philip Hunton and Henry Parker wrote about the people united in a single person and personhood, along with representation, was used by the Parliamentarian writers in 17th century England to attack the king's prerogative (Skinner 2005: 156). In response, Thomas Hobbes resorted to Cicero's definition of a person and returned to his idea of *persona civitatis*. In this paper I aim to compare Cicero's account with Hobbes's in an effort to show how it influenced Hobbes's views on personation. I will also discuss a number of Hobbes's modifications to the Ciceronian notion of *persona* and its related concepts. These changes are a part of Hobbes's effort to reshape the classical account so that it could support his arguments in favour of absolute and unitary authority. This was no easy task since Cicero's theory was geared in the direction opposite to Hobbes's and towards the account of mixed government in which those behind *persona civitatis* have a duty to take care of public affairs (*res publica*). Cicero's notion of *persona* was, thus, a part of the wider ethical framework, situated within a complex web of conceptual relationships between the notions such as *lex naturalis*, *ius*, *civitas* and *res publica*.

The importance of Cicero's account of personhood for Hobbes is indisputable. The classical author to whom Hobbes most often refers in connection to the etymology of the word *persona* is Cicero. In *Leviathan* (1651: 80) and in *De Homine* (1978a: 83) Hobbes presents us with a quote in which Cicero is suggesting that he used to "bear" or "sustain" three persons while arguing a case: his own, his adversary's and the judge's. More importantly, as somebody who was especially concerned with the proper signification of words,[1] Hobbes is explicit about the authoritative nature of Cicero's notion of *persona*. In his reply to Bramhall, Hobbes (1682: 37) backs up his etymological analysis by citing Cicero as one of the Latin authors who is "esteem'd the most skilful in their own Language".

The connection between Hobbes's and Cicero's accounts has been recognised in recent scholarship (Skinner 1999: 20; Skinner 2018). The authors who discuss Cicero in relation to Hobbes generally point out the theatrical aspects of Cicero's use of the word *persona* (Skinner 2018: 13). For example, in his influential piece that deals with Hobbes's notion of representation, Skinner (2005: 161) argues that "Cicero's immensely influential analysis centres around the term *persona*, a mask, the mask that actors wore in the ancient theatre to indicate what roles they had assumed". Although it is, indeed, very important to note that Cicero's *persona* denotes a certain kind of role, there is also something to be said about the nature of such a role – especially if it is, as I will argue, revealing of Hobbes's use of the term and his conception of the state. Hobbes's argument employs all the important elements of Cicero's

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1   On Hobbes and definitions see Stanton 2010.

account but with a radically different outcome. Hobbes takes the theoretical framework that served to constrain the rule of the sovereign and turns it upside down in an argument that supports the sovereign's absolute authority. Therefore, an account that relies on the notion of a mixed constitution and underlines a strong ethical conception of the ruler's duties becomes an argument in support of singular and absolute authority of the sovereign.

Hobbes, as I will show, separates the idea of *persona civitatis* from its ethical underpinnings. He does that by eliminating all external reference points that are required by a strong ethical conception of the duty to exercise authority in a particular way. Hobbes thus does away with the "external" notion of *res publica* by subsuming it under *civitas*, strips the distinction between *ius* and *lex* of its normative potency and reduces the requirements of *utilitas* and *salus populi* to the basic right to self-preservation. In this paper I will first give an overview of Cicero's account of personhood and *persona civitatis*. After that I will turn to examining the underlying elements of Cicero's notion of *persona civitatis* and their reconceptualization within Hobbes's argument. In its final part the focus of my argument is expanded into two opposite directions, as it deals with the two authors' notions of liberty, absolute authority and mixed government as the premises and consequences of their accounts, respectively.

Cicero on Personhood and *persona civitatis*

In *De Officiis* Cicero classifies the types of *personae* into two dichotomies.[2] The first type distinguishes between universal (*communis*) and individual *personae*. Cicero (1913: 109) points out that the former "aris[es] from the fact of our being all alike endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brute", while "[t]he other character[3] is the one that is assigned to individuals in particular". In other words, while the use of reason is a distinctively human trait, every particular human being's *persona* is comprised of a distinctive blend of physical and mental strengths and weaknesses (Wood 1988: 84). The universal *persona* defines us as rational human beings who are capable of "moral self-direction", while the individual one is comprised of our own personal characteristics which we "should retain [...] and not copy other people's" (Gill 1988: 174).

Cicero's (1913: 117) second dichotomy distinguishes between two additional kinds of *personae*: those "which some chance or some circumstance imposes" and those "which we assume by our own deliberate choice". This dichotomy applies to statuses and vocations and Cicero (1913: 117–124) discusses both in their variety by adducing a number of examples from literature and history. As Christopher Gill (1988: 174) suggests, "the third *persona* is [...] to be seen as

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2   For an account examining Cicero's classification of *personae* as a part of the wider Stoic account of personation see De Lacy 1977. Troels Engberg-Pedersen (2001) offers a more general discussion of the place of personhood in Stoic philosophy.
3   Walter Miller translates "*persona*" as "character" in the 1913 edition of *De Officiis*.

the background against which one chooses, and the fourth *persona* is [...] to be seen as the result of one's choice (at least as far as a career is concerned)". This background is one's standing, as determined by age or legal status, while his choice of career constitutes the fourth *persona*.

This leaves us with four types of *personae*: universal, individual and the two related to standing and vocation. The feature that they all share is their relative invariability: "there is nothing so essentially proper as to maintain consistency in the performance of every act and in the conception of every plan" (Cicero 1913: 129). However, for Cicero, there is one other, and distinct *persona* – and that is the status of a magistrate. When referring to vocations, statuses and other kinds of *personae*, Cicero qualifies the noun *persona* with another noun in the genitive case. For example, when discussing the duties of a judge, Cicero (1913: 311) argues that "an upright man [...] lays aside the role of a friend [*personam amici*] when he assumes that of a judge [*personam iudicis*]". Here we can see that Cicero uses the genitive case of the noun 'judge' (*iudex, iudicis*, m.) to denote the corresponding profession or role. On the other hand, when referring to the status of a magistrate, Cicero does not use the term *persona magistratus*. This public official, unlike a judge, sustains *persona civitatis*, the person of the state (Cicero 1913: 126). Cicero seems to think that there is something fundamentally different between the two offices, if a judge cannot also be said to sustain *persona civitatis*. In his oration on behalf of Aulus Cluentius, Cicero (1856: 164; 1855: 353) explains what the difference consists in: "The ministers [*minister, ministri*, m.] of the law are the magistrates; the interpreters of the law are the judges; lastly, we are all servants of the laws, for the very purpose of being able to be freemen". From this it follows that, when a magistrate is exercising his powers, in contrast to a judge, he is wearing the mask of the *civitas* and not just the vocational mask of a magistrate. This is because Cicero does not consider the status of a magistrate to be a vocation. Instead, this status is primarily a duty, as its *persona* is entrusted to its bearer. Ideally, one should never *choose* to be a magistrate in the way one might choose to be a philosopher or an orator.

Another distinctive feature of magistrate's *persona* is not only that it marks a status, but also signifies a specific relationship between its bearer and the state. In *De Officiis* Cicero (1913: 127) discusses the duties of a magistrate along with the duties of "private individuals" (*privatus, privati*, m.) and foreigners (*peregrinus*, *peregrini*, m.). All three categories are distinguished and defined by their relationship with the state: a magistrate has a duty "to uphold its honour and dignity, to enforce the law, to dispense to all their constitutional rights"; a private individual can be considered to be a good citizen if he "labours for [...] peace and honour [...] in matters pertaining to the state"; and a foreigner has a duty "not to [...] meddle in the politics of a country not his own" (Cicero 1913: 127). However, it is only a magistrate who, while enjoying his status, sustains a *persona* other than his own and exercises his authority while wearing another mask, the mask of the *civitas*. The question then becomes, what is the exact nature of the relationship between the *civitas* and a (good) magistrate?

It is important to note, before proceeding any further, that there are two possible meanings of the term *persona civitatis*. The noun in the genitive case can be used both to describe the noun adjacent to it and to denote that the latter is a *possession* of the former. That is to say, the *persona civitatis* may be both a specific kind of *persona* and a *persona* that is a property of the *civitas*. That being said, Cicero usually uses the noun in the genitive case as a descriptor. For example, the universal *persona* is qualitatively different from the individual *persona* and it is clear that Cicero does not argue that the two *personae* belong to, or that they are a part of, a certain "universality" or "individuality". However, the situation is much less clear, and the dilemma is much more politically significant, if we can also say, following Cicero, that the *persona* that the magistrate is sustaining is the one that belongs to the *civitas*. This, along with the fact that the role of a magistrate is marked as a status rather than a profession, would imply that the *civitas* exists as an independent corporate entity, separate and separable from its *persona*.

Neal Wood (1988: 132) seems to suggest something similar to this interpretation when he argues that, in contrast to the ancient Athenians, "Cicero and the Romans [...] begin to separate government from state conceptually, endowing both with a more 'collective' and abstract character". Cicero's idea of government, as Wood (1988: 133) notes, "comprises of those officials and administrators who are agents of the *civitas*, acting in its name, as distinct from the *civitas* itself". In *The Dream of Scipio* (*Somnium Scipionis*), the final chapter of *De Re Publica*, Cicero (1999a: 96) defines the *civitates* as "councils and assemblages of men associated through law".[4] This definition corresponds with thinking about the Roman state as *senatus populusque*, since it is also based on the idea that the sovereignty rests in the people united by law. The two elements, popular and legal, are also present in Cicero's (1999a: 18) definition of *res publica*: "the commonwealth is the concern of a people, but a people is not any group of men assembled in any way, but an assemblage of some size associated with one another through agreement on law [*iuris consensus*] and community of interest [*utilitas*]".[5] Therefore, Wood is right to assert that Cicero sees the *persona* of a magistrate as entrusted to him by the citizens. Comparably, in *De Officiis* Cicero (1913: 127) emphasises that the office of a magistrate "has been committed to him as a sacred trust"[6] and, as Wood (1988: 134–136) notes, this trust (*fides*) corresponds with the Roman legal concept of *tutela* or guardianship over the citizens' wellbeing.[7]

Wood, however, seems to neglect the fact that the duty of a tutor or a guardian is also to represent his ward. Although Skinner (2005: 162) rightly argues

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4   "concilia coetusque hominum iure sociati" (Cicero 1826: 475).

5   "Est igitur, inquit Africanus, res publica res populi, populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus." (Cicero 1826: 104–105)

6   "...ea fidei suae commissa" (Cicero 1913: 126).

7   For an elaborate discussion about the legal guardianship in Cicero's times, see: Roby 2000: 92–127.

that "Cicero never employs the verb *repraesentare* in any of these contexts", there is an underlying notion of representation in Cicero's idea of *persona civitatis* that is more than just a foundation for the "semantic development" of a theatrical metaphor. In the second book of *De Re Publica*, Cicero (1999a: 49) explicitly describes "a virtuous king" as "good and wise and knowledgeable about the interests and the reputation of the state, almost a tutor and manager of the commonwealth [*tutor et procurator rei publicae*]; that, in fact, is the name for whoever is the guide and helmsman of the state [*rector et gubernator civitatis*]".[8] Calling a ruler a *tutor* is perfectly in line with Wood's emphasis of *tutela* as a basis for the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Furthermore, noting that Cicero is also referring to the king as a *procurator* clears any possible doubts about the ruler's representative capacity. In *Justinian's Digest* (III. 3. 1)[9] a procurator is defined as: "one who transacts the business of another on a mandate from his principal".[10] Comparably, a ruler as a procurator manages public affairs (*rei publicae* or *rei populi*[11]) by sustaining the *persona civitatis*.

We can see now that representation is an important part of Cicero's idea of *persona civitatis*. This sheds light in its turn on a direct connection between Hobbes's and Cicero's theories. In the English *Leviathan* Hobbes (1651: 175) suggests that the main aim of "trusting" somebody with "the Soveraign Power" is "the procuration of *the safety of the people*". Furthermore, he notes that the word person is synonymous with the words "representative" and "procurator", among others (Hobbes 1651: 81). Finally, in the Latin *Leviathan* Hobbes (1668: 80) suggests that procurator's *persona* is a *persona repraesentativa*. However, the most important difference between the two notions of representation is in the fact that the Ciceronian magistrate procures *res publica* while the Hobbesian sovereign represents the people and procures their safety. This difference will be discussed at greater length in the second part of this paper.

In summary, there are at least three dimensions in which Hobbes's account of the personhood of the state matches Cicero's. Firstly, in both accounts there is a clear distinction between the abstract office of a ruler and the particular human being who occupies it. Secondly, the term *persona civitatis* signifies a relationship between the exact same three elements: the state (Hobbes's Commonwealth or Cicero's *civitas*), the government (Hobbes's sovereign or

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8   "bonus et sapiens et peritus utilitatis dignitatisque civilis, quasi tutor et procurator rei publicae; sic enim appelletur quicumque erit rector et gubernator civitatis" (Cicero 1826: 296).

9   I am here quoting from Alan Watson's (1998) edition of *The Digest of Justinian*.

10   "Procurator est qui aliena negotia mandatu domini administrat" (Digest, III. 3. 1) Apart from offering a definition of a procurator, the *Digest* sets the foundation for the legal theory of incorporation. On this point, III 4. is important as it discusses one's ability to act in the name of a corporation, Book XIV presents us with an account of persons legal liability for his representative's actions and, finally, XLVII. 22. explicitly deals with the notion of *collegium*. However, the notion of a corporate *person* developed much later, starting with Innocent IV's account from the thirteenth century.

11   For the discussion about the interchangeability of these terms see Wood 1988: 126.

Cicero's magistrates) and the public (Hobbes's subjects or Cicero's *populus*). Thirdly, this relationship is a vital part of both authors' formulas for political legitimisation, although the formulas themselves differ. Finally, the relationship is based on representation and the playing of *social* roles. As Gill (1988: 171) argues, Cicero's four-*personae* theory is formulated [...] from a highly social perspective; the individual is viewed in a social setting and judged by social norms." For Hobbes representation is equally contextualised within a society, although, *pace* Cicero, society itself is dependent on the existence of a sovereign state (Hobbes 1651: 62).

On the other hand, the fact that Cicero thinks of *persona civitatis* as a duty implies that there is an ethical framework that exists independently from *civitas* to which the magistrate has to conform if he wants to fulfil his duty. This external ethical framework is set up by a number of concepts that are also used by Hobbes. These include notions of *lex*, *ius*, *utilitas* and *res publica*. In contrast, Hobbes believes that there are no such ethical impediments to the sovereign's rule and that *persona civitatis* does not constrain the sovereign as its bearer. Instead, Hobbesian *persona civitatis* is a mask of unconstrained power that gives its bearer absolute authority. Coherence of Hobbes's argument thus demands fundamental reconstruction of Cicero's notion of *persona civitatis*. The Ciceronian version of the concept needs to be detached from its ethical roots and Hobbes does this in a way that is also revealing of his methodological approach. Hobbes keeps the notions of *civitas* and *res publica*, *utilitas* and *salus populi*, *lex* and *ius* and redefines them in a way that allows for an ethically independent notion of *persona civitatis*. To a large extent this frees the idea of *persona civitatis* from its ethical "baggage", leaving it only with a fundamental notion of self-preservation.

Hobbes's (Re)Interpretation of "persona" and Its Consequences

Although the frameworks of both authors' theories are comprised of matching elements, they fundamentally differ in their consequences. Hobbes formulated his theory in a way that would legitimise the sovereign having absolute authority. By contrast, Cicero offered an elaborate discussion of just and unjust ways of ruling and was also one of the most famous advocates of tyrannicide. In this section I will try to explain the relationship between the elements constitutive of Cicero's definition of *res publica* and Hobbes's account of *res publica* as *civitas*. This is especially important since, as I will demonstrate, one of the most important differences between Cicero's and Hobbes's notion of *persona* is that the first depends on the established ethical conception of a "good" or "virtuous" magistrate while the latter has no such (strong) ethical prerequisites. Contra Cicero's notion of a magistrate as someone who fulfils his duty by ruling in an ethically desirable way, Hobbesian sovereign is free to decide on all matters that concern the commonwealth, including any ethical questions. However, the omnipotence of Hobbes's sovereign has one major prerequisite and that is the singularity of the sovereign's will. This rules out the mixed constitution

as a desirable political system and corresponds with Hobbes's erasing the distinction between *res publica* and *civitas*.

As I have previously suggested, following Wood, Cicero's (1999a: 18) *res publica* consists of two foundational elements: an agreement on right (*iuris consensus*) and the notion of common interest (*utilitas*). It is an "assemblage of some size associated with one another through agreement on law [or right] and community of interest". Here it is important to note that *iuris consensus*, in fact, corresponds to *civitas*, which is, according to Cicero (1999a: 96): "[a council] and [assemblage] of men associated through law". Both *civitas* and *iuris consensus* concern "assemblages" of the people taken in its totality and both terms depend on *ius*. The second element of Cicero's definition of *res publica* is *utilitas*. *Utilitas* "covers any type of benefit, including material wealth, security, freedom, power, fame, virtue, happiness" (Asmis 2004: 578) and, according to Cicero's account from *De Inventione Rhetorica*, it comprises power and security (Wood 1988: 129).

The result of this combination is that the public is expected to judge whether the people behind the mask of *civitas* are running the popular affairs justly and in the direction of the optimal public *utilitas*. Therefore, the citizens are to take an active role in modelling their legal system and monitoring the work of the magistrates as the caretakers of *res publica*. The key criterion in deciding whether a magistrate is a good procurator of *res publica* and whether his rule can be considered legitimate is *utilitas*, i.e. his ability to run the country in a way that makes it secure and powerful. Power in *De Inventione* is defined as the extension of security or security brought to a higher level:

> [T]here are some things in the republic which, so to say, refer to the person[12] of the state, – as lands, harbours, money, fleets, sailors, soldiers, allies; by all which things states preserve their safety and their liberty. There are other things also which make a thing more noble looking, and which still are less necessary; as the splendid decorating and enlarging of a city, or an extraordinary amount of wealth, or a great number of friendships and alliances. *And the effect of all these things is not merely to make states safe and free from injury, but also noble and powerful*. So that there appears to be two divisions of usefulness, – safety and power.[13] (Cicero 1853: 376–377; the emphasis is mine)

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12   It should be noted that the word "person" is a somewhat descriptive translation of the Latin word "corpus", which literally (and here more properly) means "body".

13   "Utilitas autem aut in corpore posita est aut in extrariis rebus; quarum tamen rerum multo maxima pars ad corporis commodum revertitur, ut in re publica quaedam sunt, quae, ut sic dicam, ad corpus pertinent civitatis, ut agri, portus, pecunia, classis, nautae, milites, socii, quibus rebus incolumitatem ac libertatem retinent civitates, aliae vero, quae iam quiddam magis amplum et minus necessarium conficiunt, ut urbis egregia exornatio atque amplitudo, ut quaedam excellens pecuniae magnitudo, amicitiarum ac societatum multitudo. Quibus rebus non illud solum conficitur, ut salvae et incolumes, verum etiam, ut amplae atque potentes sint civitates. Quare utilitatis duae partes videntur esse, incolumitas et potentia." (Cicero 1783: 127)

Subsequently, in *De Legibus* Cicero argues that the primary purpose of laws is in establishing security (Wood 1988: 129). The things that "contribute something grander and less necessary" are essentially the same means of maintaining basic safety and liberty. The only difference is a quantitative one, they are more abundant and their utilisation surpasses the needs of basic security. However, its being derived from security does not make the augmentation of power less of a criterion for distinguishing a legitimate ruler. In fact, Cicero seems to suggest that this is the primary reason for instituting a government. When criticising more pessimistic accounts of human nature, he notes that:

> [o]thers have thought these ideas as insane as they in fact are and have said that it was not being mauled by wild animals that brought men together, but human nature itself, and that they herded together because the nature of humans shuns solitude and seeks community and society. (Cicero 1999a: 18)

In turn, this means that human beings have a more elaborate set of needs and that they strive towards living in a community in order to satisfy them. The purpose of the government cannot be simply defined as keeping its citizens safe; "the first cause" of its creation is to "promote the citizens' shared association in a happy and honorable way of life" (Cicero 1999a: 80).

Hobbes defines *res publica* very differently from Cicero. In the Latin *Leviathan* Hobbes mainly refers to the commonwealth as *civitas* and, when offering the definition of commonwealth, he treats *civitas* and *res publica* as synonyms. Hobbes uses the coordinating conjunction "or" (*sive*) in the title of the 17th chapter of the Latin *Leviathan* (*De Civitate sive Republica*) and "and" (*et*) when arguing that the *persona* of the state is called "*Civitas et Respublica*" (Hobbes 1668: 85) or, in the English version, "COMMON-WEALTH, in latine CIVITAS" (Hobbes 1651: 87).[14] That being said, Hobbes's theory involves all the elements that we found in Cicero's. In the Latin *Leviathan* he mentions *utilitas* as a public concept when suggesting that fortifications and war machines are "*[a]rtes, quae conducunt multum ad utilitatem publicam*" (Hobbes 1668: 44) – the "arts of publique use", as translated in the English version (Hobbes 1651: 42). More importantly, Hobbes (1651: 86) discusses *utilitas communis* in chapter 17 of *Leviathan* where he suggests that human beings are different from "certain living creatures" that are considered by Aristotle as sociable (or "Politicall") creatures. One of the chief differences between human beings and those creatures is that the humans' private good differs from the common one (Hobbes 1651: 86). In other words, Hobbes argues that the fact that all humans eventually

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14 Asmis (2004: 576) quotes the passage from the first book of *De Re Publica* (1.41) in which Cicero also seems to consider *res publica* as synonymous to *civitas*. However, she notes that: "[a]lthough the two terms have the same extension, each is defined by a different aspect". *Civitas* is, therefore, "an organization of a people" while "the definition of *res publica* views the state as a collective entity rather than an organization" (Asmis 2004: 576). Although this difference in aspects might not be of the utmost importance for Cicero, it is central for Hobbes.

desire same things does not make them sociable. Instead, this feature of human psychology makes people competitive and envious in their mutual relations, rendering any idea of the common good that surpasses the basic demands of personal safety inoperable within the Hobbesian state.

On the other hand, Cicero's notion of *utilitas* is more heterogeneous than Hobbes's. He argues that "laws were invented for the well-being of citizens, the safety of states, and the calm and happy life of humans" (Cicero 1999b: 133). There is, however, no explicit priority of safety over the other three elements. Although the Ciceronian concept of safety is not there to counter otherwise incontrollable natural human passions, it should be noted that the safety of the people is entrusted to the persons of highest authority – to magistrates behind *persona civitatis*. In Cicero's (1999b: 159) words, "praetors, judges, or consuls" are those for whom "the safety of the people [should be] the highest law". *Salus populi*, then, is conceptually linked to sustaining *persona civitatis*. Magistrates are those who are "wearing" this *persona*, they are those who are responsible for taking care of public affairs and, ultimately, their task is to keep their fellow citizens safe. All of these elements are present in Hobbes's theory. The people escape the miseries of their natural condition by transferring their authority to the sovereign in exchange "*for their Peace and Common Defence*" (Hobbes 1651: 88). Although it is its surpassing purpose, the preservation of people's lives is not the sole purpose of a Hobbesian government. In *De Cive* Hobbes (1978b: 259) argues that:

> by *safety* must be understood, not the sole preservation of life in what condition soever, but in order to its happiness. For to this end did men freely assemble themselves, and *institute* a government, that they might, as much as their humane condition would afford, live delightfully.

In this sense, Hobbes's account matches Cicero's. However, there is one significant difference. For Hobbes, being successful in "preservation of life" guarantees the legitimacy of a sovereign. And for Cicero keeping the subjects safe only has lexical priority over a sovereign's other duties: although a society cannot flourish unless its members are safe, protecting the public safety alone is not sufficient to legitimise one's rule. The difference between Hobbes's and Cicero's accounts does not flow out of any deep disagreement about the sovereign's responsibilities. For although their offices involve both of them acting behind a *persona civitatis*, unlike Hobbes's sovereign, Cicero's magistrate, for whom *salus populi* should be "the highest law", is not in the possession of absolute authority. However, describing the differing extent of responsibilities that Cicero ascribes to the magistrate and those that Hobbes attributes to the sovereign does not exhaust the discussion about the differences between the two accounts. This obvious dissimilarity is reinforced by Cicero's and Hobbes's contrasting accounts of mixed constitution and absolute sovereignty, their conceptions of liberty, *salus populi*, *res publica* and *civitas*. I will now briefly discuss each of these elements.

Absolute Authority, Mixed Constitution, and the Liberty within

The difference that makes a difference may be traced to Cicero's account of a mixed constitution. Hobbes argues that authority should be unified and entrusted to those who bear the *persona* of the state. To put it in Ciceronian terms, Hobbes's commonwealth can only be governed by a magistrate endowed with absolute authority and there can be no place for a Senate or a tribunate. The Hobbesian state does not have to be "great" or "glorious" in classical sense for its sovereign's rule to be legitimate. It does not *have* to be victorious in conquests; the sovereign does not *have* to make its citizens proud by erecting monumental buildings, having a vast merchant navy and organising triumphs, exhibiting numerous spoils of war. Such an argument is not possible since it would entail a conception of human nature similar to the classical Aristotelian account, by which human beings are primarily defined as sociable and the purpose of the state is also to nurture to their needs that are more extensive and elaborate than the preservation of peace and security alone can satisfy. By contrast, Hobbes's account of human nature entails that human beings are rational, often greedy and, most importantly, guided by their urge for self-preservation. Although this makes for havoc in the free-for-all of the state of nature, it also forces them to create the state as a "common Power to keep them all in awe" and, thus, to secure their preservation (Hobbes 1651: 62). And even if Hobbes does not grant human beings sociability, he does grant them the use of reason to find ways of self-preservation. Ultimately, the Hobbesian state is a unique consequence of human nature, not unlike the Aristotelian or the Ciceronian one.

In contrast to Cicero's, Hobbes's subjects evaluate their security individually and not in terms of *societal* security: they have a right to resist the sovereign's orders that might lead to their personal demise. Their decision is not based on evaluating the virtue of the people behind the mask of *civitas* or their proficiency in safeguarding *res publica*. Instead, it is an individual decision guided by a personal feeling of safety and in Chapter 21, Hobbes (1651: 112) discusses a number of such situations, ranging from disobeying the sovereign's order to hurt oneself to advocating the right of "men of feminine courage" to refuse to fight in a war. None of these situations entails evaluating the sovereign's fitness to rule. Cicero, however, argues that the decision about the state of *res publica* should be put in the hands of the *boni* (also known as the *optimates*), the members of Roman aristocracy (Pina Polo 2006: 75). They are the ones who are, according to Cicero, fit to decide whether a magistrate is a virtuous and just ruler, worthy of sustaining *persona civitatis*.

In this regard, Hobbes's account deviates from its Ciceronian roots. For Hobbes, there is no collective idea of common good outside the idea of state. *Res publica* is *civitas*; public affairs are equated with the state and the underlying sovereignty. The only way a subject can evaluate the performance of his sovereign is by establishing whether the sovereign's actions are violating *his* right to self-preservation. In contrast to Cicero's *boni*, the Hobbesian sovereign

alone and not the subject is the "*judge of what is necessary for the Peace and Defence of [the] Subjects*" (Hobbes 1651: 102). A Hobbesian subject cannot be the judge of means of enforcing peace; he can only be the judge of the sovereign's efficiency in reaching the goal of keeping *him* safe. If it were otherwise, he would have (at least partial) sovereignty, which would be in conflict with the indivisibility of sovereignty, one of the main principles of Hobbes's theory. The Hobbesian sovereign is thus an equivalent of a Ciceronian magistrate with full sovereignty. The sovereign also sustains the *persona civitatis*, but, since she is not the head of a Ciceronian republic or a mixed constitution of any sort, her prerogatives are not limited in any way.

Cicero's view, on the other hand, can be traced back to Polybius's accounts of Roman republic and mixed government laid out in the sixth book of his *Histories*. Polybius, reiterating the ancient Greek accounts of the factors that cause states' decay, (Walbank 2002: 200) argues that the primary cause of the stability and imperial power of the Roman state of his day was its mixed constitution. Asmis (2005: 377) compares Polybius's and Cicero's accounts and argues that Cicero takes Polybius's praise of the Roman constitution to the next level, as he "elevates the Roman constitution above the constitution of any other state as the single best constitution". According to Asmis (2004: 570), in his account of the best form of government, Cicero had in mind a special kind of mixed constitution based on a "distinctively Roman conception of partnership". This partnership presupposes that the responsibility for securing and advancing *res publica* is shared between different social groups and that the resulting *utilitas* should be shared between them according to their contribution (Asmis 2004: 598–599). Cicero's *persona civitatis*, therefore, is not a mask of absolute power, although the persons behind it have a greater share in this partnership and are, therefore, more powerful than the citizens – their partners that are in front of the mask.

Hobbes (1651: 172) explicitly argues against the idea of a mixed constitution and suggests that there can be no mixed government: "all Governments, which men are bound to obey, are Simple, and Absolute". Therefore, Hobbes (1651: 172) considers himself amongst a "few [that] perceive, that such government, is not government, but division of the Common-wealth into three Factions, and call it mixt Monarchy". In contrast to Cicero's account, Hobbes's *persona civitatis* is a *persona* of absolute authority. Behind it there is the sovereign who rules with singular will. Hobbes openly criticizes Cicero's views in Chapter 21 of *Leviathan*. This chapter deals with the idea of liberty and Hobbes argues that there are two kinds of liberty: the liberty of subjects and the liberty of sovereigns. According to Hobbes, classical authors such as Aristotle and Cicero were wrong to confuse private with public liberty and to prefer republican and democratic states to monarchies because, as they would argue, the latter are deficient in terms of liberty. Regardless of the form of government, Hobbes (1651: 110) argues, every sovereign state possesses the full scope of liberty: "Whether a Commonwealth be Monarchicall, or Popular, the Freedome is still the same". Therefore, when we speak about the freedom of Athenians

or Romans, we think about "free Common-wealths: not that any particular men had the Libertie to resist their own Representative; but that their Representative had the Libertie to resist, or invade other people" (Hobbes 1651: 110).

Hobbes is pointing out here that there are two aspects of the liberty of a state. Both of these aspects amount to sovereignty, or, more specifically, the sovereign's right (and ability) to impose the laws on her subjects (internal sovereignty) and to interact with other sovereigns representing their countries (external sovereignty). For Hobbes, a state can serve its purpose only if its sovereign has unlimited and effective power. Therefore, one of the main causes that "tend to the dissolution of a Common-wealth" is a sovereign being "*content with lesse Power, than to the Peace, and defence of the Common-wealth is necessarily required*" (Hobbes 1651: 167). A state's sovereignty is also severely lacking if the sovereign authority is divided between different persons or institutions, "[f]or what is it to divide the Power of a Common-wealth, but to Dissolve it" (Hobbes 1651: 170). Division of power leads to instability and that is precisely what Hobbes has in mind when criticising Cicero's account of the optimal form of government:

> For whereas the stile of the antient Roman Common-wealth, was, *The Senate, and People of Rome;* neither Senate, nor People pretended to the whole Power; which first caused the seditions, of *Tiberius Gracchus, Caius Gracchus, Lucius Saturninus,* and others; and afterwards the warres between the Senate and the People, under *Marius* and *Sylla;* and again under *Pompey* and *Caesar,* to the Extinction of their Democraty, and the setting up of Monarchy. (Hobbes 1651: 168)

Hobbes argues that if we want to preserve the stability of a state, we should not allow any traces of popular sovereignty. This is why he defines individual liberty negatively, as liberty under a sovereign's laws. The subjects, as bearers of such a liberty, are free to make decisions on everything that has not been regulated, or, in Hobbes's words (1651: 113), their liberties "depend on the Silence of the Law". The subjects should not be deceived by the classical idea that their liberty is aimed at "controlling the actions of their Soveraigns" (Hobbes 1651: 111). The Hobbesian state is clearly not a republic, or, as Hobbes refers to it, a "popular state". Reading "Aristotle, Cicero, and other men, Greeks and Romanes" is dangerous, since it leads to confusing the "Publique" liberty that belongs to the sovereign with the subjects' private liberties (Hobbes 1651: 110). Since legislation is a part of public liberty and Hobbes defines the subjects' liberty negatively in relation to the laws, we can see how stark Hobbes's differentiation between public and private liberty is. Hobbes believes that it is crucial for the safety of the subjects that sovereignty is indivisible. In contrast to the ancient Romans, who "shared amongst them the Soveraignty of Rome", Hobbesian subjects should refrain from making claims to sovereignty because doing so leads to "the effusion of so much blood" through civil wars and falling back to the state of nature (Hobbes 1651: 110–111) In order to avoid such a situation, unlike Cicero's citizens, Hobbes's subjects have agreed not to exercise any sort of influence on their state's legislation and have, by making an

Artificiall Man, which we call a Common-wealth [...] also [...] made Artificiall Chains, called *Civill Lawes*, which they themselves, by mutuall covenants, have fastned at one end, to the lips of that Man, or Assembly, to whom they have given the Soveraigne Power; and at the other end to their own Ears. (Hobbes 1651: 108–109)

The fact that Hobbes talks about slavery when discussing liberty is not a sign of novelty in Hobbes's approach. As Skinner (2004: 207) argues, quoting Cicero, slavery was commonly used as a metaphor to describe "the condition of political liberty" throughout classical sources, such as Livy's history of Rome. Cicero is no exception as he notes in *De Officiis* that preservation of liberty depends on the citizens being "prepared to act 'as slaves to the public interest' [*communi utilitati serviatur*]" (Skinner 2004: 207). Since Hobbes reconceptualises *res publica* as *civitas* and, effectively, subsumes the former under the latter, Cicero's classical underlying notion of the public interest (*utilitas*) also gets remodelled within the conceptual foundations of the Hobbesian commonwealth. As a consequence, unlike Cicero's citizens, Hobbesian subjects effectively and inevitably serve the sovereign if they protect the public good. Internalisation of *res publica* within *civitas* leaves the citizens without an external reference point for establishing whether their sovereign's rule is legitimate. The only criterion that they are left with is based on establishing whether their ruler has effective sovereignty, i.e. sufficient power to guarantee their personal safety. Since for Hobbes the difference between the state of nature and civil society amounts to the existence of a sovereign with effective monopoly of force and since the same criterion defines the Hobbesian state, a Hobbes's subject can deem the sovereign's rule illegitimate only when it is ineffective or defying its own purpose by jeopardizing his safety. In both cases, from the subject's personal perspective, the rule is illegitimate only when the ruler cannot guarantee that subject's personal safety.

Conclusion

In this paper I endeavoured to analyse the similarities and differences between Hobbes's and Cicero's accounts of personhood and, especially, their notions of the state (*civitas*) as a *persona*. It can be concluded that Hobbes's account matches Cicero's in at least three important aspects. The first is that they share an underlying idea of representation. The second is a shared thought that this notion can be best described through a theatrical metaphor of *persona* as a mask. Finally, the third aspect is based on the two authors' shared assumption about *civitas* as an entity separate from the human being who bears its mask. However, Hobbes and Cicero offer different accounts of *civitas* and they seem to construct their accounts of personhood from different perspectives. As Gill (1988: 171) argues, Cicero's develops his ideas about personhood "from a highly social perspective". This is evident since they are dependent on the concept of *decorum* that consists of a set of social standards for proper behaviour. On the

other hand, Hobbes puts state before society. Hobbesian account of person-hood is much more reliant on the sovereign state because Hobbes believes that it provides a (legal) framework under which the underlying concept of representation can function. This is something that Cicero does not need, since the ethical apparatus that serves to distinguish between right and wrong, proper and improper can readily be found in natural law and justice. The notion of Cicero's *res publica* is thus ethically encumbered and means more than just living peacefully together within the scope of *civitas*. In contrast, for Hobbes, *civitas* does not need to be *res publica*, as the effectual government satisfies the basic condition for peaceful living. Finally, Cicero's account of personhood demands *decorum* as an ideal to which one should aspire and strive and presupposes having liberty to achieve it. On the other hand, for Hobbes there is nothing intrinsically valuable in assuming at least one out of many possible social roles, nor is there any rule describing the proper way of bearing such a *persona* that is outside the realm of legality. Hobbes does not care if our chosen professions fit our social standing or not, as long as what we do is legal. Something similar also applies to the bearers of *persona civitatis*, as Hobbes's sovereign, in contrast to Cicero's magistrate, is unconstrained by an external ethical account of his duties and "simply" needs to procure the safety of its subjects.

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Marko Simendić

Ciceron i Hobs o ličnosti države

Apstrakt

Teško je prenaglasiti važnost ideja Tomasa Hobsa o licu, ličnosti i predstavljaju. Takođe, teško je zanemariti dug koji u ovom pogledu Hobs ima prema jednom od svojih klasičnih suparnika, Marku Tuliju Ciceronu. U ovom radu poredim Hobsove ideje o ličnosti države sa Ciceronovim pojmom *persone civitatis* i nastojim da opišem kako je Hobs oblikovao Ciceronova uputstva za predstavljanje *legitimne* vladavine u mehanizam za odbranu *bilo kakve efektivne* vladavine. Hobs apsorbuje Ciceronovu uticajnu argumentaciju i razvija njegovu ideju političkog predstavljanja kao uloge i jedne vrste starateljstva, pri čemu uklanja etičke temelje Ciceronove teorije. Za razliku od uloge Ciceronovog magistrata, društvena uloga Hobsovog suverena nije uslovljena etičkim ograničenjima: njena svrha nije da ublaži samovolju dužnosnika već da joj pruži opravdanje.

Ključne reči: Hobs, Ciceron, lice, ličnost, predstavljanje, *persona civitatis*, *persona*, država

III

CARRIED OVER

PRENESENO

Wolfgang Merkel

NEW CRISES: SCIENCE, MORALITY, AND DEMOCRACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY[1]

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the restructuring of political conflict in Western societies in the 21st century, as well as its effects on morality, science, and democracy. I argue that the traditional socio-economic dimension of conflict has been intersected by a new dimension of cultural conflict between the cosmopolitan and the communitarian camps. In this paper, I identify three new crises which are responsible for this two-dimensional conflict structure: the refugee and migrant crisis, the climate debate, and the COVID-19 pandemic. I argue that these crises are not based in "objective" facts alone, but that they are also shaped by their subjective perceptions or "crisis narratives". The paper shows that these narratives are characterized by three distinct properties: scientification, moralization, and polarization. Scientification entails the simplified perception of both science and democratic decision-making. By reducing the role of science to a singular procedure which produces non-refutable "truths", scientification has led to a change in the perception of democracy from a pluralistic and *a posteriori* decision-making to the means of implementing *a priori* scientific truth. The second characteristic of crisis narratives is moralization; that is, the stylization of one's own moral position as superior in order to disparage another moral position which introduces binarism and friend-foe relations in the political discourse of democracy. Finally, I demonstrate how these properties undermine democratic pluralism by leading it into a two-dimensional (or, in the case of the United States, one-dimensional), non-negotiable and "all or nothing" polarization.

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Introduction

Whoever talks about democracy cannot remain silent about its crises. We have known this since the days of Plato, at the latest. The gallery of great minds is an impressive one: from Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, Hobbes, Tocqueville, Weber to Habermas, Offe, or Colin Crouch. All of them reflected not only on the democratic system of rule, but also its crises. As impressive as the latter three contemporaries are both scientifically and intellectually, however, their diagnoses of crisis are exaggerated – at least if one takes the term "crisis" seriously and understands it as an existential question of life or death, stability or collapse, democracy or autocracy. In the last five decades, we have not experienced any such existential crisis of democracy in Western Europe (Koselleck 2004; Merkel 2020a; Merkel 2017a; Kneip et al. 2020). The United States under President Donald Trump may be a borderline case (Levitsky; Ziblatt 2018). The populist-plebeian style of government and the undemocratic claim to power of Trump and the Republican Party supporting him have been successfully repudiated by the democratic institutions of the rule of law, the quality press, and finally by free elections. Things are different in Eastern Europe: despite membership in the European Union, Romania and Bulgaria never managed to become fully developed constitutional democracies. Far more disturbing is that the region's former flagship democracies, namely Hungary and Poland, have regressed from consolidated to defective and illiberal democracies within a decade (Merkel 2004; Ágh 2019).

In short: there is no existential crisis of Western democracies, but there is an erosion of democracy worldwide. The latest expert surveys by Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) show this very clearly. The aggregated graph line in Fig. 1 shows the average quality of "Western" democracies over time since 1950, illustrating that the quality of democracy held up until the epochal break of 1989. This marked the addition of the young democracies of Eastern Europe, whose quality was less developed than that of the Western European democracies. The small dip in the democratic evolution is quickly smoothed out again as the 32 established democracies democratized further. Greater gender equality, legal acceptance of same-sex preferences, better protection of minorities, strengthening of civil society and media diversity were the drivers of the "democratization of democracy" (Offe 2003). This trend continued until 2008, when it took a significant turn for the worse. Since then, the quality of the best democracies has been visibly declining. Twelve years are a long enough period to call this a stable trend.

This long trend line of democratic erosion is now being met with considerable force by three external crises that challenge democracy in especially persistent ways. What are these crises, what distinguishes them, and why are they particularly challenging?

Fig. 1: The development of the quality of established democracies (1950-2020).
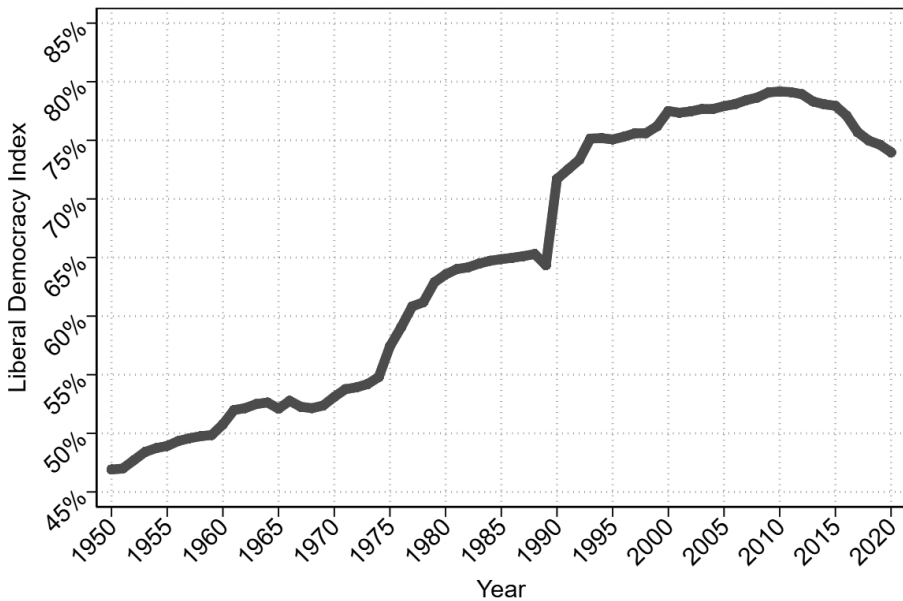
New Conflict Structures

Financial, labor-market and, more generally, economic crises have not gone away. It is certainly true that the "Great Recession", the financial crisis (2008 onwards), and the ensuing Eurozone crisis (2010 onwards) were more than a decade ago. However, the construction of the European common currency, the large-scale deficit spending in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the considerable transformation costs in the fight against the climate crisis will contribute to the fact that economic crises will not disappear. Despite improved international governance instruments and a willingness to cooperate on the part of the major capitalist economies of the West, economic crises will continue to put pressure on democracy (Kocka 2013). Moreover, it is not only the crises of capitalism that can pose a threat to democracy, but also its very triumph: namely, when deregulated global markets continue to significantly constrain the scope for democratic politics (Merkel 2014).

Traditional economic crises have now been joined by new crises in the second decade of the 21st century, which in turn reflect the two-dimensional conflict structure of democratic competition in the developed democracies. The traditional horizontal conflict dimension between capital and labor, left and right, state and market has long been intersected by a vertical conflict dimension featuring cultural issues. This divides our developed societies into

urban, well-educated upper-middle classes on the one hand and a lower half with less education and lower socioeconomic status on the other. The former group follows a cosmopolitan worldview and sees nation-state borders as a relic of the 20th century that must be overcome. Their normative point of reference is not the nation but the whole of humanity; the political and legal equality of multiple genders ranks above classical distributive justice; they emphasize gender-neutral language, insist on equal rights for different sexual preferences beyond "heteronormativity", stress a liberal immigration policy, and see the fight against the climate crisis as an absolute priority for the 21st century (Reckwitz 2017; Merkel 2017b; de Wilde et al. 2019). Socio-economically, they are among the well-to-do in our societies.

At the other pole of this conflict dimension, we find the less privileged in our societies. They are formally much less educated, earn less, and are socio-economically in the bottom half, if not the bottom third, of our societies. They are in favor of the nation-state, from which they expect protection and support, including the redistribution of material resources as well as income and life chances; they tend to have authoritarian rather than libertarian attitudes; the new terminology of gender-neutral language is unimportant to them, if they are familiar with it at all. This camp is divided into two groups: one group tends toward nationalism, right-wing populism, and xenophobia. Their political home is the right-wing populist parties. The other communitarian group consists primarily of the traditional clientele of social democracy. Their normative point of reference is the Swedish "folkshemmet", the people's home: a relatively homogeneous "home" with a strong solidarity-based welfare state. They have become politically homeless after the culturalist turn of some social democratic parties and, after a stay in the camp of non-voters, not infrequently end up with right-wing populists across Europe.

The socio-economic and the cultural conflict dimensions shape not only the competition structure of the party system, but also the discourse landscapes of Germany as well as many other developed Western European or North Atlantic societies. "Developed" is a key adjective here because it can be shown empirically that cosmopolitan cultural discourses are particularly strong in places where economies are highly developed and conducive to postmaterialist cultural discourses emerging from a terrain of material security. This Maslov-based needs hypothesis became extraordinarily influential in comparative politics with Ronald Inglehart's book *The Silent Revolution* and retains its validity today (Inglehart 1977). Without the cultural discourses, socio-cultural camps, and political entrepreneurs mobilizing along discursively powerful lines of cultural conflict, it is impossible to understand why the new crises in the 21st century pose such a challenge for democracy.

New Crises

Financial, labor-market and, more generally, economic crises will not disappear under capitalism. The aftershocks of the financial and Eurozone crisis have by

no means disappeared in Southern Europe. In Northern and Western Europe as well as the US, in contrast, the financial crisis was followed by a long phase of stable economic prosperity.

Traditional economic crises have now been joined by new crises in the second decade of the 21st century. What are these crises, what makes them new, and why are they, in particular, an enormous challenge for democracy? We are talking here about the refugee and migration crisis of 2015 onwards, the climate crisis that has been smoldering or even blazing for some time, and the COVID-19 crisis. What makes these crises new are three characteristics that are intertwined in a certain sequence and contribute to the division of our democratic societies. It is precisely in the case of these "new" crises that it becomes apparent that they always have an objective and a subjective dimension. The objective dimension comprises the factual circumstances surrounding the crisis in question. In the dot-com stock market crisis of 2000, it was the bursting of a bubble that sent overvalued technology stocks plummeting. In the 2008 financial crisis, it was the bursting of the real estate credit bubble, first in the US, then in Europe; in the multi-layered euro crisis, it was the rapid increase in total private and public debt, the elimination of flexible exchange rates, and speculation about Greece leaving or remaining in the common European currency. In the refugee and migration crisis of 2015, an extraordinarily rapid influx of refugees and migrants into Western Europe, particularly Austria, Germany, and Sweden, was observed. In the climate crisis, the steady increase in global warming caused primarily by human activity (especially in industrialized countries) is seen as particularly serious. In the COVID-19 pandemic, it was the rapid increase in infection rates, mortality, and overcrowding in intensive care units in the hospitals.

This is only a partial list of the causes and circumstances of the crises. None of the three new crises can be explained by "objective" facts alone; in all of them, there is a subjective dimension of considerable importance. This relates to the construction of a crisis narrative as it is repeatedly developed in societal discourses by government, opposition, new political crisis entrepreneurs, media, demagogues, or social movements. There may be legitimate or illegitimate reasons for this. What holds true is the following: a crisis is only a crisis when the majority of people believe that it is a crisis. Crisis narratives contribute to this belief just as much as the "objective" facts they try to explain or distort. It is, above all, these crisis narratives that feed on the three new properties of scientification, moralization, and polarization, then nourish and weave them into a crisis context of public significance.

Scientification

Not all three crises are equally affected by scientification (Bogner 2021). The scientification thesis applies least of all to the refugee crisis. Even if policy-making elites have less expertise here than in social, labor-market, or domestic policy, the demand for scientific research on refugee movements and migration

is limited. However, more NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and think tanks operate here as policy advisors than traditional associations and lobby groups in economic and social policy. The situation is different in the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. The complexity of the causes and spread of greenhouse gases or viruses catch political decision-makers cognitively unprepared, almost by necessity. The political demand for expertise in the (natural) sciences is accordingly high. Without scientific advice, rational and efficient crisis solutions cannot be found. The term "evidence-based policy making" already found its way into policy research from the health sciences (with "evidence-based medicine") in the 1980s. With the climate crisis and the pandemic, it is also increasingly appearing in German political and media usage.

As necessary as scientific evidence-based policy advice is, it is not without problems and side effects. Governments may select scientists who best suit their concept, to the extent that they can already have such a concept pre-scientifically. Political-strategic selection is particularly problematic in complex crises characterized by ignorance and uncertainty. It is precisely there that politics requires a particularly broad and pluralistic access to scientists and scientific disciplines. If this access is strategically narrowed down for political reasons, the scientification of politics leads to the politicization of science. "Evidence-based policy making" is then in danger of being turned into "policy-based evidence making".

Not only does this mean the exclusion of certain alternative scientific positions, but parts of science can come dangerously close to the sphere of political activism. "Scientists for Future", in a sense the knowledge suppliers for the social movement "Fridays for Future" (FFF), cannot have an easy time following the epistemic imperative of open-ended research behind their scientific-political engagement. The movement activists of FFF, for their part, respond as naïvely as logically: "Science has told us". In other words, the political plans have long been at the ready and it is compromise-based politics that stands in the way of the necessary one-to-one translation of scientific research into policy. Two problematic simplifications become visible here: on the one hand, "science" is spoken of in the singular, as if it were not precisely the competing pluralism of the sciences with their permanent attempts at refutation that guarantees scientific progress in the search for truth (Popper 1963); on the other hand, democratic policymaking is misunderstood as a machinery for implementing "truthful", "indubitable" knowledge. It is as if there were always only *one* political problem in migration,[2] climate policy, or pandemic policy, rather than multiple consequences affecting civil liberties, the labor market, economic growth, inequality distribution, or generational and gender issues. One of the too little-noticed side effects of the scientification of politics is the naïve simplification of what science and politics are and what they can, should, and

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2   I am consciously using the overarching term "migration" here in the awareness that there are very different motivations and causes of human movements that, in turn, lead to different legal categories for immigrants and refugees.

must be in a democracy. The singularization of both knowledge and political processing does not do justice to either.

This raises another problem that will preoccupy democracy now and especially in the future. This is a question that, beyond social movements, concerns the governing and the governed alike: can science (in the plural) (pre-)determine the common good? Not least in Germany, an old longing that never quite disappeared is experiencing a renaissance: namely, to bypass or even overcome the arduous path of party pluralism (referred to as *Parteienhader* in the Weimar era) and the laborious process of finding compromises. This is by no means to be done by an autocrat, but perhaps by an impeccable sphere such as that of science, committed only to truth. Why, then, should one deviate from the supposed truth just because different interests, less truthful politicians, or even ignoramuses influence the political decisions and thus water down the best solution conforming to science? What we would then need are collective philosopher-kings who are ethically and cognitively on top of the problems of the day and can solve them faster, more effectively, and more justly than the lengthy decision-making processes on the levels of pluralistic interest negotiation are ever capable of doing.

I accentuate my argument here to illuminate the democratic pitfalls of this scientistic understanding of politics. When, for example, in climate policy, it is said that the goal and the path to the goal have long since been formulated by science and that politics must only finally implement them, this is based on a misunderstanding of what democracy is. As the theorist Adam Przeworski put it, democracy is "a system of ruled open-endedness, or organized uncertainty" (Przeworsky 1991: 13). The institutions and procedures are fixed *a priori*, and the results of decisions are therefore necessarily contingent within the framework of the constitution and its laws. This, incidentally, is one of the cardinal differences with authoritarian decision-making regimes. For climate activists, zero-COVID advocates, and science-armed technocrats, on the other hand, it seems clear: the outcome is *a priori* fixed, the procedures only have to be adapted to it. This is the core of technocratically narrowed-down "evidence-based policy". This is at odds with Ernst Fraenkel's core postulate of pluralistic democracies: In a pluralistic democracy, the common good is achieved only *a posteriori*, as the result of a "delicate process of divergent ideas and interests among groups and parties" (Fraenkel 1991: 200). In this process, the state must ensure the "equality of arms" between the various social groups (parties, associations, organizations, groups), as well as the consideration of the interests of minorities. Scientific findings, too, must pass through the sluices of democratic decision-making procedures if they are to become legitimate, authoritatively binding resolutions and induce compliance from free and sometimes obstinate citizens.

Moralization

The second characteristic element of the "new" crises is the moralization of politics and scientific positions. Moralization is distinct from morality. Morality,

as codified in the human rights and freedoms of democratic constitutions, enshrined in the postulates of equality and justice in the norms of the rule of law, or understood as tolerance and respect in civilized civil societies,[3] cannot be conceived without a morality that must constantly be subject to justification. Without morality there is no democracy. Moralization, however, is a different matter. Moralization is a self-righteous stylization of one's own moral position in order to disparage another moral position. It is a variety of egocentrism, a "moral ostentation" that claims for oneself a position of moral superiority (Neuhäuser, Seidel 2020: 10). Such ostentation cannot be had without moralizing and inappropriately reducing the complexity of political issues.

Two examples illustrate this. If, in the climate crisis, for example, someone criticizes the wisdom of the recent Constitutional Court ruling, which calls for a more precise step-by-step plan for achieving the Paris climate goals, by maintaining that this constitutes an excessive encroachment on parliamentary authority, he or she is usually not confronted with constitutional counter-arguments, but rather (not infrequently) defamed as a climate denier who accepts that, as a result of his or her petty democratic-theoretical concerns, the climate catastrophe will come closer, countries will be flooded, and people will have to die as a result of drought in certain regions. An argument on the issue of judicial self-restraint and parliamentary prerogatives thus becomes simplified and displaced onto the level of another issue in order to ascribe *ad personam* an immoral or even inhumane attitude to the opponent. This form of self-righteous moralization is not infrequently conducted with the aim of excluding supposedly immoral persons from the discourse of moral participants. If such an argument is conducted *coram publico*, it acquires a particularly intolerant effect.

Another example can be drawn from the controversial debates on measures against COVID-19. Here, the difficult balancing act between Article 2(2) and the freedoms enshrined in Articles 4, 8, 11, and 12 of the Basic Law in particular was repeatedly discussed, and rightly so. In moralizing discourses, the first sentence of Article 2(2), "Everyone has the right to life and physical integrity," was not only declared to be the overriding fundamental right, but all those insisted on balancing it against the other freedoms in the COVID-19 debate were suspected of devaluing the lives of their fellow human beings. Thus, not only was the counter-position dismissed as immoral, but the speaker also elevated himself onto the moral high ground. While, with the exception of the AfD, the official discourses in parliament were still conducted in a sufficiently civilized manner, on the Internet they not infrequently turned into hate and agitation via the moralization of positions.

"Excess moralization" (Strohschneider 2020) and the discrimination of dissenters not infrequently associated with it also become clear when it comes to

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3   "Civilized civil society" is not a pleonasm, but a demarcation from "dark" undersides of civil society as represented by the likes of PEGIDA, Reichsbürger or militant conspiracy "theorists" in the German context.

labeling those citizens who, for whatever rational or (predominantly) irrational reasons, protest against the COVID-19 policy of the German federal government and the state governments. A name was quickly found for them: "Corona deniers". Even before that, all those who refused to believe in anthropogenic global warming against all scientific evidence became "climate deniers". But no discourse can be conducted with liars and deniers. As a result, these individuals are first conceptually and then actually excluded. Let there be no doubt: the author of this article has nothing at all in common with the positions of so-called "climate deniers" and "Corona deniers". However, he considers moral discrimination to be democratically problematic and politically unwise, as it pushes people of very different convictions to the margins of democratic society. Democracy, on the contrary, requires debate, the "freedom of the dissenter" (Luxemburg) and the "unforced force of the better argument" (Habermas), i.e. inclusion and not exclusion.

A problematic binary is introduced into political discourse through the moralizing disparagement of opposing positions and the postulation of the superiority of one's own. The binary code becomes: truth vs. lies, morality vs. immorality. In such a binary meta-scientific discourse, pluralistic, dissenting scientific positions in the public sphere become something that has to be fought against. This form of communicative practice initiates a moralistic transformation of discourse that crisis narratives then cast in the form of a friend-foe relation (Schmitt 1991: 20). It is not only the right-wing admirers of Carl Schmitt who understand this as the essence of the political; no, it is also supposedly left-liberal currents[4] that view the exclusion of immoral opinions and their exponents as their democratic moral duty. The attempt of both sides to integrate complex societies with their own particular morals is pre-modern and leads to polarization in modern societies – the third characteristic of "new" crises.

Polarization

Democracy can be understood as a political order in which differences in interest, worldview, and moral conceptions of a pluralistic society can be peacefully negotiated and processed. If this succeeds with the majority approval of the population and without violent or anti-system dissidence on the part of political, social, religious, or ethnic minorities, democracy maintains its stability since the legitimacy of the democratic order, both empirical (in the form of approval from the population) and normative (Kneip, Merkel 2020), proves itself over and over again.

If this pluralism, while conflictual, is carried out in mutual acceptance and according to *a priori* fixed rules of decision-making, this can constitute a particular strength of democratic institutions and their embeddedness in a lively civil society. The transition from lively pluralism to polarization takes place

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4   The common designation "left-liberal" is misleading in this context; exclusionary discourses may be many things, but being liberal is not one of them.

especially when the multitude of social divides merge and bundle into a single dimension. When this happens, cross-cutting cleavages lose their moderating effect and a single cleavage dominates the political contest. This can lead to society splitting into two camps. In the populist narrative, it becomes "us" vs. "them", the "corrupt elites" vs. the "pure people" (Müller 2017; Mudde, Kaltwasser 2017).

In free Western societies, an increasingly far-reaching dimension of cultural conflict has been emerging over the past decade that runs between the camps of cosmopolitans and nation-state communitarians. The latter can appear in both traditional social-democratic and nationalist guises (Merkel 2017b; de Wilde et al. 2019). In Germany and Western Europe, the two dominant lines of conflict, socio-economic and cultural, have not completely merged into a one-dimensional one. However, the socio-economic conflict dimension between the well-off and the less well-off does not intersect the vertical cultural conflict dimension between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism orthogonally, since the camp of the better-off tends toward cosmopolitanism and that of the less privileged toward nation-state communitarianism. The two lines of conflict tend toward each other, but have not (yet) fused into a single dimension. That is why polarization in most Western European societies is not as advanced as in the United States, where social conflict has been politically fused into a single dimension by the polarized two-party contest between the Republicans and the Democrats. However, the one-dimensionality that Somer and McCoy describe is by no means a necessary condition for the polarization of a society (Somer, McCoy 2019; Somer, McCoy, Luke 2021). If the cultural conflict dimension dominates in a society, sharp polarization can emerge even in a two-dimensional conflict structure.

In polarization research, a distinction is made between democratizing polarization and pernicious polarization, i.e. polarization that threatens democracy (Pausch 2020). Why is cultural conflict (currently) particularly harmful? Socio-economic conflicts are generally easier to deal with than cultural conflicts. There, it is not a question of all or nothing, but of more or less. Compromises are possible, if not obvious. This does not mean that distributive conflicts are settled once and for all. The recurring compromises between the conflicting parties nourish mutual trust as well as acceptance toward the opponent and stabilize the rules of conflict resolution. The policies of the welfare state and collective bargaining agreements after 1919 and 1949, respectively, demonstrate the pacifying effect of this "democratic class struggle" (Korpi 1983) in Germany. Cultural conflicts are usually structured differently. They are about the whole, about true or untrue, lie or truth, recognition or non-recognition, identity vs. identity. Here, what is negotiated are "fundamental and, from the point of view of those concerned, non-negotiable, because morally absolute, values" (Lütjen 2021: 11). Purism allows for neither relative positions nor compromise (Pausch 2021: 3). The drivers of social purism are to be found primarily on the side of the populists, but also among the self-righteous moralizers of political conflicts.

Conclusion: Scientification, Moralization, Polarization, and Democracy

The migration, climate, and COVID-19 crises are characterized by scientization, moralization, and polarization to different degrees, but all of them to a much greater extent than economic crises. Discourse camps have long since formed in most Western democracies, reinforced with scientific and moralizing arguments by interest groups, NGOs, movements, political parties, and political entrepreneurs. The not infrequently hand-woven moralistic positions tear down the bridges of understanding between the camps. Opponents become enemies. Science, following this logic, cannot be negotiated any more than morality. "Science has told us". Minority or dissenting opinions are effectively immoralized by majorities or activists. We are currently experiencing a re-coding of political conflicts that poses new challenges to democracy in Germany, Europe, and North America.

Beyond scientization, moralization, and polarization, the three crises have revealed other problematic trends for democracy. This became particularly clear in the COVID-19 crisis (Merkel 2020b). A shift from participatory input to decision-making output took place, whereby the executive dominated the legislature and science dominated democratic representation. Re-democratizing democracy after the pandemic is a challenge. But challenges are not yet crises. They only become so when politics and society fail to find answers appropriate to democracy. Faster, more centralized, more executive – as popular a choice this might be, it is the wrong one. Democracy needs time, pluralism, and dissent. If it is deprived of these, it loses quality and resilience (Schäfer, Merkel 2020). This will not stop the worldwide erosion of democracy, but accelerate it.

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Volfgang Merkel

Nove krize: nauka, moral i demokratija u 21. veku

Apstrakt

Ovaj članak istražuje restrukturiranje političkog konflikta u zapadnim društvima u 21. veku, kao i efekte koje je ono imalo na moralnost, nauku i demokratiju. Pokazujem da je tradicionalno socio-ekonomska dimenzija konflikta postala ispresecana novom dimenzijom kulturnog konflikta između kosmopolitskog i komunitarnog kampa. U radu identifikujem tri nove krize koje su odgovorne za ovu dvodimenzionalnu strukturu konflikta: izbeglička i migrantska kriza, debata o klimatskim promenama i COVID-19 pandemija. U tekstu pokazujem da ove krize nisu zasnovane samo na „činjenicama", već takođe i na subjektivnim percepcijama krize ili „naracijama krize". Ove naracije poseduju tri različite osobine: scijentizacija, moralizacija i polarizacija. Scijentizacija podrazumeva simplifikovanu percepciju nauke i demokratskog procesa odlučivanja. Ona redukuje ulogu nauke na singularnu proceduru koja proizvodi neupitnu „istinu" i time menja sliku demokratije od pluralističkog i *a posteriori* procesa donošenja odluka u sredstvo primenjivanja *a priori* naučne istine. Druga osobina naracija krize je moralizacija, odnosno stilizacija sopstvene moralne pozicije kao superiorne u odnosu na drugu, čime se unosi binarizam i prijatelj-neprijatelj odnos u politički diskurs demokratije. Najzad, demonstriram kako ove osobine podrivaju demokratski pluralizam time što ga vode u dvodimenzionalnu (ili u slučaju Sredinjenih Država, jednodimenzionalnu), bezkompromisnu i „sve ili ništa" polarizaciju.

Ključne reči: nova konfliktna struktura, naracije krize, demokratija, scijentizacija, moralizacija, polarizacija

IV

CORRIGENDUM
ISPRAVKA

CORRIGENDUM

CORRIGENDUM ON: Munkholt Christensen, Maria (2021), "Meditatio mortis. Meditating on Death, Philosophy and Gender in Late Antique Hagioraphy", *Philosophy and Society* 32 (2): 177–193, DOI: https://doi.org/10.2298/FID2102177M.

The author of the article: Munkholt Christensen, Maria (2021), "Meditatio mortis. Meditating on Death, Philosophy and Gender in Late Antique Hagioraphy", *Philosophy and Society* 32 (2): 177–193 has informed the Editorial Office of an error in the title of the article. The correct title of the article is: "Meditatio mortis. Meditating on Death, Philosophy and Gender in Late Antique Hagiography". The author has requested for this error to be corrected. Therefore, the journal is publishing this Corrigendum.

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In the text: (Logar 2009: 12).

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Example:
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In the text: (Ross, internet).

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Primeri:

U literaturi: Miller, Johns Roger (1926), „The Ideas as Thoughts of God“, *Classical Philology* 21: 317–326.

Hartman, Nikolaj (1980) „O metodi istorije filozofije“, *Gledišta* 21 (6): 101–120.

U tekstu: (Hartman 1980: 108).

U napomeni: Hartman 1980: 108

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Primer:

U literaturi: Espozito, Džon (prir.) (2002), *Oksfordska istorija islama*, Beograd: Clio.

U tekstu: (Espozito 2002).

U napomeni: Espozito 2002.

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U literaturi: Nizbet, Robert (1999), „Jedinične ideje sociologije“, u A. Mimica (prir.), *Tekst i kontekst*, Beograd: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, str. 31–48.

U tekstu: (Nizbet 1999: 33).

U napomeni: Nizbet 1999: 33.

12. ČLANAK IZ NOVINA

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U literaturi: Logar, Gordana (2009), „Zemlja bez fajronta“, *Danas*, 2. avgust, str. 12.

U tekstu: (Logar 2009: 12).

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U tekstu: (Ross, internet).

U napomeni: Ross, internet.