Introduction: Balkan Precariat

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Introduction: Balkan Precariat

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This special issue of Contemporary Southeastern Europe highlights recent research in the social anthropology of three former Yugoslav countries, namely Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia. It represents a shift away from previous studies of the former Yugoslav region, which has focused mostly on the dissolution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and ensuing wars. This issue points to the necessity of studying the Western Balkans from perspectives beyond the ‘war and nationalism’ paradigm. With its comparative approach, anthropology is probably the best of the social sciences for undertaking such an endeavour. Similarly to how Michael Herzfeld has shown that the geographically marginal position of Greece provided a platform from which to study European anxieties, the Western Balkans, as a European periphery whose ‘otherness’ is affirmed through its non-EU status, can serve as a laboratory for studying the workings of weak states with unregulated markets. Why go all the way to Africa, as the Comaroffs suggest, when the European periphery, exemplified in Bosnia, Macedonia and Serbia, represents a much nearer experimental playground for neoliberal capitalism? Not only do the Western Balkans offer an insight into post-socialist and post-war coping mechanisms, but they also serve as a mirror for the EU and its market policies in relation to non-EU countries. The effects of the financial crisis of 2008, argue the Comaroffs, were felt much more strongly in places

"in which there has been a relatively abrupt conversion to laissez-faire from tightly regulated material and moral economies; where evocative calls for entrepreneurialism confront the realities of marginalization in the distribution of resources; where totalizing ideologies have suddenly given

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1 The articles in this issue were presented at the workshop ‘Balkan Precariat: Mediating the Global Economic Crisis in Southeast Europe’, organized by the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, and held in Marija Bistrica, Croatia on 8-10 November 2013.


way to a spirit of deregulation, with its taunting mix of desire and
disappointment, liberation and limitation. Individual citizens, many of
them marooned by a rudderless ship of state, attempt to clamber aboard the
good ship Enterprise. In so doing, however, they find themselves battling
the eccentric currents of the ‘new’ world order, which forge expansive
connections between the local and the translocal, short-circuit established
ways and means, disarticulate conventional relations of wealth and power,
and render received borders within and between nation-states at once more
and less porous.”

The articles in this volume echo all of these issues – individuals struggling to
survive under new and precarious circumstances, taking part in the ‘race to the
bottom’ with the global South (Chiara Bonfiglioli); embracing entrepreneurship
and battling with an unregulated market (Andre Thiemann); navigating the
intricacies of a devolved healthcare system (Čarna Brković); and building one’s
own social security system through personal networks of support in the wake of
a collapsed social welfare state and economic crisis (Ivana Bajić-Hajduković).
In recent years there have been a series of excellent ethnographic studies about
post-socialist worlds, and more specifically Central and Eastern Europe. Following in the footsteps of Caroline Humphrey and Katherine Verdery, who
paved the way for Western anthropologists working ‘behind the Iron Curtain,’
the next generation of scholars turned their attention to analyses of everyday
life in post-socialist societies. Daphne Berdahl, one of the ‘pioneers’ in the
anthropology of post-socialist worlds, writes Michael Herzfeld,

“mounted an important challenge to ‘transitology’ dominated as it was
until the late 1990s by political scientists and economists. Against their
‘linear’ and ‘teleological narration’ of the transition in terms of ‘capitalist
triumphalism’, Daphne championed a view that emphasized ‘the
contradictions, paradoxes, and ambiguities of postsocialism’.”

Berdahl was one of the first anthropologists to put nostalgia for state socialism
on the research agenda of post-socialist scholars. In her seminal work
“(N)Ostalgie for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things”
(1999), Berdahl showed that nostalgia for socialist times was actually people’s
attempt to make sense of their lives in a post-socialist context. ‘Nostalgia,’
according to Berdahl, was ‘about the production of a present rather than the
reproduction of a past’. Post-socialist transformation brought tremendous

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changes in people’s lives, and it was through remembering the past that people tried to come to terms with the profound changes in their daily existence. Notwithstanding differences between post-socialist countries, there are many parallels to be drawn between the example of ‘(N)Ostalgie’ in East Germany (GDR) and memories about socialist past in other East and Southeast European countries. In fact, it would be hard to find a contrary case, that is, a post-socialist country where people do not talk about the past with a sense of nostalgia. This does not imply, however, that people long for the oppressive communist regime that was in place in those times. Rather, as Berdahl so brilliantly demonstrated in her work on consumption in re-unified Germany, they are 'longing for an alternative moral order'.

This ‘longing for an alternative moral order’ while battling with precarious living and working conditions in post-socialism is one of recurring themes in this issue. In Chiara Bonfiglioli’s article about textile workers in Macedonia, she shows how remembering one’s life and working conditions during Yugoslav times is a way of coping with difficulties in the present. The differences in working conditions in the textile industry during socialism and post-socialism are, perhaps, more striking in Macedonia than anywhere else. In the socialist period textile factories provided workers not only with a workplace, which meant stable employment with fixed working hours and paid overtime, but also with access to a subsidized canteen, childcare, on-site medical and dental services, and the use of holiday apartments or hotels owned by the factory for its workers. The workplace, in other words, was the centre of one’s sociality during Yugoslav socialist times, or ‘one’s social universe,’ in Susan Woodward’s words. Writing about the meaning of the workplace in an East German context, Berdahl noted that ‘in the GDR the workplace was not only the centre of everyday sociality, it was also a symbolic space of community and national belonging’. Bonfiglioli takes this observation further by analysing the impact of radically different post-socialist working conditions on Macedonian women in particular and the country in general. Unlike the former GDR, which became part of a unified Germany in the post-socialist period and followed a different model of capitalism, Macedonia embarked on a path of neoliberalism, only to become ‘one of the most unequal countries in Europe’. This inequality directly reflects gender inequality, because 85 per cent of textile workers in Macedonia are women and their wages are around ‘one third of wages in other industrial sectors’. In other words, while the Macedonian textile industry secures contracts with Western European clients by offering lower prices and a quicker and cheaper turnover than its competitors in East Asia, the highest price in this ‘race to the bottom’ is borne by women textile workers, who work and live in precarious conditions. Macedonian textile workers work for 4-5 euros per day, often also during night and weekends without taking breaks for fear they might lose their jobs. Thus, to remember one’s life and work during socialist Yugoslav times provides an escape from the precariousness of today. This work of memory is particularly important to women who are double victims of neoliberal transition in Macedonia. Not only are they paid much less

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9 Creed, Masquerade and Postsocialism, 47.
11 Berdahl, On the Social Life of Postsocialism, 49.
and have no employment security, things they had during socialism, but all the working benefits they had, such as subsidized childcare on work premises and factory canteens which relieved women from a large part of domestic work, no longer exist.

Andre Thiemann’s article in this issue analyses the struggle for the production of social security among agriculturalists in Serbia. Although the setting is very different to the industrial world of textile workers in Macedonia discussed by Bonfiglioli, the ‘longing for an alternative moral order’ and the personal struggle to create social security, which the state ceased to provide with the end of socialism, are themes that run through both cases. Thiemann’s article shows how people navigate the system with what he terms ‘moral appreciation.’ That is the social revaluing of constant (objects and machines) and variable capital (people). These continuous adjustments to the ever-changing socio-economic circumstances, under which they work, put agriculturalists in post-socialist Serbia under tremendous strain. This is exemplified in their own terms as physical and mental ‘breaking’ (pućanje). The low prices at which agriculturalists have to sell their produce are associated with government policies that protect big businesses at the expense of small agricultural producers. Similar to the case of Macedonia and its textile industry, ‘ineffective state regulation benefits monopoly formation, because it does not counter the expansion of inequality inbuilt into capitalism’ (Thiemann).

Both Bonfiglioli’s and Thiemann’s case studies show that weak state regulation, in the region comprising the former Yugoslavia, or a lack thereof, leaves producers – in the first case, factory owners who claim to be the victims of the global race to the bottom along with their workers, and in the second case, small agricultural producers burdened with debts incurred from unfavourable terms of microfinance credit – in a vulnerable position, having to compete against big businesses, local and transnational. The results of this laissez-faire approach to new market capitalism, in post-socialist Serbia and Macedonia, are painfully palpable in the two articles presented here. In both cases, however, one of the major forces in coping with a lack of social security is the personal networks of support, or social networks. In Thiemann’s article, the success of one’s business operations, as well as of attempts to preserve one’s mental and physical health, depends almost entirely on one’s social network capital. Similarly, in Bonfiglioli’s article, social support, which factory workers had access to during socialism, is nowadays co-opted with intergenerational support between family members.

Social networks also play a key role in two other articles in this issue. In Čarna Brković’s article about humanitarian actions in Bosnia, one’s survival is predicated on the size of one’s social network and one’s visibility within that network. According to the Dayton Peace Agreement from 1995, the Bosnian healthcare system was decentralized and split across thirteen healthcare systems, each with its own legislature and ministry of healthcare. People only had access to healthcare services within one of these ministries, that is in the area where they resided; if one’s medical condition required additional services

12 Berdahl, On the Social Life of Postsocialism.
that were offered in one of the other systems or abroad, one was more or less left at the mercy of a bureaucratic lottery and ‘humanitarian actions.’ The more one became visible in social networks the more likely it was that one could solicit help through ‘humanitarian actions.’ In other words, one’s chances of receiving life-saving medical treatment were dependent largely on arbitrariness and the need to continuously move within as large of a social network as possible. This combination of arbitrariness, and the need to move, is what Brković terms ‘moveopticon.’ She follows Nancy Fraser, who placed Foucault’s notion of the ‘panopticon’ in a new landscape of social regulation, more privatized and dispersed than any envisioned by Foucault. According to Fraser, while the Foucauldian concept of the ‘panopticon’ was based on exercising discipline within a Fordist welfare state, in today’s neoliberal state disciplinarian power is more dispersed and international. These changes, argues Brković, ‘are reflected in a new kind of regulatory structure which is flexible, multilayered, and selectively repressive – and whose contours have yet to be fully determined.’ The individuals described by Brković are left to his or her own devices to secure medical treatment and a ‘chance to life.’

The centrality of social networks to one’s survival, though in a different context than that of the Bosnian healthcare system, is a subject of analysis in Bajić-Hajduković’s article in this issue. This article examines the consequences of practices that enabled people’s survival during the UN embargo and hyperinflation in Serbia in the 1990s. Strategies for overcoming food scarcity included a return to pre-industrial ways of sourcing and preparing food, buying and selling on the black market, smuggling, and strengthening social networks. It was social networks, argues Bajić-Hajduković, which had the longest legacy, because of the nature of debt created within them. Debt created in social networks had no certain timeframe within which it had to be settled, and as such, the debtor could be called upon to ‘pay’ at any point. Similarly to the Bosnian case (Brković), where people helped others without expecting direct reciprocity, in Serbia during the crisis of the 1990s, solidarity was incredibly widespread. Bajić-Hajduković argues that this solidarity worked as a kind of ‘social network tax.’ In other words, by being part of a social network and helping out whomever possible, one created debt that remained part of that network, the so-called ‘social network tax.’ In the vacuum created by the crumbling of the welfare state in the early 1990s, social networks not only filled the gaps in the system, but also became a permanent tool for survival.

The phenomena presented and analysed in this issue’s articles all attest to the tremendous creative forces and adaptability to socio-economic challenges at work in the post-socialist space of the former Yugoslavia. In response to the grinding adversity from unrestrained neoliberal market forces paired with insufficient institutional social support, people have become increasingly reliant on their own social support networks, which are predicated on intergenerational solidarity (Bonfiglioli), or the assistance of neighbours, colleagues, friends and family (Thiemann, Brković, and Bajić-Hajduković). Social networks serve as a buffer against calamity, as a source of help when institutional support is lacking or insufficient; dynamic and enduring, they are

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probably one of the most powerful tools for overcoming the effects of short- and long-term economic crisis. Last but not least, as the articles in this issue demonstrate, social networks are a building block of new markets and their moralities in regions where the Fordist welfare state is a thing of the past and where omni-networked individuals constantly negotiate their and others’ survival.

Bibliography


Gender, Labour and Precarity in the South East European Periphery: the Case of Textile Workers in Štip

Research Article

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Gender, Labour and Precarity in the South East European Periphery: the Case of Textile Workers in Štip

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The paper investigates the living and working conditions of textile workers in the city of Štip (Macedonia). The textile industry was highly developed during socialist times, but underwent a process of decline after the Yugoslav break-up. While it still represents a relevant economic sector for post-socialist Macedonia, the textile industry is highly dependent on outsourced orders from Western Europe. Local workers’ living and labour conditions, therefore, are affected by the global ‘race to the bottom’ for production costs that is typical of the garment industry. On the basis of a series of interviews conducted in Skopje and Štip with workers and factory owners, the article argues that contemporary working conditions in the Macedonian textile industry are characterised by poor labour rights, gender discrimination and widespread precarity. In contrast to the current circumstances, working and living conditions during socialist times are positively remembered by workers, who claim that their social status and living standards have deteriorated in the course of the last twenty years. This narrative of precarity is also partially shared by local entrepreneurs, who emphasise the global and local obstacles that hinder the development of the textile industry in Macedonia.

Keywords: Macedonia, textile industry, labour, gender, precarity

Introduction

This paper investigates the transformations of the textile industry that occurred in the post-Yugoslav region in the last twenty years, and their effects on workers’ rights, on the basis of the case study of the Republic of Macedonia. The textile industry represented a relevant economic sector in Yugoslavia during socialist times, covering approximately 12% of total manufacturing in the 1970s. In the 1980s Yugoslavia “was among the world’s leading producers of textiles and wearing apparel.”¹ Yugoslav fashion brands were sold both locally and internationally.

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and the industry employed hundreds of thousands of workers, predominantly women, contributing to the industrialisation of rural peripheries. Textile factories – similarly to other factories – were not only production centres, but also centres of community life, especially in peripheral towns.\(^2\) Factories also operated as social security providers. Job security was a crucial feature of the socialist welfare system, and the workplace “was a key access point to social benefits including social security and healthcare.”\(^3\) Employment became a crucial means to access wages, social insurances, healthcare, cheap housing and paid holidays, which were also subsidized through the construction of specific holiday resorts for factory workers. As Woodward notes, during socialism “the employment status defined the identities, economic interests, social status and political loyalty of Yugoslav citizens. One’s place of work was the center of one’s social universe.”\(^4\)

The socialist welfare regime also produced very specific gendered effects. Socialist authorities promoted an idea of women’s equality that was strictly related to women’s participation in the labour market. At the same time, women’s simultaneous status as mothers and caretakers was recognized by the state and “socialized” through a number of welfare arrangements. Scholars of post-socialist countries have defined these welfare measures as the “working mother” gender contract.\(^5\) In Yugoslavia, women gained access to free healthcare, free abortion, free education, extended paid maternity leave for up to a year, canteens and childcare facilities in the workplace, and shorter working hours to take care of small children. These services, however, were not evenly developed across the country, and women’s employment rates in Yugoslavia in the 1970s and 1980s were closer to Western Europe than to Eastern Europe, scoring around 33% of the total workforce, with significant differences between Yugoslav republics.\(^6\)

Women’s access to the labour market was dramatically curtailed in the 1990s and 2000s, when the post-Yugoslav region underwent a process of “re-peripheralisation” and “de-development.”\(^7\) The textile industry, which was

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traditionally a ”woman’s industry,” was particularly affected by this process of economic decline. Many textile firms ceased to operate as a result of the collapse of the internal Yugoslav market and of the privatisation process. The privatisation of the previously socially owned textile industry was characterized by shady agreements, mismanagement and corruption. Besides the loss of jobs, many workers found that they could not claim back decades of social contributions or years of unpaid wages during transition times as a result of the bankruptcy of their firms.° Trade unions, which traditionally were integrated within state structures during socialist times, did not manage to offer significant resistance, and membership rates plummeted as a result of deindustrialisation.°

In the textile sector, the closure of previously socially owned factories has been accompanied by high unemployment and by a growth in informal and irregular textile labour. At the same time, private companies have been created, and the textile industry is still relevant in post-Yugoslav states. In Croatia (4.4 million inhabitants), textile and clothing producers employ approximately 20,000 people. Similar numbers are also employed in Slovenia (2 million inhabitants) and Bosnia-Herzegovina (3.7 million inhabitants). The greatest textile production is taking place in Macedonia (2 million inhabitants), with around 40,000 employees in the leather, clothing and textile sector, as well as in Serbia (7 million inhabitants) with around 30,000 workers. The textile sectors in Kosovo and Montenegro are very small and oriented towards the internal market.°

During socialist times, textile factories were producing both “full package” collections for the internal and external market, as well as outsourced lohn production for export. In post-socialist times, state and private firms are, instead, mainly exporting garment products to Western Europe through the lohn system. The lohn system - or OPT (Outward Processing Trade) process – functions on the basis of the outsourcing of the labour intensive phases of production. Western partners send the textile material and the local factories carry out the sewing and finishing phases.° This particular system started in the 1970s and was further developed in the 1980s, with West Germany outsourcing its production to East Germany or Yugoslavia. The system expanded considerably in the 1990s, as a result of the tariff and custom

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°° I am combining numbers quoted in the most updated press releases and in textile trade reports, as systemic data on different post-Yugoslav states is not available and numbers of employees in the industry are fluctuating every year. For data on Macedonia, see the official website Invest in Macedonia. (accessed: 13 May 2014).

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protection put in place by the EU towards CEE and SEE countries. With time, this produced Eastern and South Eastern Europe’s increasing dependency on Western markets, transforming the region into “a sewing shop for the EU.”

Together with low labour costs, the proximity of Eastern and South Eastern Europe to Western Europe constitutes a significant competitive advantage when it comes to delivery times, whose speed is regulated by consumption cycles. The delivery times of Eastern and South Eastern Europe are considerably faster than those from China or South East Asia. At the same time, since the 2005 WTO trade agreement on textile and clothing, the trade of textiles and garments from the global South to the global North has been considerably liberalized, leading to increased competition from Asia. Local manufacturers in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, therefore, are pressured to accept the conditions imposed by Western clients, and respond to the global competition over market prices by pushing salaries down.

These interrelated processes have had devastating consequences on textile workers across the former Yugoslavia. The destruction of the state industry, widespread unemployment and lack of job certainty have pushed textile workers to accept lower wages and poorer working conditions in newly founded private companies. In this paper, I am going to focus on the Macedonian textile industry, and particularly, on the case study of Štip, a textile city located in Eastern Macedonia, which was an important centre of textile production during socialist times and remains a relevant textile hub in the present days. On the basis of a series of interviews with workers and factory owners conducted in Skopje and Štip in February 2013, and on the basis of a wide array of secondary literature, I argue that working conditions in the Macedonian textile industry are characterized by poor labour rights, gender discrimination and widespread precarity.

Textile workers, as I will show, describe post-socialist transition as a prolonged crisis, which turned workers – and particularly women workers - into precarious subjects subjected to exploitation. Interestingly, this narrative of precarity is partially shared by factory owners. While local entrepreneurs are keen to downplay workers’ complaints and social conflict in order promote a “better image” of the industry, they also emphasize the pressure of global price competition, the dependency from foreign partners, and the lack of state

13 Musiolek, Made in… Eastern Europe, 16.
16 In Skopje and Štip I conducted three in-depth interviews with women textile workers of different generations, as well as with two factory owners and a government representative. I also conducted informal talks with local citizens who have relatives working in textile factories, as well as with factory owners and factory employees at different levels of management (both men and women). All names quoted in the article are pseudonyms.
support for the local textile industry, which makes entrepreneurship in textile difficult and uncertain.

1. Textile production in post-socialist Macedonia: the case of Štip

The town of Štip, located in Eastern Macedonia with a population of 50,000 inhabitants, became a relevant textile centre during socialist times. The whole region was known for its production of silk, cloth and laces in the 19th and early 20 century. Štip's main kombinat – that is, a colossal textile complex combining different production processes for yarn, raw fabrics and finished products – was the Makedonka factory, which employed several thousand workers, predominantly women. The overwhelming presence of women in the garment industry is determined by gender stereotypes when it comes to the evaluation of women as work force. Women are associated with “nimble fingers” and docility, and are considered more suitable for monotonous work. In socialist Yugoslavia, gendered stereotypes about women workers and their “female nature” were very much present, and women tended to be concentrated in “light” industries such as the textile industry.

The Makedonka factory was created in the early 1950s as a result of the industrialisation drive, and their products were mainly sold on the internal market. A centralized heating system and a railway line were included in the Makedonka complex. Cotton was produced in Macedonia until the 1970s, but in the 1970s and 1980s cotton was mainly imported from countries that were allied with Yugoslavia through the Non-Aligned Movement, such as India and Egypt. Weaving plants and apparel producers linked to the Makedonka complex were gradually built in Štip and the surrounding towns and villages to absorb the great number of unemployed people living in the region. Makedonka included a restaurant for the workers serving one free meal per day, discount stores, childcare facilities (mainly in the 1960s), a library, and a choir that performed around town. The factory also provided housing for its workers, through a complex of apartment buildings. Makedonka also provided holiday facilities on the shores of Lake Ohrid, a summer resort on the mountain Plachkovica, and a hotel at Lake Dojran. The workers could make use of the hotel resorts for symbolic prices. Workers could also take interest-free credit and advances on their wages for a variety of purposes. The other main factory for the production of ready-made garments, Astibo, was founded in the 1960s, and employed thousands of workers in Štip and the surrounding villages. In the 1970s, Astibo became the main producer of casual apparel in Yugoslavia, with 60 shops all over the country. In the early 1980s, Astibo had 3,700 workers, and the factory had grown so much it included “a health care institution (zdravstvena stanica), a restaurant, and a day care centre for employees’ children (detska ustanova).” The health care institution also had “a unit for gynaecological treatment offering, among others, counselling about the


use of contraceptives, a lab, a paediatrician, and a dentist unit." The company also built houses for its workers in Štip.20

When looking at factory magazines from socialist times, it becomes clear that these services were not always provided in an optimal manner. Complaints about the quality of childcare facilities, or about the food in the canteen, were common. Workers often complained of low wages and the impossibility to afford summer holidays, especially from the mid-1980s. The flats provided by the factory were also not sufficient and there were long waiting lists. When it comes to domestic work, women were the ones in charge of reproductive labour, and had difficulty reconciling waged labour with family duties.21 Despite its limits, however, the degree of social security that existed during Yugoslav times came to be seen as desirable when compared to the period of crisis, war, economic instability, de-industrialisation and widespread poverty that followed. In the case of textile workers, the post-socialist, post-conflict transition entailed a dramatic deterioration of social rights and labour and welfare standards.

The decline of Makedonka and Astibo already began in the 1980s, when the two factories were increasing producing through the lohn system for foreign partners. The disintegration of the Yugoslav market in the 1990s, and the impossibility to make financial claims throughout Yugoslavia, brought Makedonka to a deeper crisis. A restructuring program was inaugurated in the early 1990s, and workers were laid off in different waves. The privatization process started in 1995, and eight different entities were created from eight different departments of the factory. These entities, however, did not recover and, in 2000, the government started a bankruptcy procedure. Several attempts of privatization of the whole complex failed, and the company was put into liquidation and sold piece by piece from 2001 onwards. Many costly machines were disbanded and stolen, or sold as scrap metal. Since 2003, private owners created several small companies on the premises of Makedonka. Many building from that complex, however, are in ruin nowadays. The Astibo complex, instead, was bought by a consortium of enterprises in 2002, and its main building was fully renovated.22

Several small textile firms (konfekcije) appeared in Štip during the transition period. A 2005 report lists 58 firms, employing some 5,600 workers on the premises of formerly socially owned enterprises (but workers currently mention the data of 8,000 employees). This amounts to 45% of those employed in the city.23 Logistics, transport companies and intermediaries related to the business have also developed since the transition. Women are mainly employed in textile factories in Štip, while men are driving taxis or working in the logistics sector. Recently, however, men who could not find other professions

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21 See notably the collection of the factory magazine "Makedonka: bilten na Pamučna industrija ‘Makedonka,’ 1955-1990. Available at the National Library of Serbia, Belgrade. An inquiry published in the Makedonka bulletin in 1959 wondered how was it possible for women to show up for productive work at all, seen that they needed on average 1.5 hour for shopping, 2 hours for cleaning, 3 hours for washing and cooking, and 3 hours for child rearing.
have also started to look for work in textile factories. Men are also to be found among the owners of the private textile plants. They are often the previous directors of state plants, who have built their careers as private entrepreneurs. The factories in town are mainly producing garments for the Western market through the \textit{loh}n system. Štip is one of the main centres of the Macedonian textile industry, which employs 34\% of total employees in the manufacturing sector; that is, 6.7\% of all jobs in the country according to the State Statistical Office.\textsuperscript{24} The industry represents “more than one third of the total exports, as well as more than one third of the employed population in the manufacturing sector accounted for the textile industry.”\textsuperscript{25} It only creates, however, 3\% of the national GDP.\textsuperscript{25} The main export clients are Germany, Greece, Holland, UK, Italy, USA, Serbia, Montenegro, Turkey, Croatia and Belgium (with Germany and Greece accounting for 51\% and 19\% respectively).

As opposed to other cities in former Yugoslavia, such as Leskovac (Serbia), where textile production has completely declined, Štip is presented as a success story of post-socialist privatisation in policy-making documents.\textsuperscript{26} Textile workers’ living conditions, however, challenge this optimistic image. The exploitative conditions of workers in the Macedonian textile industry have been the object of a recent report commissioned by the Clean Clothes Campaign, an international alliance of labour rights organizations, unions and NGOs that are campaigning for the respect of workers’ rights in the garment industry. The report took into consideration Macedonian factories (mostly located in Štip) producing work wear for the army and for well-known airlines in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The report highlighted multiple violations of human and workers’ rights: poverty wages that are 19\% of a living wage, forced overtime with Saturdays as “normal” working days, short-term labour contracts, health concerns and lack of trade union representatives.\textsuperscript{27}

This situation is common throughout the country. Another report on Macedonia published by the Fair Wear Foundation documented excessive work and low wages, and noted that workers are often forced to work overtime according to the urgency of external orders.\textsuperscript{28} The report also highlighted the unsafe conditions of most textile factories, where workers have to bear peaks of heat and cold due to the absence of air conditioning or heating. According to data given by the Macedonian Ministry of Labour, serious injuries at work have been numerous in the last years: 112 in 2004, 115 in 2005, 160 in 2006, 176 in 2007 (with 18 deaths in both 2004 and 2007).\textsuperscript{29} Journalist Natasha Dovoska reported the case of a woman, Marijana Stojcevska, 40 years old, who died after 13 hours of consecutive work at a machine in a Greek factory located in Bitola.

\textsuperscript{27} Clean Clothes Campaign/Network Wear and Setem. 2012. \textit{Made in Europe, Swiss, Austrian and German Workwear Suppliers Profit from Macedonian Workers’ Poverty and Fear}. (accessed: 13 May 2014).
\textsuperscript{28} Fair Wear Foundation, \textit{Macedonia country study}, 2010, 27.
\textsuperscript{29} Fair Wear Foundation, \textit{Macedonia country study}, 2010, 28.
in the summer of 2007. The owner of the factory prevented the doctor from entering the factory and issuing a certificate of death. In another factory in Kocani, six seamstresses were brutally attacked by an owner for asking for late salaries. They were working more than ten hours for 4-5 euros a day, producing garments for luxury brands. In another instance, thirty workers were locked in a factory in Prilep to finish an order for export.30

Gender discrimination is apparent since textile workers in Macedonia are 85% women, and wages in this sector are around one third of wages in other industrial sectors. The nation-wide minimum wage for textile workers in Macedonia, 102 euros, is even lower than the nation-wide net minimum wage of 131 euros, established in 2012. The minimum wage in textile, clothing and leather manufacturing will be harmonised with the minimum wage in other sectors only in 2015.31 Women often rely on subsistence agriculture to supplement their low wages, and this further increases their working hours.32

Another recent ILO report on the gender pay gap in Macedonia points at the role played by gender in the stratification of poverty and inequality in the country; not only are women’s employment rates much lower than men, but women also “tend to be concentrated in sectors closely related to the tasks they perform in households (social work, health care, education and, within manufacturing, the textile sector). The work they perform is often undervalued. Women are overrepresented in the textile sector, where international competition is fierce, working conditions are often very poor and workers often work overtime.”33 The union density in the textile sector, moreover, is extremely low, around 9% (as opposed to 78% in education, 50% in the metal industry, and 30% in construction). This indicates “the deterioration of women’s wage bargaining power as they account for the bulk of employment in this sector.”34 Moreover, as noted by the Fair Wear Foundation report, workers’ right to strike in Macedonia is severely limited.35 Workers’ rights are also limited by the fact that many of them work in the informal sector, that is, their social contributions are not paid. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, undocumented workers are 10-15% of total textile employees.36

The precariousness, and daily struggle for survival, of textile workers in Štip is far from being an exception in Macedonia. As Saveski noted, working conditions across the country have considerably worsened in the last twenty

35 Fair Wear Foundation, Macedonia case study, 14.
years, not only for textile workers, but for all categories. The amendments made to labour laws in Macedonia in the 1990s and 2000s – allegedly aimed at making the country more competitive for foreign investment – have considerably disempowered workers. As an anonymous legal adviser told *Businessweek* in relation to the labour reform of 2008:

> “Employers can do pretty much anything they want with their employees for a lot of reasons, one of which is the huge unemployment rate. That creates a situation in which anybody is seen as easily replaceable, regardless of his personal qualities.”

Often presented as a success story of neo-liberalism and privatisation in the region of former Yugoslavia, Macedonia is, in fact, one of the most unequal countries in Europe. 28.7% of Macedonian people live below the national poverty line and the unemployment rate is over 30% since 1994 (men’s official employment rates are of 52.3% while only 30.3% of women are employed). An increasing number of people in Macedonia, as noted by Novoska, are “unemployed, discouraged, underemployed and with low pay,” with low skilled workers and women being most hardly hit by the transition. Workers in the textile industry were particularly affected, as employees in the industry are generally women with primary or secondary education. In the next section I will analyse textile workers’ subjective accounts of post-socialist transition in Štip. These accounts are emblematic of the processes of economic and social precarisation that have affected the Macedonian society in the last twenty years.

2. **Socialist security, post-socialist precarity: workers’ voices**

Among textile workers living in Štip, feelings of precarity, social uncertainty and injustice are widespread. My interviewees recall the shock of post-socialist transition, and the material and subjective difficulties it entailed. In the case of Nada, a textile worker in her forties, the 1990s represented a traumatic period. When her parents lost their jobs at the Makedonka plant, Nada had to leave Skopje, where she was studying English literature at the university, and look for work back in Štip. She found a job in a private textile factory, thanks to her knowledge of English, and acted as an intermediary with foreign clients. Nada supported her parents with her salary for eight months, until they found work again in the private sector. Working conditions in the 1990s were particularly exploitative, since the new entrepreneurs took advantage of political

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39 The inequality between wealthiest and poorest incomes is staggering: the highest salary of top managers in 2011 was 630 times higher than the minimal wage of 131 euros. Saveski, Sadiku and Vasilev, *Wealth and Poverty in Macedonia*, 11-15.


uncertainty and poorly defined legal regulations at the expense of the workers. As Nada recalls:

“There was a time in which there was not much respect and they [the owners] used it very well. They earned a lot of money and people worked very hard.”

Many workers were not legally registered, thus, lost several years of social contributions and did not benefit from annual leave and sick leave. Nada herself lost four and a half years of social contributions.

At the end of the 1990s, Nada recalled always being at work, to the point that she did not realise she was four months pregnant until she fainted in the factory. Initially, she attributed the lack of menstrual cycle to the irregular working and eating schedule she followed: “I was four months pregnant! And I didn’t know. I cried a lot. It was such a rush, we were always at work.” Overtime work and low wages are common in the textile industry, and workers feel exposed to the demands of the bosses. To quote Nada once again:

“This is not a career, you cannot call it a career, it’s very heavy work. You always work, curb your head, and do what they tell you to do. The problem here is, the owners are careless, and they will tell you, ‘this should be finished’, they don’t care about sickness and neurological disorders, if the nerves leave you. And on the other hand they will always find some trick to diminish your wage.”

Beside workers’ low wages, the competitiveness of the textile industry in South-Eastern Europe is largely due to its proximity to Western Europe, and to the fact that small quantities of garments can be ordered and produced relatively quickly. As advertised by the official website Invest in Macedonia, one of the competitive advantages of the Macedonian industry is “high flexibility and readiness to adapt to the demands of foreign markets.”

The working time in textile plants, thus, is largely dictated by the speed and quantity of the orders from abroad. All over Štip, one can hear complaints about the length of working days in textile plants. According to textile workers, working rhythms are often very strenuous since many factory owners promise unrealistic results to foreign partners, and are not able to calculate the real productivity of labour in relation to the work force capacity. Workers are often working during weekends to finish orders. Ana, a quality controller in a private factory who is in her thirties, recalled one recent instance in which she had to work the whole weekend, nights included:

“One Saturdays you cannot plan anything, you work till seven pm, or eleven pm, we had moments in which we had to work until four in the morning. Four in the morning! Meaning, you wake up at six in the morning and work the entire day, until four the next day! There was some order to finish, we had to pack, then we had some problems and so on.”

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Workers today often compare current working conditions with the working conditions of their parents’ generation. The working week, for instance, was much shorter in socialist times. As recalled by Nada:

“My parents used to work eight hours, every day, until Friday. When there was a night shift, it was paid extra. And they had a kitchen in their factory, they could eat there (...) Everything was different, it was easier. On Saturdays they were home! They did not work, and on Sundays as well. Sunday was a day of rest from work.”

The social rights connected to workers’ status under socialism are often compared to the lack of social rights experienced after the transition. The possibility of access to summer holidays, a symbol of socialist popular culture (Grandits and Taylor, 2010), is also evoked as a privilege of older generations. While workers at Makedonka and Astibo could access holiday resorts for token prices, summer holidays today have become unaffordable for most workers. Moreover, even if textile workers are formally entitled to 21 days of annual leave, employers discourage them from taking holidays during the summer, when production levels are very high, and tend to give few days of annual leave during March or September-October, during the mid-fashion season. Ana, for instance, decided to take a holiday in summer, and the result was a wage cut:

“Last year my boss gave me 5 days but not together, first 3 then 2 days free. And when I wanted to go on holiday with my family in August, I said I wanted to go and I have to go, to take my children on the seaside or the lake, and they took away 100 euros from my salary. Ok go, but it will not be paid. So my wage was 100 euros less! They do not respect workers’ rights.”

Another social right that is scarcely respected is the right to maternity leave for women workers. Formally, workers are entitled to nine months of paid maternity leave, extendable to twelve months in case of the birth of more than one child. From 1998 onwards, however, the law has been amended and an employee can come back to work, if she wishes, before the termination of her maternity leave. This amendment is presented as a worker’s right, but in fact, means a “backdoor right for employers to exert pressure on their female employees to return to work prior to the termination of the maternity leave period.” In the case of my informants, maternity leave was not always paid. While Ana had no problems in obtaining her leave, Nada, for instance, was told that she could take six months of leave, but without pay, “since there is no law on that, until the law comes out. Then we will give you that in two rates.”

Women have trouble reconciling paid work and family duties, particularly due to overtime work. The lack of public childcare infrastructure also contributes to the precarity of women workers. Intergenerational solidarity is widespread: while older women help their daughters or younger female relatives with childcare, younger women are generally taking care of the elderly and of the ill. In the case of Nada, she could count on her mother-in-law for childcare, while Nada took care of her when she became ill. On the other hand, her mother Vera took time off work to take care of her husband’s mother before she died. Intergenerational solidarity is also used for housing purposes, since the

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parents’ generation had access to housing more easily during socialist times, and could help younger couples with housing, as in the case of Nada, who swapped her smaller apartment with her parents’ larger one. Older relatives’ pensions and houses are often crucial to the survival of entire families in Štip. Family networks are a form of “social capital,” against the loss of social security, and are a characteristic element of post-socialist transition (Daskalova et al. 2012).

The sense of precarity is also very strong among women from the older generation, who used to work at the Makedonka factory. Older women often face unemployment and a devaluation of their position, as in the case of Vera, Nada’s mother; in her early sixties, once administrator in Makedonka, she managed to find work in a private company where she is now performing very heavy work through a textile press machine. Vera compared her living standards in socialist and post-socialist times as follows:

“I could, at that time, take care of two daughters with two wages from “Makedonka”, have two flats, and go to holiday...today I cannot. Today we work – I, my husband, my daughter and her husband – and we have only two kids [her nephews], and we cannot. I get a fixed wage of 12,000 denars (200 euros). 5,800 denars I have to pay this month for the electricity bill. That is 50% of what I earn! Until 1993 I got 700 marks, as if I would get now 350-400 euros. I could have taken a credit to buy a whole kitchen, pay it back in a year and I would not feel it. But now I cannot. I cannot buy anything, a television, nothing.”

Generally, living standards and working conditions experienced during socialism are remembered in positive terms, since textile workers were rewarded with higher social security and with greater status. Workers’ wages were sufficient to guarantee good living conditions and workers felt rewarded through other benefits. Nowadays, workers instead feel that they receive little in exchange for their hard work. Vera, for instance, states that she works “like a horse,” but without receiving a proper wage. “I work and I like to work. But this is not important. What’s important is that I cannot get to the end of the month with my wage.” Other factors of precarisation are the lack of job security, the inability to claim years of wages and social contributions due to bankruptcy, the closing of factories, and the postponement of retirement age. Women like Vera, who started working very young, have to, nonetheless, work until 62 years old, whatever their social contributions (radni staž). As a result of the decline of the textile industry, many women lost their jobs in their 50s, when they were too old to be hired again and too young for retirement. In Macedonia, and the Western Balkans more generally, entire generations lost their industrial jobs without being old enough for retirement and are at great risk of poverty. “There is an army of unemployed over 50s across the Balkans, an entire generation who suffered the economic fall-out of war, the collapse of the former Yugoslavia and the brunt of their countries’ transition from socialist economies to capitalism.”

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3. The employers’ side: the local effects of global competition

Narratives of textile workers in the Macedonian town of Štip, as shown in this article, emphasise feelings of precarity, social uncertainty and injustice. Workers compare present working and living conditions to the work security and social rights experienced before transition. The loss of social status, purchasing power and a wide array of social benefits connected to factory employment contribute to shaping their negative feelings towards their current working experiences. Overtime work, low wages and difficulty in accessing basic social rights, such as annual leave, maternity leave and sick leave are common. In the eyes of textile workers, factory owners are the ones profiting from this situation, imposing unrealistic working schedules onto workers and gaining from the exploitation of workers’ labour.

Entrepreneurs in textile, however, partially share feelings of precarity and uncertainty. They underline the multiple problems of the Macedonian textile industry, particularly the dependency from Western clients and the pressure determined by global and intra-European competition. A local entrepreneur, Marija, stated:

“That is the pressure that we have from our clients, because they say ‘If you don’t give this price, we will go somewhere else’. We cannot beat the competition with environments where they have bigger productivity, less taxes on the labour force, and they are in Europe – I am talking about Bulgaria and Romania – or they are more supported by the government like Albania.”

Marija also stressed the multiple responsibilities, regulations and taxes that fall on textile entrepreneurs, and talked of the difficulty of having to cope with a negative image as factory owner in the eyes of the workers:

“In Macedonia ‘gazda’ [the owner] is someone who wants to beat them, exploit them, and all the time they think that they give more than they receive. Maybe everywhere is the same, but here there is too much accent on that problem, and we really have a problem with this, because it is really rare to have loyal workers.”

Trade representatives and factory owners highlight the need to change the “bad image” associated with working in the textile industry, which makes Macedonian young people scarcely interested in working in the industry. Entrepreneurs also argue that the existing technology should be upgraded to increase productivity, in order to produce not only outsourced lohn orders (which now amount to more than 90% of the Macedonian exports), but also full package collections, which can be more profitable on the global market. State authorities, however, do not seem interested in supporting the industry like neighbouring South East European countries do. The lack of state investment, they claim, is making entrepreneurship in the textile industry hard to sustain in the long term. As Marija concluded:

“If you have every year exports of 50-60 millions and no one wants to invest in that sector it means something. I am tired. But I don’t have solutions, because it’s really difficult. Everybody sees you as exploiting people, and
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*nobody analyses how much money I earn and give to the government, and to the people who are working.*”

Another paradox is, that while Macedonian companies are exporting garments to Western Europe, Macedonian citizens are mainly buying cheaper clothes from Turkey and Asia for local consumption, as the local market is no longer a target of local production. As opposed to the current Macedonian market of 2 million inhabitants, the Yugoslav market, which included 20 million inhabitants, was more viable for textile production. Dragan, a factory owner who used to be a manager of a socialist factory, recalled, “*Yugoslavia was like an European Union, but we did not know how to deal with it. We had an internal market before the collapse.*”

Overall, entrepreneurs’ narratives tend to emphasise the multiple local and global obstacles they face, and to downplay workers’ demands for better conditions. At the same time, they expose the structural problems of the Macedonian textile industry (a small internal market, limited state and foreign investment, the need to upgrade the existing technology and know-how), which are hindering growth and productivity and are reinforcing the dependent character of local production based on Outward Processing Trade. The dependency from Western clients and from global garment prices pushes local entrepreneurs to keep up with global concurrence through the “race to the bottom” in production costs, that is, to pay low wages and to demand overtime work in order to satisfy Western clients’ requests for “just in time” production. These interrelated processes reproduce Macedonian textile workers’ exploitation, gender discrimination and precarity, and make the textile industry scarcely sustainable for Macedonian society as a whole, in its current conditions.

Conclusions
The article investigated the transformations affecting the textile industry in Macedonia in the last twenty years, focusing in particular on the shifting living and working conditions of textile workers in the city of Štip. On the basis of textile workers’ testimonies, I argued that the position of textile workers dramatically worsened as a result of post-socialist transition, privatisation and global competition in garment production. The dependency of the local industry on outsourced orders from Western Europe means that Macedonian workers became increasingly affected by the global ‘race to the bottom’ for production costs, which characterises the garment industry worldwide.

The worsening of labour conditions led to widespread feelings of precarity among workers of different generations. Since the garment industry has traditionally been a ‘women’s industry,’ women were most heavily affected, losing not only living wages and consumer power, but also many of the benefits attached to the ‘working mother’ gender contract, such as childcare services, paid maternity leave, subsidised holidays and shorter working time. Many of them are currently struggling with overtime work, job uncertainty, poverty wages and unsafe working conditions.
The situation of labour exploitation and the gender discrimination present in the industry have been recently documented by several international reports. The minimum wage in textile manufacturing is not yet harmonised with the minimum wage in other industrial sectors, and textile manufacturers are often imposing strenuous working rhythms for very low wages to comply with Western demands. In a context of widespread unemployment, textile workers have scarce bargaining power, with trade unions being almost completely absent from private factories. For employers, low production costs are seen as the only way to maintain their businesses despite global competition, a small internal market and lack of state investment.

The position of textile workers reflects the general worsening of labour standards since the beginning of the transition era, and the high degree of social inequality that characterises the Republic of Macedonia. While telling tales of precarity and exploitation, women workers show their resilience by relying on intergenerational solidarity and extended family networks to make ends meet. Remembering a different, more secure past is another way for them to cope with the harshness and uncertainty of the present.

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“It was the least painful to go into Greenhouse Production”: The Moral Appreciation of Social Security in Post-Socialist Serbia

Research Article

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“It was the least painful to go into Greenhouse Production”: The Moral Appreciation of Social Security in Post-Socialist Serbia

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This paper deals with the agricultural production of social security. By representing a rural case study from Central Serbia, it contributes to the economic history of post-socialist former Yugoslavia and explores the conditions of the possibility for social alternatives to neo-capitalism. In the case study, a male actor - embedded within family and wider social networks - successfully accommodates the adverse macroeconomic conditions through hard work, micromanagement of limited resources, and the production of social relations. He also combines new micro-spatial fixings - productive facilities - with revaluing morally depreciated older ones. In sum, this case study shows how networks of actors can invest their energy into reversing the moral depreciation of labor and capital under conditions of capitalist competition and growing inequality. These practices point to an emancipation from the inegalitarian moral economy of capitalism, a process I conceptualize as “moral appreciation”. As its goal emerges the production of a relatively egalitarian society within the lived space of the urban-village continuum.1

Keywords: moral appreciation, social production of space, social security

Introduction
Modernist historians have bemoaned the longue durée of “underdevelopment”2 and

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2 Underdevelopment is understood in development studies, e.g. in the dependency school and in systems theory, as a consequence of unfavorable value exchange relations resulting from the peripheral integration of a region into the capitalist world system. Sundhaussen critiques these explanations as lacking systemic “inevitability”. See Sundhaussen, Holm. 1989. Die Verpasste Agrarrevolution: Aspekte der Entwicklungsblocade in den Balkanländern vor 1945, in Industrialisierung und Gesellschaftlicher Wandel in Südosteuropa, edited by Roland Schünfeld. München: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, 50-51. By contrast, he explains Central Serbia’s underdevelopment in comparison to Northwestern Europe culturally with a historically lacking “capitalist spirit” (Sundhaussen, Die Verpasste Agrarrevolution, 45, 49, and 59).
“underemployment” in the Central Serbian countryside starting from the late 19th century, attributing underdevelopment to a lack of work discipline as well as capital. Compared to the very unfavorable conditions in Yugoslav agriculture until the interwar period, characterized by “regional developmental differences, rural overpopulation, low degree of industrialization, scarcity of capital and low level of education” combined with rapid population growth and the fragmentation of landholdings, the socialist history of Yugoslav agriculture between 1945 and ca. 1985 was a relative success story. The increasing use of experts, machinery, fertilizer, etc. led to yearly productivity growth of over 3%. However, in the three decades since, agricultural trends are more contradictory. In the fertile river plains, land tends to be bought up and amassed by external investors. Meanwhile, in hill villages, the fragmentation into small land-holdings continues and the industrialization of agriculture decelerates because of very limited capital and declining returns for smallholders. Should this be seen as a mere reversal to cultural patterns observed before the Yugoslav era, cementing “underdevelopment”? Sundhaussen’s and Palairet’s usage of the term underdevelopment is problematic - it induces them to compare non-Western experiences with the yardstick of an idealized “Western” history and ends up narrating “defective” histories. Unfortunately, such research artifacts have been reproduced by Palairet in his more recent studies of Yugoslav industry. He interprets the irregularities of industrial mismanagement as having so negatively affected the attitude and productivity of industrial workers that it led to the “attrition of human capital” resulting in a “return to underdevelopment” since ca. 1978.

However, during my fieldwork in a Serbian village, I was struck by the intensive work habits and skillful management practices of the farmers, whether of recent “industrial worker” origin or of “older peasant” pedigree. My informants’ social practices contradict allegations of underemployment, slack, and mismanagement. They evince strategic planning and self-exploitation. Following Sundhaussen’s recent call to return to economic history, which had been relatively neglected since the late 1980s because of the cultural turn in history, in this paper I critically unpack Palairet’s “attrition of human capital thesis”. I show how the allegedly “uneconomic” work ethic turns out to be an elastic strategy of “moral appreciation”, which serves to organize the social security of a population under constant capitalist crisis conditions.

My anthropological approach to the contradiction between capitalist market expansion and creative social countercurrents takes its inspiration from the recent debate between Thelen and Verdery and Dunn. Thelen criticized Verdery’s classic

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5 Höpken and Sundhaussen, Jugoslawien, 880-90.
explanation of socialism as an “economy of scarcity” for its reductionism. Such economism resulted unintentionally in the people living under socialism becoming morally valued - positively as resistant selves domesticking the socialist revolution through their shrewd use of networks - or negatively as the “post-socialist other”, whose “corrupted” networks prevented a functioning market economy. More rarely, post-socialist resistance to capitalism was valued positively. As an alternative, Thelen proposes to look at post-socialist social relations to learn something new about human possibility. She also suggests that we need to “re-diversify that [economic] common ground” before diversifying our understanding of (post)socialism,9 an approach taken up in this study by using a Lefebvrian relational approach to the social production of space.10

Methodologically, I take inspiration from the situational analysis and extended case study methods pioneered by the Manchester School of Anthropology, in which theoretical discovery is grounded in the meticulous analysis of the ethnographic material. I use the results of participant observation and targeted interviews to understand the agricultural (re)production of social relations as “moments of social life in the very process of formation”.11

In accordance with Naumović’s study on Serbian organic poultry farming,12 I argue that rather than “culture” it is the adverse macroeconomic conditions, the unsound agricultural policy in Serbia, and the moral economy of capitalist market exchange, which make agriculture a gamble. Unlike Naumović, who analyzes the failure of an agricultural business, I concentrate on a successful agricultural household in order to point to the possibility of successful relational practices within these circumstances.

1. The production of social (in)security in everyday rural places
A half-century ago, E.P. Thompson explained the resistance of 19th century English working people against the logic of liberal capitalism as a defense of their moral economy against its “disembedding”.13 However, rather than understanding market economies as “immoral” economies, I follow Marx’s “incidental moral anthropology”14 that under capitalism the moral valuation of humans merges with their financial valuation:

“Whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them.”15

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9 Thelen, Economic Concepts, 89.
In capitalism, the moral valuation of persons is ideally based on the principle of meritocracy, their ability to produce marketable goods. Concomitantly, non-productive people are financially undervalued, be they old and infirm, incapacitated, unskilled, unemployed, or too young for production. Moral undervaluing in the form of financial inequality translates into a graded liberty to dispose of oneself as one sees fit, thus undermining the liberal promise of freedom for all. An aggravating factor is that these valuations are made on the basis of prejudices regarding gender, race, and class.16 A final drawback is that under normal conditions the capitalist moral economy cannot fulfill its own promise of meritocratic inequality, because it multiplies inequality to the disadvantage of workers.17

Thus, the contradictory moral economy of capitalism legitimates inequality and poses the problem of social security. Social security is here understood as the social organization of the satisfaction of material wants, needs, and desires of those persons not able to satisfy them on their own. It is the complex byproduct of six interrelated, non-hierarchical dimensions. These dimensions are defined as (1) cultural ideologies, (2) normative institutions, (3) individual perceptions, (4) social relations, (5) social practices, and (6) social and economic consequences.18 After having sketched (1) the cultural ideology of capitalism above, and providing (6) some background information on social and economic consequences, I will portray (2) the life story of a social actor embedded in the normative institution of the family and his (3) perceptions of social security. Subsequently, I will show how these perceptions are shaped by and shape his (5) everyday social practices within (4) the forming of social relations. I show how he negotiates the perceptions and cultural ideologies of social security, which leads him to (2) reshape and reproduce several other local normative institutions.

Every society produces its own space: the social production of space is an inscription of temporal social relations into the spatial field.19 How does neo-capitalist society with its increasing social insecurity reshape the space in Central Serbia? What we gain from a Lefebvrian approach is to think together three dialectically interlinked processes of the social production of space: (1) perceived space (everyday spatial practices and spatial perception by the five senses), (2) conceived space (the space as known and discursively constructed by actors), and (3) lived space (the habitualized living in symbolic space, which may be creatively reshaped by people offering them a surplus of identification).20

Lefebvre’s relational concept of space has been narrowed and pushed by David Harvey into a political-economy direction. Harvey provides two important concepts for my article which I use and re-extend in a Lefebvrian mode: “spatial fix”, and “moral depreciation”. “Spatial fix” is a concept Harvey

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16 Varul, Reciprocity, 59, 66.
17 Marx, Capital, 212, 536.
19 Lefebvre, Production of Space, 175.
20 Lefebvre, Production of Space, 38-42.
developed while exploring the Limits of Capital,\textsuperscript{21} denoting a heterogeneous set of actions within “capitalism’s insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical extension and geographical restructuring”\textsuperscript{22}. The concept describes, among others, the tendency to build up space through capital investment in immobile (infra)structures and mobile machines in order to secure increasing capitalist production and exchange, while reducing expenditure of time. This complex and always reversible process, which leads to a “fixed space (or ‘landscape’)”\textsuperscript{23} of production is coproduced by many actors on different scales, from transnational corporations and state projects over national to local actors. I expand the notion to micro-spatial fixes undertaken or at least co-produced by Serbian smallholders.

As the result of the uneven development of capitalism, spatial fixes are prone to devaluation, making way for new spatial fixes elsewhere.\textsuperscript{24} Such devaluation of fixed capital has been called “moral depreciation” by Marx.\textsuperscript{25} Moral depreciation results from three tendencies: (1) the social wear and tear of machines, by which a machine transfers part of its value on its products (“straight line depreciation”); (2) the replacement cost of a machine (“what it would cost to replace it with an equivalent machine”) and (3) the innovation of machines which can reduce the average social value of a machine before it has amortized.\textsuperscript{26} Fixed capital becomes devalued through moral depreciation and falls into disuse. Labor, as well as capital, which from a Marxist viewpoint is the result of “congealed labor”,\textsuperscript{27} need to be activated in order to produce surplus value. Morally depreciated capital can be reused to produce value in market segments in which lower productivity is off-set by lower machine or labor costs. I call such recycling of underused capital “moral appreciation”. However, moral appreciation also needs to be exerted on the individual and collective human producers of value. I hence introduce moral appreciation to the study of the economy and of social relations.

\section*{2. Rural dynamics}

In former Yugoslavia, which has been characterized as one of the most rural states in Europe, rural activity rates declined steeply, from 76.6\% in 1931 and 73.3\% in 1945 to 49.6\% in 1961 and 38.2\% in 1971.\textsuperscript{28} By 2009, over one fifth of Serbian employees work in agriculture.\textsuperscript{29} The change brought about by the integration of the village into wider market relations and urbanization has been palpable.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
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\end{thebibliography}
The regional economy experienced the insertion and the extraction of capital in several waves. Not all influx of capital stimulates productivity, as the history of credit in agriculture shows. The first “credit crunch” of Serbian agriculture happened in the late 1920s. Since 1926, world grain prices had been dropping, and by 1929, the central state founded an agricultural bank to provide credit as an alternative to usury. By 1932, the agricultural bank had to put a moratorium on debt repayment as 700,000 agricultural businesses were on the brink of bankruptcy (often they had borrowed money for food). In 1936, these debts were partly cancelled.  

Forty years on, the now socialist economy of Yugoslavia became increasingly integrated into the fast financializing capitalist world market through credit arrangements with international lenders like the World Bank. Through the mediation of “socialized agriculture”, part of this money was productively invested in agriculture in the Green Plan between 1973 and 1985. By that time, “social property” made up ca. 15% of the agricultural land in Yugoslavia, but it accounted for higher intensification, land concentration, and productivity than the “private sector” and offered valuable services to the small producers, including provision of credit and production materials, or the buying up of products. Inauspiciously, the necessity of debt repayments as part of Structural Adjustment policies in the 1980s seriously undermined the Yugoslav economy and led to a spiral of economic quarrels between its constituent republics, constituting an important factor of the breakup of the Federation in the early 1990s.

A generation later, at the end of the year 2000, the World Bank invited leaders of the alliance of 18 opposition parties, which had just ousted Milošević from power, for economic strategy talks. Unprepared for the task, the new leaders accepted the World Bank’s standard tool for boosting “development”: microcredits. Arguably, an almost fully industrialized country like Serbia might have wished for bigger credit lines or technological support in restructuring production. Microcredits are less suited to the task and can be rather seen as part of an ersatz-developmental package on the premise of family entrepreneurship and micro-capitalism, according to which “borrowers are expected to improve their socio-economic conditions by using loans for business ventures which allow them to accumulate capital for reinvestment and loan repayment with interest”. Microcredits are an ambiguous policy tool, whose effects on social security are debated. In the Serbian case, it was clear that microcredits could not save the big plants of socialist Yugoslavia. In the

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31 Höpken and Sundhaussen, Jugoslawien, 887.
32 Alloock, Explaining Yugoslavia, 137-40.
35 Personal communication with a member of the World Bank negotiation team (8. November 2013).
37 Indeed, microfinance can have adverse social effects. In September 2010 in Andhra Pradesh, India, a political crisis erupted “triggered by a wave of client suicides that exposed predatory lending practices, market oversaturation, dishonest interest rates, and coercive recovery methods. Under conditions of cutthroat competition in a nontransparent and crudely regulated microfinance marketplace, microfinance institutions (MFIs) had recklessly overextended credit, using the Indian government’s priority sector finance targets and international investors’ money to expand their lending and feed a spiral of client debt” (Mader, Making the Poor Pay, 6).
Municipality of River City, 10,000s of workers were laid off. The unemployed faced the option of small entrepreneurship based on microcredits. Overnight, 1000 micro-producers mushroomed.

Since 2009, I do fieldwork in Lower Village, a small dispersed village in the hilly regions of Central Serbia. A paved road connects Lower Village to the urban and formerly heavily industrialized municipal center River City (ca. 70,000 inhabitants) some 12km to the southwest. The village had ca. 1000 inhabitants. Almost half of its approximately 300 households declared themselves agrarian households at the Serbian treasury (September 2009). Since 1948, a village cooperative had worked several dozen hectares of confiscated land in the village. After some permutations, this cooperative joined in 1975 the Agricultural Industrial Combine (PIK) River City, the municipal branch of a Belgrade based mixed food-production and distribution chain. The united cooperatives of several villages now collaborated with a conglomerate of urban firms including a modern milk plant, slaughter house, Rakija factory, and a food trading section. When, in the wake of post-socialist restitution processes and war-endowed economic problems, the component parts were set free in 1996, the cooperative Lower Village resumed working on an independent basis, led by a local agronomist. The cooperative declared bankruptcy in 2009, after pension funds had been secured for all former employees.

Today, in the village exist some 50 bigger objects for animal husbandry and milk production (for up to 100 pieces of cattle), and four larger glasshouses. Industry, commerce, education, and transport tend to be located in town. Multi-sectorial earning strategies are practiced by polutani, peasant-workers employed in the industries and services of the town who also practice agriculture as a secondary activity. Official unemployment is high. The (renewed) importance of agriculture for Lower Village was attributed from the inside as well as from the outside. For instance, the director of the Center for Social Work (CSW) River City stated “this is a typical agricultural village. This is not New York, nothing special about it, only two or three social cases there”.

3. The economic story of the Todorović's

In this part, I present the case study of a male agriculturalist and his domestic group, who are regarded as diligent (vredni) and also good (dobri) by the majority of villagers, because they help themselves and others. In the analysis of the case, I focus on several crucial aspects of the relations of production: domestic relations, access to land, family work, paid labor, and advice and help between neighbors. Furthermore, I discuss non-domestic relations, as reproducing village relations and solidarities has positive repercussions for the household. I also consider the understudied but important aspect of credit relations. Finally, I highlight the

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38 Toponyms and names are anonymized.
41 All translations of quotes are mine.
42 Interview, Director of CSW, 17. July 2009.
contradictions of agricultural production by characterizing its backbreaking quality even for its most “elastic” practitioners. I begin the case study with the condensed life story of the protagonist.

3.1. The life story of Goran Todorović
Goran Todorović was born in 1967. When he was a toddler, his parents migrated to West Berlin to work as industrial laborers, from where they returned in 1979. As they could not find a kindergarten place in Germany at the time, he was sent back to Serbia to be raised by his maternal aunt and uncle living in a neighboring village, whom he came to consider his real parents. In his youth, Goran enthusiastically trained football and was a very good pupil. However, he decided not to pursue higher education and became a skilled blue collar worker. In 1986 and 1987 he served in the Yugoslav National Army in Croatia. Since 1988, he was employed in a big machine tool factory in River City, which produced mechanical component parts for the world market. The work was well-paid and allowed him to play football and enjoy the nightlife. Around 1990, after a pub brawl, the pub owner reported him to the police for swearing at Tito, a delict considered to be high treason. However, Milošević’s legislative abolished the paragraph, so he was spared prison. At that time, when his firm faced problems and wages plummeted, he left and started laboring in tiny private firms, e.g. in yoghurt production and distribution in Creek Town. He did not want to “fight for the communist Milošević” in the Yugoslav secession wars and evaded the military police that was looking for him. As soon as it was safe, Goran resurfaced and worked in the football club’s pub in his aunt’s and uncle’s village. As player, pub tenant, and club official, he met “so many people that otherwise only bosses of big firms know” and met and married Vesna, a girl from southwestern Serbia who then resided with her aunt. With the growing needs of accommodation, they moved to the compound of Goran’s parents in Lower Village, where they crammed into the small house (ca. 30m²) built by his grandfather. In 1998, their daughter Marica was born, in 2000 son Mihajlo. In 1999, Goran participated in the war in Kosovo. In 2000, he began planting potatoes on their one-hectare family land to earn some money on River City’s green market. What began as a “back-breaking” (ubitakčka) emergency production grew over time into a small, successful agricultural smallholder unit. Today, the Todorović provide several near city markets with fresh produce (in 2009 lettuce, salad, spring onions, cabbage, tomatoes, potatoes, and peppers). Since 2006, Goran became active in the village football club, when his son became old enough to train. Goran was also elected a member of the village’s Local Council from 2009 to 2013.

3.2. Becoming an agriculturalist
For roughly two decades Goran had shown great geographical mobility and work ethos in order to sustain a careless working class youth life. But as a father of a baby girl, and with his wife pregnant again, Goran was stuck and could not resist being drafted for the Kosovo War. Jobless, with a disconcerting

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43 In fall 2009 I conducted a semi-structured interview with Goran Todorović at his farmstead, during part of which he sorted tomatoes for the green market. In 2012 we had a 7 hour narrative biographical interview on two consecutive days (16. and 17. May 2012).
war experience just behind him and a family to support, he had to start from scratch. The decision making process concerning where and what to work was confusing. With almost no capital, land, machinery, or knowledge, it took him two years to fully plunge into agriculture, as he told me in 2009. In May 2012, Goran presented the result as a strategic decision:

“I have one hectare agricultural land, and so we contemplated which production we should take up. It was least painful [najbezboljnije] to get into greenhouse production where you need much work, but less means. And then we started in 2000, as I said with the help of the bank, 1-2-3 nylon greenhouses. Now we broadened this protected space to 0.1-0.15 hectares, and since last year we have also 0.15 hectare under glass.”

By 2012, Goran still alluded to the deliberations as “painful”, but overall he performed a rather “entrepreneurial” discourse. His memory of worries and failures had not receded, rather it is morally rewarding to narrate one’s life as a success story in the neo-capitalist moral economy. The family’s fast progress in the agricultural business was attributed by Goran to several individual factors, like his strategic planning capacity, as he colloquially put it: “imam kefalo” or “imam kliker”. Another factor he emphasized was that he “never shied from work”. Indeed, his work day often covers 16 hours, and afterwards he still caters to social obligations. However, individual prowess does not nearly exhaust the reasons for Goran’s achievements.

3.3. The complex relations that make an agriculturalist
Since 1996, Goran and his wife lived close to his parents, from whom he was emotionally distanced since his childhood. However, they established a tolerant modus vivendi. Goran and Vesna also struck friendships with several young neighboring families like the Bobanović, who were invested in agriculture. Uroš Bobanović, a milk technician by training, was married since 1990 and had two children. Together with his wife and parents he worked a diversified agricultural cycle. In the early 2000s, they even acquired a glasshouse for gerbera production (see below). Uroš’s family advised the young couple to start with potato production, which was relatively easy to begin with and if it did not sell in the market could be consumed privately. Vesna, who had grown up in a village, supported this idea. In 2000, the Todorović accomplished their first successful production with the help of their neighbors on their tiny parcel of land. Their once established cooperation continues to this day.

Soon, the Todorović started to establish reliable trading channels through long-lasting interactions with medium scale green market traders of several surrounding cities. The initial financial means to start production had come from Goran’s and Vesna’s parents, and now Goran’s paternal aunt contributed another half a hectare plot for 100€ rent annually, where Goran drilled a waterhole for subsurface irrigation. He also leases half a hectare land from a neighbor. The increasing professionalization of production was funded through

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44 Interview with Goran Todorović, 16. May 2012.
45 On both days of the narrative-biographical interview, Goran Todorović had worked from 4 am till 8 pm.
bank loans, which were relatively easy to come by, for reasons explained above. However, while many villagers used credits for consumption, Goran invested into nylon covers, poles, pipes, a multi-fuel stove, fertilizer, and foreign seeds, and he invented a heating system for a plastic greenhouse. Goran’s relatively cheap spatial fix could produce high-priced early vegetables at low cost. To heat this greenhouse system, Goran needs to get up every three hours, from January through to March. The Todorovići thus established a work-intensive position in a market segment with comparatively little competition. Husband and wife often work side by side and seem content with their situation. The microcredits, however, heavily drain actualized turnovers. Goran and Vesna engage with revolving vertical bank credits that have to be taken in Dinars but serviced in €-equivalents. The steady inflation (2012 at 7 per cent annually) minimizes their returns.

As a response, the course of production has to be increasingly diversified, oriented upon both catching premiums for selling early vegetables and allowing for a year round inflow of “living money” (živa para) to manage the monthly running costs of 700€. Goran reckons that for each credit of 4000€ he paid 1500€ more servicing it. So far, he “earned ca. 4000€ for the banks”, that is he realized ca. 12,000€ credit via three microcredits.

3.4. Shifting spatial fixes

How did the Todorovići diversify their few resources? I cannot go into the details of year-round intensive production but concentrate here on the main, micro-spatial fixing strategies. A couple of years ago, Goran expanded raspberry production on Vesna’s parents’ land to 0.5 hectares, and in 2009 he planted a fruit orchard (sweet cherries and apricots) on one hectare around his family house. Raspberries are produced in the mountainous regions of southwestern Serbia around clusters of post-socialist macro-spatial fixes. Oligopolies of refrigerated warehouse owners control the supply chains of productive factors like fertilizer and pesticides to the small producers, and buy up, transport, and market the produce on international markets.

While Goran periodically travels to his parents-in-law to support different stages of the raspberry cultivation process, his wife and children pick the fruits in July and August together with two laborers. During these months, Goran needs to run the vegetable production in Lower Village with two urban

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46 One credit was used to “begin solving the housing problem”.
47 Second hand glasshouses are directly imported from the Netherlands. One square meter of building envelope costs 15€. Nylon covers can be bought in Serbia and cost ten times less.
48 Their shared positive outlook on agriculture has much to do with their joint decision-making process and subsequent close collaboration. In another successful agricultural couple, where the wife had been forced by her family to decline work offers outside agriculture, opinions were clearly divided. While the husband was content, his wife bitterly told me: “If it were now like once, it would not be bad, but today? Agriculture? […] I would not propose it to anyone at all” (Interview, female agriculturalist, 20 May 2012). In both cases, the rather invisible female self-exploitation contributes to making the farm viable. For a comparable Spanish case study, see Narotzky, Susana. 1988. The Ideological Squeeze: ‘Casa’, ‘Family’ and ‘Co-operation’ in the Processes of Transition. Social Science Information 27(4), 559-81.
49 Interview with Goran Todorović, 16. May 2012.
Raspberries are much more expensive fruits than summer vegetables (2012: 1€-1.20€/kg for raspberries at the wholesale market compared to ø 22 Cent/kg for tomatoes at retail green market prices). Goran slowly phases out labor-intensive open field vegetable production and switches to more machinable fruit tree plantation because the raspberry-attempt at marketing up created labor bottlenecks and the labor costs diminish earnings.

His fruit tree investment is expected to have a first turnover in 2014. Goran plans to stay in intensive greenhouse production of early varieties in winter and spring, pursue mid and upper market production in summer (tree fruits and raspberries), and gain a free autumn. For years, Goran and Vesna had no holidays or time for sick leave, which they hope to rectify. Building up microspatial fixes at home (greenhouse, orchard) and tapping into outside large-scale spatiotemporal fixes of vertically integrated marketing chains (through raspberry farming), Goran successfully navigates the uneven capitalist development. His spatiotemporal fixes increase agricultural viability at the cost of excessively binding his forces and relations of production. Under capitalism, macro- as well as micro-spatial fixings are crisis-prone, as one spatial fixing bears the next problem and crisis is shifted around from fix to fix.

3.5. “Breaking” or “bending” under economic pressure

A gift for cultivating relations, dedication to hard work, and creative micro-spatial fixings are no guarantee that the agricultural cycle is successfully run - even for bigger players than Goran. A case in point are the glasshouse owners in the village who try to recuperate their large investments through flower production, sometimes combined with import and retail business strategies. At the onset of my fieldwork, these businesses were proudly presented to outsiders as the epitome of the village’s modern, intensive, and profitable agriculture. However, all but one of them had failed by 2013. This was due to heightened competition by Balkan-Holland, a native of River City and former 

gastarbajter

(work migrant), who had lived for 20 years in the Netherlands. Balkan-Holland has no family ties in Lower Village, but formerly cooperated as a truck driver with the 
Pantić

family business, the longest established flower glasshouse owners in the village. The 
Pantić

business, presently run by the 
Pantić

couple, their unmarried sons in their twenties, and a couple of laborers, had started their production/import firm in the early 1990s. In the past years, they had advised other interested villagers like 

Uroš Bobanović

to establish similar businesses.

In 2008, Balkan-Holland built the biggest glasshouse of the village widely visible in its very center, on land adjacent to the dissolving village cooperative. Like the 
Pantić
, he specialized in rose production, and he delivered his imported and selfproduced flowers to the same retailers all over Central and Western Serbia - whose addresses he had snatched from the 
Pantić

previously. Balkan-Holland’s activities were the nail to the coffin of 

Uroš Bobanović’s fledgling 
gerbera

production, who later completely reoriented his business (see below).

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50 On top of self-exploitative, at this moment the 
Todorović’s farming becomes petty capitalist.
51 Balkan-Holland innovated with the import of vegetables and seeds, and subcontracted onion production (from Dutch seeds) to villagers.
Another producer, owner of the formerly biggest glasshouse, went financially bankrupt, and according to gossip also socially. My research assistant, who visited that family, told me “on je totalno pukao”, literally: “he totally burst [to pieces]”. This “bursting” not only signified the widely visible cracking of his glasshouse. I find the metaphor of an osier stake bending appropriate: of flexible substance and considerable elasticity, a fresh osier stake gradually splinters into ever more seams when it is pressured, torn and worn by spatial and temporal dynamics. The “total cracking” of such an elastic body/material, however, implies sustained, severe use of force. “Pući” (to crack) is thus a relational folk concept standing for becoming mentally ill or economically ruined. It blends today with the capitalist valuation of people in which a life’s achievement is sidelined by fluctuating success.

The cracking point of small agriculturalists is related to many interconnected, oscillating factors, including bodily robustness (fitness, health, skills), accessible and reliable social relations, financial and material support, and so forth. The Pantići proved extremely elastic. Not only did they withstand the competition, but they “rebound”. They reminded retailers of their long cooperation in mutual trust and credit relations and berated Balkan-Holland for copying their practice and their contacts. By using moral economic arguments, reinvigorating social ties, which went along with reduced prices, they drove Balkan-Holland out of operation within three years. For his failed investment, the latter had taken loans of over 200,000€.

The already mentioned third glasshouse owner and now failed gerbera producer, Goran’s neighbor and agricultural mentor Uroš Bobanović, had been barely able to service the considerable debt he had incurred for his glasshouse even before the “flower wars”. In 2010 Bobanović made a “clean cut” after the mourning period over his deceased father ended and started anew with a technically and hygienically up-to-date mini-cheese production. In order to be independent of middlemen, by 2012 his wife sold their branded cheese in Belgrade’s green market, where she stayed 6 days a week. Uroš meanwhile runs almost single-handedly the full agricultural production cycle (grains and vegetables, cow milk, cheese and beef production) with some help from his elderly mother and neighbors.

Stoically, he carries his lot.

In 2011, Goran started sharecropping Uroš’s glasshouse, raising salad and early potatoes, working on increasing its soil fertility. This is a perfect case of moral appreciation. The intermittently abandoned production facility was revalued by Goran and Boban, who installed a new irrigation system and reused it for new purposes. I have proposed in the introduction the concept “moral appreciation” to understand instances in which people are engaged in reproducing and transforming their social space. To recap, moral appreciation is the social revaluing of morally depreciated machines or objects (constant capital) and people (variable capital). Moral appreciation always happens in a triple sense: economically, morally, and socially. Economically, reusing the glasshouse reinforced agricultural market production and helped to contribute to the social

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52 Varul, *Reciprocity*, 65.
54 According to gossip, Uroš Bobanović had borrowed 70,000 €.
55 Interview with Uroš Bobanović, 18. May 2012.
security of both families. Morally, villagers shun the “breakage” of local spatiotemporal fixes and approve of their reinvigoration. Socially, the neighbors held together despite changing fortunes and supported each other to overcome pressure.

3.6. Agricultural economy

Goran himself has been forced to bend in the face of uneven development and capitalist oligopoly formation for three times: 1989, 1999, and 2011. The last economic twist was agricultural. When I visited Goran in 2009, he produced tomatoes in bulk, which he grew from Israeli, Dutch, and German seeds. However, wholesale tomato imports by the transnational supermarket chain Maxxi, an oligopolist in Serbia’s retail market, started undercutting prices. In 2012, Goran had dropped tomato production completely. Like most villagers, Goran connects the recurring slump in prizes of agricultural goods partly to the Agricultural Ministry of Serbia and big economic players: “The state and certain tycoons work against the villager”. Goran portrays “the state” as uninterested in helping small producers, and implicated “it” in cutting shady deals with importers to the detriment of local agriculture. This unfavorable view on Serbia’s agricultural economy is shared by an array of scientific, political, and journalistic sources. The rural sociologists Bogdanov and Božić identify, for instance, in Serbian agricultural policy

“a discriminatory attitude towards certain groups of users [small farmers] to the benefit of others [licensed agribusiness] […]. The stability of measures is not provided […]. Financial resources are not specified for several years in advance, and they change depending on the annual budget […].”

The economic specialist of an International Development Cooperation (IDC) corroborated such views. He stated that the Ministry of Agriculture was run “short-termist”, by a “totally uninterested minister”, while the restitution policy was “a minefield” in which “tycoons were able to influence the legal process”. This shortsighted agricultural policy leads to the endless deferral of reforms. For instance, in order to support the fledgling cooperative sector, a new Law on Cooperatives is publicly discussed since 2010, without having been ratified so far. Furthermore, EU-accession negotiations are accompanied by decreasing tariffs for agricultural imports, with the effect of increased inland competition, while it is questionable whether Serbian farmers “will use the opportunities offered [on EU markets, which] depends on their competitiveness in terms of price and quality”. In sum, agricultural policy favors large producers in line with the moral economy of capitalism. Meanwhile ineffective state regulation of the expansion of inequality inbuilt into the capitalist process of value production engenders monopoly formation. The situation is decidedly disadvantageous for the small, indebted producers, who were, as shown above, sometimes just created by an ersatz-developmental state policy a decade earlier.

56 Interview with Goran Todorović, 16. May 2012.
57 Bogdanov and Božić, Review of Agriculture, 216.
58 Interview, IDC, 22. October 2009.
59 Berkum and Bogdanov, Serbia on the Road, 62.
60 Berkum and Bogdanov, Serbia on the Road, 159.
3.7. Working for the future
Blaming the state for idleness and corruption translates in Goran’s case into the “hope for” a better, more responsive state, and motivated him to actively take part in village life by running the local football club since 2006. Socially, this football club mediates the “attrition of human capital”, an aspect noted by supporters and participants who greeted the physical activity and male bonding of the village footballers - kids, adults, and veterans - as reinvigorating. When this “gridding” of social life proved successful, Goran and his club colleagues expanded activities by volunteering in the local government of the Local Council (Mesna Zajednica). As his main motivation, Goran states “helping the village”. For his children he wants to overcome the lack of a road and streetlights so they could go safely to school. While reproducing the discourse of the irresponsible state, Goran attempts to practice a more responsive (albeit discursively concealed) state relation.

Casually Goran remarked that “they want us to associate now”. He is a declared former anti-communist who employs an entrepreneurial discourse, so it is a step for him to contemplate the governmental plans to rehabilitate cooperatives. On the other hand, in his economic, social, and political practices, Goran already evinces a collaborative style, shares access to resources and distributes responsibilities. Formalizing these activities offers the legal construction of limited accountability, which means another elasticity option in the wake of recurring failures. However, the implied concentration of production on few crops appeared to Goran too risky under conditions of fluctuating markets, and he ultimately preferred his small, diversified approach towards social security production. The amplifying risks in this endeavor also explain why Todorović do not want their children to continue in agriculture and hope for their success in the urban economy:

“At the moment the children are excellent pupils. They have their plans, which will develop in the future. Marica is in the 7th, next year in the 8th grade, and we will see how she selects her professional specialization in secondary school. What concerns me, I am willing to provide their faculty expenses, of course. If they will not have a university degree and a certificate, then they will be nobody in this state. And I told them, if they do not want to learn I will secure them here [at the farm] that they have something to work [laughs].”

Goran is clear about the odds against rural children to succeed in professional advancement. He told me in 2009 that his children have to be better than average in their educational success and better in networking than those more favorably placed by birth. For the latter reason, Goran wants his son to become a full person through football. Football for kids, he told me in 2012, should not mean “the pipe dream” of a superstar earning millions of hard currency; rather it means a process of acquiring social competencies and friendships, which can be valuable in life.

62 For an in-depth analysis of such contradictions, see Thelen, Tatjana, Andre Thiemann, and Duška Roth. 2014. State Kinning and Kinning the State: Elder Care in Serbia. Social Analysis 58(3) (forthcoming).
63 Interview with Goran Todorović, 16. May 2012.
64 Interview, 16. May 2012.
Conclusion

Launched as a heterodox economical account, modernist historians like Sundhaussen and Palairet have suggested categories like “slack”, “underemployment”, and “attrition of human capital” to explain the underdevelopment of the Serbian economy in the past and present. Both accounts remained as unconvincingly structuralist as those Marxist-inspired approaches they criticized. Palairet’s valuable empirical studies remained wedded to a liberal economic account, which, for what it is worth, resembles Verdery’s analysis of socialism. Meanwhile Sundhaussen employed Weber’s idealist thesis of the “protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism” as if it was a structurally explanatory factor, overlooking that it is an ideal type, which by definition is not “inevitable”. As an alternative, I suggested a more flexible Lefebvrian approach to combine questions of the production of social relations with the (moral) economy of post-socialism. Through analyzing a successful case, I have shown how hard imaginative work accords to Serbian social norms, which in turn do not fully conform to the capitalist moral economy. Individual achievement is valued as much as the moral appreciation of social space and social relations.

The protagonist of my case study produces social security and reconfigures material-social relations on the basis of agricultural production. He socially co-produces (or buys), arranges, orders, names, and fixes fields, firms, green- and glasshouses, homes, and orchards in space and time. These assemblages constitute a renewed social space, which constrains, and enables the relations that produce it. An important subjective driving force behind these practices is the creation of an intimate and secure place for the family. Goran strives to produce “a normal life”\(^6\) entailing the values of building a home, maintaining an emotionally close family, enabling a better future for the children, and working mercilessly hard to accommodate to the circumstances. He also manages to maintain his machine tool production skills, inventing a greenhouse heating system and producing a novel spatial fix. Still, Goran and his wife plan for their children to exit agriculture in their own interest of “having a normal life”.

Goran, like many of his neighbors, went into heavy debt to go into agriculture. His returns are spatially fixed through acquiring productive assets, and used for servicing credits. He bought machines to be less dependent on machine services by neighbors, but he also invigorates capital and work swaps within several solidary groups. Morally appreciating the devalued collaborative work, he reproduces and transforms the social landscape.

As a small agriculturalist, Goran represents the fruitful side of agricultural production as it generates wealth for society. With his *bricolage* of capitalist and non-capitalist elements in spacing and placing, he has established a work intensive place of social security under adverse conditions, and is bound for years to intensive market production. Like his mentor Uroš Bobanović and others, Goran encourages co-villagers to adapt successful working models and elicits cooperation in value production. Goran is beaming with an optimism that

Andre Thiemann

is sustained by his ongoing ability to provide social security for “less productive” significant others. In the face of macroeconomic insecurity, production of social security was a daunting process, which not all neighbors were able to achieve.

Goran himself repeatedly bent under the impact of capitalism's tendency to create monopolies and eliminate competition. Therefore, the generalized critique of state corruption and shady businesses is appropriated by him. It is no wonder that socially productive qualities as evinced in this case study ultimately wear out. The most resourceful, flexible, elastic actors may successfully manage the capitalist context of market production for a while, produce social security for their significant others and gain prestige among their peers. Yet, there are great dangers of over-investment. Hard work and intelligent management are no guarantee that the business and the family may not “burst” under multiple pressures. People “crack” not from socialist or “traditional” slack but from extensive capitalist competition, self-exploitation, and financial indebtedness. To counter the tendencies to burst and crack, actors constantly need to “reglue” and “rejuvenate”, that is morally appreciate, themselves and their social relations. Social relations are partly built on sociality, play, and passions, which Goran morally appreciated when reinvigorating local football, the social field in which he had found his ontological security in the 1980s, and had earned income and overall social security during the mid-1990s. Partly, social relations are imbricated in the moral economy of collaboratively producing food and enhancing infrastructures, with the effect of alleviating living standards. This was the approach Goran pursued in interactions with his close neighbors and in the Local Council. The apparent contradiction between his altruistic “reinvigorating of social relations” and his individualist micro-spatial fixing is bridged by the relational concept of moral appreciation. When morally appreciating people and production, social actors also morally appreciate themselves. This finding is in line with the observation that humans desire their mutual recognition because they are always already the product of social relations.67

With such hybrid moral economic activities, Goran and his social relations insist on an alternative world, an “otherwise” as interpreted by Elizabeth Povinelli:

“*The social projects [...] may not have the force to act in the sense of making anything like a definitive event occur in the world (becoming a counterpublic is an achievement), but they exist, nevertheless, in the Spinozan sense of persisting in their being. And insofar as they do, these alternative worlds maintain the otherwise that stares back at us without perhaps being able to speak to us [...]*.68

This case study, embedded within the Serbian transition from market socialism to neo-capitalism by way of primitive accumulation, suggests a critique of the contradictory moral economy of capitalism, which is straining the wishes, hopes, and needs even of the most productive people, and is outright adverse for the majority. The problem people formulate is that it has become “painful” to produce social security. Out of passion they perform multiple moves between industry,

services, and agriculture to morally appreciate the intimacy of their social space.

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Surviving in a Moveopticon: Humanitarian Actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Research Article

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Humanitarian Actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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This article discusses “humanitarne akcije,” a practice present across former Yugoslav states, whereby relatives of people who need expensive medical treatments abroad, raise large sums of money. Ethnographically exploring three humanitarian actions organized in a town in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2009 and 2010, the article critically engages with an issue of how survival and wellbeing were enabled in this context. The simultaneous postwar and postsocialist transformation of healthcare and social security systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina created gaps, in which many people were left without support. The article suggests that survival and wellbeing did not primarily depend on citizenship, ethnicity/nationality, residence, or some other category of identification and differentiation, but on the skill to generate a large network of relations in varied ways. Humanitarian actions can be understood as enactments of a moveopticon—an arrangement in which people have to be known and knowable in order to maintain survival and wellbeing and which does not have a single unifying centre where knowledge is gathered and control organized. Instead, in a ‘moveopticon,’ people have to keep moving, since survival and wellbeing largely depend on the compassion and goodwill of people and public officials one meets along the way. ¹

Keywords: humanitarianism, power relations, flexibility, moveopticon, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

One late October afternoon in 2009, I went to a bank in Bijeljina, a border town in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereon: Bosnia), to pay my bills. The bank was located at the town’s centre; it was recently refurbished, with grey counters, minimalist chairs, and LCD computer screens. While queuing, a conversation between an employee behind the counter and her customer caught my attention.

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I am grateful to the three families who organized humanitarian actions for letting me learn from them, as well as to Stef Jansen, Sarah Green, Paul Stubbs, Florian Bieber, Jon Mair, Elissa Helms, Andrew Hodges, Ainhoa Montoya, Vanja Ćelebićić, Danilo Martinović, anonymous reviewers, and the editors of Contemporary Southeastern Europe for their comments on earlier versions of this article. Support for research and writing was provided by the Leverhulme Trust and the CEU Institute for Advanced Study.
Customer: Hi, I want to make a payment to a humanitarian account. This is the name of the account holder and here is the account number [she gave a piece of paper to the clerk].
Bank Clerk: Who is making the payment?
Woman: Class 3T, Vuk Karadžić School.
Bank Clerk: And to whom is the payment addressed?
Woman: For Božo… Božo… Could you please take a look at the name on the paper?
Bank Clerk: For Božović Slavko… I know about this boy.
Woman: Yes, my class collected money for him.

The two women briefly discussed the boy, the sorrow his family must be feeling, and other humanitarian events organized for the Božović family about which they had heard. A few days later, I saw a poster asking for help for Slavko Božović at the town’s main bus station. I started noticing the humanitarian posters throughout the town: on walls, bus stops, street lights, in shop windows, and so on. It seemed like the town was filled with calls to help people through humanitarian actions. In the following months, the announcements of humanitarian events for Slavko multiplied, advertisements appeared in newspapers and on local TV stations, followed by Facebook groups and more posters.

In this article, I follow, ethnographically, three families who organized humanitarian actions in Bijeljina in 2009/2010 in order to get expensive medical treatments abroad. The Božović’s who successfully raised money for Slavko’s healthcare abroad from thousands of donors were one of those families. In all cases, individuals, privately owned firms, municipality and other state institutions, non-governmental organizations, and many other actors donated money in order to help a single person’s survival and well-being. The argument of this article is that moving socially – the pursuit of social relations among the aforementioned public and private actors – is the critical factor for survival and wellbeing of many people in postsocialist, postwar Bosnia. Humanitarna akcija (literally: humanitarian actions) is a practice that can be understood as an arrangement where people needed to be known and knowable for survival, but who did not have a single unifying centre where information and knowledge was gathered and control organized. Instead, in ‘moveopticons,’ as I am calling these arrangements, people had to keep moving, since their survival and wellbeing largely depended on the goodwill of the people they met along the way. Those who were able to access the required medical treatments were, primarily, those who made themselves known to multiple social actors by continuously moving through local social worlds.

Local knowledge of who these people were and where they came from was very important for donors’ decisions of helping or not. The donors’ reasons for helping were also affected by the ethnicity/nationality of those who needed help, their age, gender, profession, and the time they had spent living in the town. However, since all three families in Bijeljina were helped by, literally, thousands of people, some of those identity markers were important for some people

2 As it is common in social anthropology, I changed the names of all my interlocutors and sometimes a biographical detail, in order to protect their anonymity.
at some point, whilst they were not so important at other points, or for other people. What enabled their survival in the end was not citizenship, ethnicity/nationality, residence, or some other category of identification and differentiation. Rather, it was their ability to generate a large network of relations in varied ways. This was possible, because the Bosnian state occasionally operated through a humanitarian logic of compassion, rather than through bureaucratic impartiality. Bosnian healthcare and welfare grids were interspersed with gaps in which bureaucratic indifference was temporarily suspended by humanitarian reason. The state was not absent from the lives of people who needed humanitarian help, but rather partly present. It provided some medical and financial services, but not all, to some people, but not others, largely on the basis of compassion and empathy.

1. Moveopticon: Flexibility of struggles to survive
When referring to humanitarne akcije as an enactment of a ‘moveopticon,’ I follow the reading of Nancy Fraser, who suggests that, today, we are seeing the emergence of “a new landscape of social regulation, more privatized and dispersed than any envisioned by Foucault.” Fraser argues that the Foucauldian concept of discipline is firmly related to the Fordist mode of social regulation, and that disciplinary power presents an analytical tool best suited for understanding socio-political arrangements of (Fordist) welfare states. In her reading, disciplinary power has three characteristics. One, it is totalizing, which means that it aims to include every member of a polity within its reach. Two, the polity is defined through the nation-state framework, which means that the reach of disciplinary mechanisms and institutions largely overlap with state borders. Three, it is dependent on self-regulation and willing subjectification of polity members. These three propositions are no longer fully valid. Privatization and deregulation of formerly public welfare services have loosened the aim to include everybody within the reach of disciplinary power, and have caused many people to fall through the gaps of public welfare systems. Furthermore, an increasing scope of transnational practices means that the framework of nation-states has been decentralized, and that social regulation today occurs on international, transnational and national scales. Finally, efforts of self-regulation and individualization are often sidelined and replaced by repression and violence. Fraser suggests that these changes are reflected in a new kind of regulatory structure that is flexible, multi-layered, and selectively repressive, and whose contours have yet to be fully determined.

The ‘decentering’ of the nation-state framework has created new forms of control and surveillance of the lawful members of a polity, where the management of prisons is often subcontracted to corporations working for profit, and where racial and sexual violence tend to replace attempts of discipline. The decentering of the national framework has also led to new architectural arrangements of control and surveillance. For instance, Bigo suggests that this emerging form of social regulation can be understood as a ‘banopticon,’ a setting where

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5 Fraser, From Discipline.
arbitrariness becomes the norm. His argument is grounded in Foucault’s discussion of the Panopticon as a nineteenth century architectural form for the surveillance and discipline of ‘problematic’ members of a national polity. The banopticon, on the other hand, materializes in detention camps for immigrants – that is, for outsiders who are considered a threat to a nation-state. The logic of the banopticon is one of “permanent exceptionalism,” or of “derogation by the government of the basic rule of law in the name of emergency.” In contemporary regimes of globalized governance, surveillance and control are not only executed through the discipline and punishment of ‘insiders.’ Instead, control in a banopticon means keeping some people at a distance from a certain territory and/or from welfare benefits given to the legal residents of that territory. With over a hundred detention centres across Europe, which are placed outside of penal laws and regulated by the administrative laws, the banopticon is increasingly transforming arbitrariness into routine.

Arbitrariness has also become routine in many Bosnians’ dealings with healthcare and social security issues. It is routinely present in Bosnia in job searches, pursuits of medical treatments, and distribution of welfare benefits. State-run committees for one-off help, solidarity funds, and mayor’s discretionary help during humanitarian actions present some of the examples of the institutionalization of the arbitrary and the normalization of the exceptional. Fraser suggests that ‘flexibilization’ presents:

> a process of self-constitution that correlates with, arises from, and resembles a mode of social organization. The hallmarks of flexibilization are fluidity, provisionality, and a temporal horizon of ‘no long term.’

As we will see, humanitarian actions were a fluid, shifting form of claiming support for the survival and well being from both the ‘state’ and ‘that which is not the state.’ Although Bosnians can hardly be understood through a prism of a “regime of self as a prudent yet enterprising individual, actively shaping his or her life course through acts of choice,” many issues regarding their survival and well being depended on their personal actions and abilities. In other words, the simultaneous post-socialist and post-war transformations of Bosnia might not have produced the need to take care of one’s own biology as a self-reliant, informed, self-responsible individual. Indeed, people’s everyday engagements with official politics in Bosnia often reflect apathy, waiting, stasis, and negligence. Nevertheless, in the attempts to secure survival and wellbe-
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In Bijeljina, those whom needed support through humanitarian actions had to navigate both institutional rules and personal wills, without knowing which path would turn out to be productive or which person would prove to be helpful. In order to survive and maintain their well being, people had to be known and knowable, not to a single centre or the central registry (a 'tower') where knowledge was accumulated - because there was no such centre - but to many different 'public' and 'private' claimants, while the relationship between 'public' and 'private' arenas was shifting. They had to move from one administrative procedure to the next one, and from one compassionate person to another, without knowing, for sure, who, and in what way, would help them survive and maintain their well being. This arbitrariness, and this need to move - both visibly manifested in humanitarian actions - is what I aim to capture by the term moveopticon.

2. What is a humanitarna akcija?

Three families had successfully completed their humanitarian actions in Bijeljina during the year I conducted fieldwork. All of the humanitarian actions lasted for several months, and consisted of many one-off events (also called humanitarian actions). The Božović family raised money for their repeated visits to a clinic near Belgrade (Serbia) with Slavko, their five-year-old son with multiple disabilities. They also wanted to go to an experimental clinic in Moscow. The Ilić family successfully raised money to go to an eye clinic near Moscow to check if it was possible to surgically improve their baby son's premature retinopathy. The Žarković family collected donations to send their sister and daughter to a hospital in Vienna for a bone marrow transplant. They lived in Brčko, but they raised money both in Brčko and Bijeljina, because the young woman who needed a bone marrow transplant was a student in Bijeljina.

I got to learn about, and from, these three families through participant observation. I attended most of the humanitarian events organized by them and for them - exhibitions, classic music and pop concerts, parties, sport games. I met with them regularly, and helped them to organize things whenever possible. Sometimes, we went to a cafe for a drink, or one of our homes. Sometimes, we met at their workplaces, and at other times, we went together to public institutions. I helped one of them organize a humanitarian film screening; another to get documents officially translated to Russian and take other documents to public institutions; yet, another to get herbal medicine from across the border. Whenever I heard that someone had helped them - by organizing or attending a humanitarian event, making a donation, registering a humanitarian telephone number, and so forth - I met and talked with those people too. The families' willingness to help me in my ethnographic research was firmly linked to their aim of informing as many people as possible about their humanitarian actions, who they were, and what they needed. I was one among many persons inter-

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ested in their situation, and they did not seem to mind the ethnographic character of my interest.

In addition to these three, many other humanitarian actions occurred that year across Bosnia, raising money for all sorts of medical needs - from urgent heart transplants, to prosthetic devices - needs that could only be met by health centres located abroad. In some humanitarian actions, money was raised for lifesaving surgeries, while, in others it was raised for treatments needed to improve the quality of life (for instance, severe eye conditions, as was the case with the Ilić’s baby). People turned to humanitarian actions for a broad scope of needs - from saving lives, to improving severely endangered states of well being.

A popular radio/TV show dedicated to humanitarian actions was broadcasted five times per week, every working day, for two hours on a radio and a TV station. The anchor, Batko, introduced various humanitarian actions, talked with the families who initiated them, then announced the details of their medical needs and their bank accounts, and followed-up with what happened after the treatment, and so forth. In doing so, Batko strongly pushed forward the idea that those who help with a humanitarian action are ‘normal humans’ (normalni ljudi), or just ‘humans’ (ljudi). Thus, meaning those not interested in politics and ethno-national divisions. Alongside its frequency, the very need for such a TV/radio show reveals that humanitarian actions are often taken as a path to solving the burning healthcare problems in contemporary Bosnia.

The need to take such a path emerged after the dissolution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. The war’s destruction of Bosnia, coupled with post-socialist transformation of healthcare and social security, created gaps in which an increasing number of people were left unsupported, and in need of life-saving protection.14 Some of the gaps were the result of the logic of ethnically defined citizenship; leaving those without access to public services people who, for various reasons, did not fit into one of the three major ethno-national categories in Bosnia.15 Other gaps were the consequence of profound transformations of the Bosnian healthcare systems. During the SFRY, public healthcare insurance covered the medical treatments that had to be conducted beyond the Yugoslav borders. After the war, the changes to healthcare insurance laws left more than 20% of Bosnian citizens without access to public healthcare.16 In line with the Dayton administrative organization of the country, healthcare has been delivered through thirteen healthcare systems, each with its own legislature and ministry of healthcare. When there was a proven need for medical treatment that could not be provided, by the healthcare system of the entity or a canton in which a person resided, public institutions co-financed it. This means that citizens’ public healthcare insurance covered treatments only within one of the thirteen healthcare systems in Bosnia. When

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Bijeljina’s (the entity of the Republic of Srpska) residents went to Tuzla’s (the Tuzla canton in the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) well-known, public cardiac centre, located only 45 minutes away from Bijeljina, the treatment there was not covered by the public insurance. In the entity of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Solidarity Fund was opened, whose explicit aim was to “establish equal conditions for accessing healthcare to insured persons residing in all cantons,” as an attempt to solve the problems created by the internal administrative boundaries of cantonal healthcare systems. In Bijeljina, the public Fund for Healthcare Insurance made decisions about co-financing medical treatments beyond the healthcare system of the entity of the Republic of Srpska. In most cases, the Fund retroactively granted up to 30% of the price of medical treatment conducted abroad. When people needed to pay for very expensive treatments in world-renowned medical centres - as well as for visas, travel, accommodation, food, and so forth - the retroactive support from the Fund was not very helpful.

Humanitarian actions emerged, after 1995 across the ex-Yugoslav countries, as a way of bridging gaps, and securing survival and wellbeing, in the midst of overarching socio-political transformations. They, simultaneously, reflect and reproduce the partiality of political life in Bosnia. They reveal that, sometimes, compassion, empathy, and other moral sentiments determine which citizens can survive and maintain their well-being. In line with the global humanitarian reasoning, humanitarian actions presented a new kind of a response to human suffering, which introduced empathy, compassion, and other moral sentiments into the politics and governance of life. What enabled survival and well-being, in Bosnia in 2009/10, was not simply citizenship, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or some other identity-based criterion. Rather, survival and wellbeing in the ‘moveopticon,’ depended on the generation of social relations in as many directions as possible and the navigation of the local social worlds. Let us take a closer look at how humanitarian actions in Bijeljina were organized.

3. The Ilić’s
Ana and Marko Ilić, a couple in their late twenties, lived in Bijeljina with their baby son Nikola. Nikola was born in 2009 with premature retinopathy, a condition restricting his eyesight, which his first doctor did not notice until several weeks later, when it was in an advanced phase. Ana and Marko searched for a doctor’s name on-line, and discovered the story of a family from Serbia who had been in a situation similar to theirs. This family took their child to a specialist eye clinic near Moscow. The clinic had a branch in Serbia, and many people from the former Yugoslav region used its resources. After consultations in the Serbian branch, the Ilić family decided to raise the money needed to go to Russia. They needed 11,000 convertible marks (5,500 Euros) for the whole trip. Since Ana had been fired by her employer, also her cousin, while pregnant, and their only support was Marko’s waiter salary, they decided to start a humanitarian action.

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18 Fassin, Didier. 2007. Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life. Public Culture 19, 499-520.
They printed calls for help, and put them throughout the town. Their family and friends engaged with the humanitarian action right away, organizing different events. Parents’ and Marko’s work colleagues made collective humanitarian donations in the name of the public and privately owned firms in which they were employed. The municipality did not give them any help. However, people employed in public institutions, with whom the Ilić’s had veze (literally: relations, connections, or štele - literally: relations that had to be fixed), made collective donations in the name of their institutions. The workers in a store where Ana and Marko did their daily shopping also gave a collective donation. The Ilić’s friends and family lived in various locations scattered throughout Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, and Switzerland, which meant that a lot of donations to the Ilić family were made from different towns and cities. Marko Ilić’s family lived in Sarajevo before the war, but they moved several times during and after the war. The Ilić’s pattern of moving is a part of the ‘refuchess’ story, or “the strategic deployment and movement of nationalised persons across nationalised places.” Marko described the people living in the same towns and refugee settlements he had as being ‘practically my relatives.’ One of those ‘practical relatives,’ a woman in her late fifties who made a donation, told me over the phone:

“It is the same circle of people who help one another, the same. My daughter had a similar problem and Marko’s parents helped them. Of course I am going to help them as much as I can now. It’s little, I would do more if I could, but it is as much as I can.”

Her words reveal a sense of indebtedness, and suggest that her motivation to help came from having a similar experience in the past. The fact that Marko called these people his relatives makes sense; if it is understood as an expression of closeness established through lived experiences. Furthermore, Marko went to the local phone company office to open a humanitarian number. This was a service provided by the local telecommunications company, whereby, each call to the humanitarian number had the same price (approximately 0.5 or 1 EUR); the amount of money raised through the calls was transferred to the organization that registered the number. Then, the organization was supposed to transfer the money to the family for whom the humanitarian action was organized. Through the humanitarian number they raised around 6,800 convertible marks (3,400 Euros). This meant that 6,800 calls were made to the humanitarian number.

I had heard about the humanitarian action for baby Nikola from the local media and via a Facebook announcement of a humanitarian concert for the Ilićs. The information about the humanitarian action traveled throughout the town in different ways, including social network websites. However, when I got in touch with them, and started meeting with Marko regularly, it turned out that they received less than a handful of donations from completely unknown people. Once, I was looking with Marko at their bank account details, and almost all donations made to them were small, given by people who knew the Ilić’s personally or through someone else. Knowing someone who knows someone

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else was the key ‘tool’ of the humanitarian action. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people had given a couple of Euros to this family, and made phone calls to the humanitarian number. The main incentive to do so did not seem to come from the representation of the Ilić’s in the media, but from the stories which spread throughout the town about the family, their current problem, their past, and the social worlds they were in.

4. The Božović’s

“It’s a system of someone who knows someone else, in a way.”

Petar Božović, a specialist construction worker in his mid fifties, used these words to describe his understanding of humanitarian actions while we were having a coffee in one of the several Irish pubs in Bijeljina. He looked more confident - rested, better dressed, with more energy - than the first time I met him. This was because his humanitarian action, for his five-year-old son’s trip to Russia for an experimental treatment for his multiple developmental difficulties, was going well, he said. We met numerous times during the humanitarian events, and in Bijeljina’s cafes and pubs to talk and share a cup of coffee. We met even more often by accident, since the apartment where I had lived was not too far from the building in which he and his wife, Milena, lived. Petar always seemed to be on his phone, even while driving, arranging the next humanitarian action and talking with potential helpers. I had to go to the music school, where Milena was teaching, in order to talk with her, since Petar was the one in charge of increasing the visibility of their family and their humanitarian action, by hanging out with people. He quit his job in construction, and started working full time on raising money.

If humanitarian actions worked through the principle of ‘someone who knows someone else,’ then Petar dedicated all of his time to making contacts and generating relations in all possible directions.

Petar managed to get humanitarian help from various NGOs in Bijeljina and many privately owned firms. Thanks to one of his acquaintances, who was the director of the local Red Cross office, the Božović’s received many donations from the primary and secondary schools in the town. The bank conversation at the beginning of this article was one small piece of a larger humanitarian action for the Božović’s, organized in Bijeljina’s schools. Also, since Milena Božović was a teacher in a local music school, her colleagues and pupils organized a humanitarian concert, in cooperation with a political party. Furthermore, Petar’s friend, a sculptor, initiated an art auction. The sculptor collected artwork from his friends and fellow artists, who lived in Bijeljina’s vicinity, in three states - Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. The auction was organized in the gallery in the building of the municipal government, and all the money raised from selling artwork was given to Petar.

Petar led the humanitarian action for many months. Over time, I learned about the Božović’s history and habits, not just from them, but from other people too. The stories about the Božović’s were not always positive, for different people perceived this family in different ways. Nevertheless, the fact that the Božović’s managed to raise tens of thousands of Euros, for Slavko’s treatment
in Russia and Serbia, suggests that the dominant perception of this family’s need was positive. A few donors I talked with said that Petar was not a very good person (nije dobar čovjek), but they decided to help because the need of his son was so apparent. Slavko’s need was confirmed, not just through medical documentation (the copies of which Petar always had with him), but through stories people shared with those they knew personally.

As we will see in the following section, people had very different motivations for helping. Trust in humanitarian actions was generated and distributed in a flexible way. Instead of raising money for a group of people with a similar health condition, or for an institution working with a group of people, humanitarian actions were organized around the need of a person (and their family). This means that trust was created through the interplay of personalized and institutional channels.\textsuperscript{20} The assumption was, if the person whose family asks for help did not really need the treatment, one would hear about it in the same way as one heard about the call for help - coincidentally, through stories, other people, and sporadic media reports. Additionally, people considered the donations to be small enough that a lack of final proof, regarding what happened with the donated money, was acceptable. The stories spread about the families throughout their ‘world of people’ (svijet) were a sufficient ‘mechanism’ of insurance that someone really needed help and, thus, of generating trust. The principle of ‘someone who knows someone else,’ which was enacted through such stories, cannot be easily translated into the language of accountability, signed documents, registered organizations, and lawsuits, present in most initiatives of the ‘civil society’.\textsuperscript{21} Still, as we will see in the following section, the prevailing incentive to help came from this principle.

5. Why did people help?
Media representations of humanitarian actions frequently had sensationalist elements.\textsuperscript{22} Not all humanitarian actions in Bosnia were organized for children, but I had an impression that narrative and visual images of a sick child were often used in media reports. The invocation of childhood innocence seemed to depoliticize the struggles of people who organized humanitarian actions, and to appeal to the sentiments created by a “spectacle of ‘raw’, ‘bare’ humanity.”\textsuperscript{23} The media representations also occasionally had a strong anti-nationalist dimension. For instance, Batko, the host of the aforementioned radio/TV show on humanitarian actions, repeatedly claimed that people who help others to raise money in a humanitarian action were ljudi (literally: humans), which means decent, good, honest people who are uninterested in the ethno-national identities of those who need help. The notion of ljudi (or pošteli ljudi: literally: hon-

\textsuperscript{20} For a discussion of how trust was generated towards scientists in Croatia and Serbia, see Hodges, Andrew. 2012. Manners and Hierarchy in the Natural Sciences. \textit{Antropologija} 12(2), 145-52.


est humans) provides conceptual tools to evaluate people’s behavior without resorting to ethno-nationalist categories. A similar, contra-nationalist interpretation of humanitarian actions appeared in April 2013, when most newspapers and web portals, in former Yugoslav countries, released information that Sarajevan actor, Feda Štukan, helped a family from Belgrade raise one million U.S. dollars for a heart transplant, which their eight year old daughter needed in the U.S. He got to know about the girl’s family through the actions of his colleague, an actor living in Serbia. When the colleague, a Belgrade actor Sergej Trifunović, appeared on the Serbian-version of the TV show Big Brother, he asked the audience to support the humanitarian action for the heart transplant for the eight year old girl. Feda decided to transfer money he collected earlier, for another (failed) humanitarian action, to the girl’s family. In his, widely circulated, Facebook status, Feda wrote:

Brother Sergej, [...] there, I’m sitting writing this to you, having goose bulbs from a crazy feeling and an awareness that we are not ruined as humans and that there is hope for us, that there is hope for little T: and that there are still those who do not distinguish children according to their faith and nation, and who are light miles away from this modern village party called ‘nationalism’.

Feda, thus, claimed anti-nationalist sentiment as a guiding principle in helping the little girl from Serbia get medical treatment abroad. However, focusing solely on these moving media stories would twist the understanding of the complex reasoning and motivations of the majority of donors, which I followed ethnographically. Unlike Feda, anti-nationalist sentiment was not the key motivation for the greatest number of donors in the three humanitarian actions in Bijeljina (nor was nationalist sentiment, for that matter). Also, most of the donors did not give money just because they were moved by the notion of shared ‘bare’ humanity that was invoked by the stories and images of the people in need. Since hundreds, if not thousands, of people got involved in a single humanitarian action, I heard different explanations of why people decided to help. However, one thing that linked most of these explanations was that they knew someone who was somehow related to the family in need.

5.1. Marta’s help - intertwined personalized and institutionalized relations Marta was in her final year in Bijeljina’s local high school for economics. I got to know her through a mutual friend, and when I heard about her involvement in a humanitarian action, I started meeting with her regularly. Marta helped the Božović’s by raising money from her class. One day, the head teacher of the school invited Marta and several other class representatives to her office. The head teacher told Marta, and the other class representatives, about the humanitarian action for the Božović’s, and asked them to raise money from other pupils in the following few weeks. At first, Marta told the other students about the humanitarian action, then she reminded them in person and via Facebook in the following weeks; eventually, collecting one or two convertible marks from

each student (half a Euro or one Euro). Once Marta had collected several dozen convertible marks, she took it to the school’s director. When explaining her reasoning for the humanitarian action, Marta said she helped because she was asked to do so, and because it was for a little boy who was almost the same age as one of her brothers. Marta also told me that, while she was in the head teacher’s office, she misunderstood for whom the money was raised - she thought Slavko Božović was a pupil in another local high school, rather than a five-year-old boy. Later on, she met with Petar in person when she gave him the donation. When describing this encounter, she stressed her happiness for being able to help as much as she could.

Marta got to know the Božović’s through her head teacher - her initial misunderstanding for whom the money was raised indicates she had no knowledge of the family prior to the humanitarian action. The head teacher, on the other hand, heard about the action from the director of the local Red Cross, who knew Petar Božović personally. This illustrates that trust and knowledge of the Božović’s was generated through intertwined, personalized and institutionalized relations of the ‘who knows whom’ principle. Petar knew the director of the local Red Cross office, who then asked school head teachers to organize a humanitarian action for Slavko in their schools; who, again, asked their employees and pupils to raise money. The ‘code’ that stimulated compassion within the public educational institution was predominantly the knowledge of the family - gathered directly, or through someone else considered trustworthy. As we will see in the following section, this was even the case in large events under the attention of the media.

5.2. Ivana, the hotel director, and Ana Bekuta - the recursive ‘who knows whom’ system

Milica Žarković wanted to organize a small humanitarian concert to raise money for her sister. Milica asked Ivana, her friend, to go to a friend who was the director of a hotel in Brčko. Ivana asked the hotel director if they could use the hotel’s stage for free. The director agreed. A couple of weeks later, Ivana got a call from Ana Bekuta, a famous pop singer. It turned out that Bekuta frequently stayed at this hotel, and the hotel director had called her and asked her to sing at a humanitarian concert free of charge. The hotel’s director knew neither Milica, nor her sister, directly, but she had a personal relationship with Ivana, and that was enough for her to become involved.

The action further expanded in its scope. Bekuta asked her colleagues to join her. As a result of the calls made by Ana Bekuta, on behalf of the Žarković sisters, a huge concert of ten famous pop singers was held in Bijeljina, including the ex-Yugoslav pop stars Neda Ukraden and Željko Šamardžić from Serbia. I do not know the reasoning and motivations of these pop stars to participate in a humanitarian concert. However, what I think is more important for understanding how humanitarian actions were organized - and what pushed the people to help - is the principle of ‘someone who knows someone else’.

The principle of ‘someone who knows someone else’ was recursively present among different groups of people who had various interests and motivations to help, and who were mutually related in different ways. Just as Ana Bekuta
asked her colleagues to help by singing in the concert, so too asked the director of the hotel of Ana Bekuta, and Ivana asked her friend, the director of the hotel. Similarly, Feda Štukan learned about the needs of a family in Belgrade through his colleague Sergej Trifunović. There were dozens of humanitarian actions going on during 2013 throughout Bosnia, which means that Štukan could have chosen to help another family, and make the same antinationalist point. However, his decision to help this particular family came after watching someone he knew - Trifunović - ask others to help. The personalized knowledge of people and their social locations was, thus, one of the most important ‘triggers’ to help, within and beyond institutions.

5.3. The Holy Mother - religious charitable work
Another motivation to help came from people’s religious beliefs, which have influenced, at least some, people to become involved in humanitarian actions. For instance, The Holy Mother was an influential Orthodox religious charity, which helped families in different ways. For one of the families, they registered a humanitarian number, and to another, they gave a direct donation. Some of their volunteers sang in a local choir, which performed at various humanitarian events organized by, and for, the families. The reasoning of the volunteers (all women) about their involvement in humanitarian actions was clearly a reflection of their wider religious ideas about how relations among people ought to be ordered. However, the way in which The Holy Mother got involved in helping with humanitarian actions was also through personalized knowledge of the families’ members, gathered from the individual experiences of The Holy Mother volunteers, or through stories shared by people close to them.

5.4. Sandra, Amela, and Marko - shared positions
An important element of the incentive to help was the idea that the helpers as well as the helped depended on the mercy of the similarly troubled public healthcare systems. Very often, when we talked about the families who organized humanitarian actions, older people started discussing their own or their family members’ healthcare problems. They would mention their own heart surgeries, high blood pressures, difficult deliveries, experiences with local doctors, and so forth. They usually summarized their views along the lines of: “I know how difficult it was for me, during my heart surgery [or something else], which is a much smaller problem from what they are going through. I cannot imagine how they must feel.” Similarly, a ‘practically relative’ of Marko Ilić pointed out that she helped because of her daughter’s shared experience.

This kind of awareness that places could be easily switched – those who provide help today could find themselves needing help tomorrow – is what guided Sandra, Amela, and Marko, a group of students from Bijeljina, to organize a humanitarian sport game and humanitarian party for Vana Žarković. Two things they emphasized were that their colleague and friend needed help, and that her problems happened unexpectedly. They claimed Vana was healthy and well just several months before, and they contrasted this with the fact that she was fighting for her life at the time. They also expressed fears about what they would do in her situation, considering the problems of accessing public healthcare in Bosnia.
6. **Who gets help from the municipal government?**

The state was often one of the humanitarian donors to families who initiated humanitarian actions. The budget of most Bosnian municipalities included a sum reserved for one-off social welfare help. The municipality of Bijeljina was no different - it even had a Committee for One-off Support, to which people submitted applications for help of up to two hundred Euros. The mayor personally decided about granting larger sums to individuals on the basis of medical or welfare need.

Although the Božović’s were formally eligible for this one-off humanitarian support from the municipality, Petar told me that he had a friend who ‘took care of’ (sredio) that donation. This friend was the earlier mentioned sculptor, who organized the humanitarian art auction. He was also a friend of Bijeljina’s mayor. One of his sculptures was erected in the central town square, in front of the main municipality building. Petar frequently mentioned this sculpture as proof of how close his friend was to the mayor. Knowing someone who knew someone else - knowing the sculptor who knew the mayor - was key for the success of the humanitarian action. Nationalist inscriptions on the sculpture, which openly celebrate the mayor’s party, SDS,25 did not bother Petar at all. Regardless of whether he agreed with the political programme of the SDS, Petar praised the mayor’s goodness of heart and personal willingness to help his family. Although the money for the Božović’s came from the municipal budget, it has become a personal gift from the mayor.

The Ilić family, on the other hand, did not get any help from Bijeljina’s mayor and the municipality. In their opinion, it was because they did not know the ‘right’ people. The official reason for declining the Ilić’s plea for financial assistance was that the funds for that year had been spent. However, Marko Ilić thought that his family would have gotten support from the Committee, had he had a veza (a relation, a connection) within the municipality. He submitted the application to the municipality in September 2009, and was convinced that - even if the money had been really spent - with a strong veza to the mayor, he would have gotten the money as a refund, or would have been told to resubmit the application the following year.

The third family who raised money in Bijeljina during my fieldwork year, the Žarković’s, also received financial support from the mayor of Brčko. The lead organizer of this humanitarian action, Milica Žarković, got to know the mayor of Brčko through a friend of a friend. No one in her family knew the mayor personally, but Milica managed to find a link to him through other people. The mayor decided to cover two-thirds of her sister’s highly expensive surgery from the municipal funds. He even gave advice about a Vienna hospital where Milica’s sister could undergo the bone marrow transplantation. Milica said her family accepted this advice, because the mayor was a trained physician and had

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25 The sculpture represents Petar I Karadžordević (the king of Serbia at the beginning of the twentieth century) on a horse and it includes a nationalistic inscription which aims to present as historically important the mayor’s party, Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), a hard-core right-wing nationalist populist party which played a leading role during the 1992-1995 war.
experience in ‘these things’ - a couple of years earlier he had helped another family get a bone marrow transplant in the same hospital in Vienna.

Why did Milica’s sister get generous municipal help and the Ilić’s did not? Perhaps the mayor of Brčko was more generous or felt personally more responsible for healthcare abroad than the mayor of Bijeljina. If so, why, and how, did Bijeljina’s mayor decide to give humanitarian aid to the Božović’s, but not to the Ilić’s? The same mayor, in the same year, decided to help one family get healthcare treatment abroad, but not the other family. In both cases, the injured parties were young boys; both families were of the same nationality (considered themselves to be Serbs); both families were conventional (married, consisting of a husband and a wife and their offspring); both treatments were uncertain and risky, and conducted in Russia (the Božović’s wanted to try an experimental treatment, while the Ilić’s could not know whether their son’s condition was operable until they were already at the Russian clinic).

However, the Božović’s were older, engaged in jobs that linked them with more influential people, and had lived in Bijeljina much longer than the Ilić’s. Thus, the key difference, I suggest, was that the Božović’s had known more people, and, themselves, were known to more people than the Ilić’s. Grandits analyzed the implications of social connections of the ‘armchair politicians’ for their continuous political rule in Bosnia. He was able to generate social connections and relations throughout the town also affected people’s struggles to survive. If the Božović’s and the Ilić’s nationalities, salaries, and citizenship were, more or less, the same, their social positions in the town were not. Marko Ilić worked as a waiter, and Ana Ilić was a retail worker before her pregnancy. Petar used to be a specialist construction worker, and Milena was a music teacher. The character of their jobs enabled them to be in touch with different groups of people. Furthermore, since people were becoming known and knowable to others by ‘being there’ - exchanging greetings in the same places, walking the same paths every day, and so forth - there were more stories traveling throughout the town about those who had been living there for a long time. The decision of Bijeljina’s mayor is a reflection of all these things put together - Petar had found a friend who was a direct veza (relation) to the mayor, while the Ilić’s could not do that.

In all humanitarian actions, people engaged in similar activities. They could not know who would help, so they had to move through their social worlds and state categories in order to survive. What made one humanitarian action easier, or more successful, than the other was the breadth of people the family could access. This difference reveals the importance of compassion, and knowing the ‘right’ people for survival. When one did not personally know the right people, survival depended on getting to know as many people as possible in the hope of meeting the ‘right’ people along the way.

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7. **Surviving in a Moveopticon**

A focus on the reasoning of the helpers sheds light on many different motivations and incentives that led people to get involved in humanitarian actions. Such randomness in reasoning is to be expected among hundreds, if not thousands, of people. Some of the people who helped, probably, just wanted to support a friend playing football at a humanitarian sport game, or to attend a party, or a pop concert. Others helped for religious reasons. Some people helped because they were suggested to do so by someone positioned hierarchically above them - such as a company director or a head teacher. Yet, others helped because they knew the family, and were aware that they may be in a similar problem tomorrow. Elsewhere, I discuss, in more detail, how the fact that both the helpers and the helped were exposed to the same healthcare and social welfare systems affects the understanding of life in humanitarian actions, as well as the implications it has for thinking about humanitarian practices more broadly.²⁷ Here, I want to suggest that disentangling how those who needed help managed to raise it - exploring the quality of social relations through which help was raised - illuminates arbitrariness, which cannot be seen when a solely ethnographic focus is placed on what the helpers were saying. This arbitrariness demonstrates that Westphalian imagination could not contain, the not quite prescribed (and often unpredictable), social relations between the state, NGOs, private businesses, neighbours, kin, and friends who constituted humanitarian actions. The state’s protection was partial (incomplete and personalized), as was protection coming from civil society institutions. The links between people, institutional resources, and knowledge about who needs whose help, and why, often were flexible. They were forged temporarily, on the spot, on the basis of moral sentiments, personal relations, and local knowledge, rather than administered through pre-existing categories.

For instance, humanitarian help was raised from private firms and public schools, not as a part of a firm’s (or schools’) organized program of social responsibility, but because the family knew the director. Ranko, the father of Ana Ilić, went to the three firms where he used to be an employee - an accounting firm, a firm that monitored parking spots, and a transportation company. He asked for help from the directors of those firms; people who used to be his co-workers. They agreed to help his daughter. The directors told their current employees about the action, and then the employees made the donations. Without these links, Ranko would not, necessarily, have convinced the directors to organize a donation. This humanitarian action was not conducted by ‘word of mouth,’ it was organized in a workplace and among co-workers. However, it was not institutional help in the full sense either, since companies who take care of transport, parking, and finances are not intended to help families with ill children. Furthermore, the municipality was a humanitarian donor - it gave municipal, or state, money to a single person. In humanitarian actions, municipalities, as much as other state and non-state institutions, sometimes distributed resources on the basis of compassion and personal relations; and, sometimes, through bureaucratic indifference, depending on personal entanglements, ways of knowing people, or the time of the year.

People who raised humanitarian aid to enable the survival of their family member, in most cases, had to be more than citizens in order to get aid. They had to be citizens (and thus eligible for various forms of state and private support), as well as fathers, mothers, former colleagues, companions or friends. In addition to citizens, they also had to be socially and personally located human beings. Such intrusion of moral sentiments and personalized relations into the management of survival and wellbeing was not welcomed by the people in Brijeljina. People criticized public institutions for not providing them with access to all the forms of healthcare they could need, and they yearned for a state that would ensure the predictability of everyday existence. This criticism was voiced by those who needed humanitarian help at the time, as well as by those who helped them. My interlocutors often expressed the idea that socio-political conditions and the healthcare system that pushed some people to depend on humanitarian aid could easily affect anyone else tomorrow. What my interlocutors criticized was the inability of the humanitarian actions to provoke a more profound change of the public healthcare and welfare systems, and to oppressive character of some forms of care and compassion.

Despite voicing their dissatisfaction, people had to keep navigating the moveopticon arrangement. The moveopticon was productive in the sense that those who managed to survive and live well through it became a particular kind of a person - someone ‘everybody knew.’ It remains unclear who exactly had the responsibility of securing survival in a moveopticon, since no direction of the humanitarian actions, and no donor, could be separated out as the most important. When compassion and empathy are a constitutive part of administrative apparatus, survival and wellbeing become a matter of personally judged merit - the issue becomes who deserves to get access to public healthcare and social welfare - and according to whom. State bureaucrats, who are in a position to make such judgments, rely on their personal relations and local knowledge, increasing their power with each decision they make and elevating their social status in the town’s social networks. There was no certainty over the success of the action and no way to predict which contact would be useful, and which avenue would be worth pursuing in order to get access to the required medical treatment. There was no homogeneity of the capillary distribution of power throughout the ‘body politic,’ as is the case with biopolitics, and no single sovereign, which had the right to make decisions over death or life. There were, rather, numerous actors, among whom the right to ‘take life’ or let live was dispersed. This was interspersed with the power of the state apparatus, in which, sometimes, those actors were employed and in which they made their decisions. Thus, the right of the state apparatus to “make live and to let die” was present, alongside “the resurgence of sovereignty within the

31 Foucault, Society Must Be Defended, 241.
field of governmentality.” 

Submitting welfare documentation to the municipality could have been considered just as important as evoking a shared past and mutual friends, but neither of these practices brought full certainty over managing survival and wellbeing. It was, rather, the repeated, continuous, flexible movement from one social actor to the next, and navigation from one ‘gap’ led by compassion in the field of governmentality to another, which offered the best chances that life would be protected.

Bibliography


Remembering the “Embargo Cake”:
The Legacy of Hyperinflation and the UN Sanctions in Serbia
Research Article

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Remembering the “Embargo Cake:”
The Legacy of Hyperinflation and the UN Sanctions in Serbia

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The extensive pauperisation of the population in Serbia in the early 1990s, caused by the economic crisis and the UN sanctions, had a tremendous impact on the people’s everyday diet. Many basic, locally produced foods became unavailable as food retailers severely limited their stock to save it from depreciation caused by hyperinflation. Following the introduction of the UN embargo, official trade came to a halt and imported foods disappeared from shops. Limited stock of basic foods, such as flour, sugar, cooking oil, white bread and milk, was supplied through state-owned food retailers, but these were rationed and difficult to obtain. However, food scarcity in early-1990s Serbia boosted the population’s resourcefulness and creativity on various levels, resulting in increased solidarity, support networks, barter, smuggling and a return to cooking recipes from the period of the Second World War. Survival during hyperinflation and the UN embargo was predicated on transmission of knowledge from the pre-industrial period, suggesting that this was possible mainly because of the simultaneous coexistence of the pre-industrial and industrial periods in Yugoslavia. This article will analyse strategies and key actors in the process of sourcing, procuring and preparing food under these socio-economic circumstances.¹

Keywords: food, hyperinflation, social networks, solidarity, Serbia

Introduction
On 30 May 1992, the United Nations imposed sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) after the UN Security Council determined that the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in other parts of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) constituted a threat to international peace.² Resolution 757 banned all international trade with Serbia and Montenegro, air travel, maintenance of aircraft, sports exchanges,

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scientific and technical cooperation, cultural exchanges and official travel. These sanctions were intended to put pressure on Serbian President Slobodan Milošević to stop support for Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In November 1995, following the signing of the peace agreement in Dayton, Ohio, the UN suspended the embargo against Serbia and Montenegro. However, the UN sanctions were not fully lifted until 2001 after Milošević’s extradition to the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

The UN sanctions had a devastating effect on the Serbian economy, which was already troubled by pre-existing economic difficulties and macroeconomic mismanagement. The war - triggered by the dissolution of former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and by the state’s robbery of citizens by confiscating deposits in private bank accounts - contributed to complete economic meltdown and hyperinflation. Three months after the imposition of the UN sanctions, industrial production fell by 40 per cent. At the end of 1992, the inflation rate in Serbia and Montenegro reached 19,810 per cent. This trend continued in 1993, when Serbia set a record with one of the highest hyperinflation rates in history: 313 million per cent (monthly inflation rate). The average monthly salary at the end of 1993 amounted to USD 15. As a consequence of the UN embargo, industrial plants were either closed or operated at minimum capacity. By the end of 1993, 1.3 million workers were on paid leave of absence - not working, but receiving salaries - while 750,000 were unemployed. Hyperinflation in Serbia lasted for 25 months between 1992 and 1994 and as such was the third longest period of hyperinflation in history. In January 1994, hyperinflation in Serbia peaked at 5,578,000,000,000,000,000 per cent, or 113 per cent daily. Prices doubled on a daily - sometimes even hourly - basis, and empty shops became a regular sight.

This article analyses coping strategies and consequences of this unprecedented hyperinflation and the UN embargo. It has to be emphasised that this article does not make a causal relation between hyperinflation and the embargo. The food production and consumption chain were affected by both the hyperinflation and the UN sanctions, and as such these two phenomena were impossible to separate methodologically for research purposes. For this reason only, the two issues are studied together in this article. It is based on extensive ethnographic research in Belgrade carried out on several occasions between 2005 and 2014, and draws on participant observation and life histories recorded during these periods. In addition, as a native researcher who lived in Belgrade

4 Delević, Economic Sanctions.
7 Stamenković, Makroekonomska stabilizacija, 29.
8 Stamenković, Makroekonomska stabilizacija, 29.
during the 1990s, many of my insights were rooted in personal experience that was subsequently informed and enriched by discussions with my research participants. The research on which this article is based mostly involved participants who lived in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. This article has a strong urban focus; although it is representative of much of urban Serbia, it does not purport to present a comprehensive overview of the situation in the whole of Serbia.

In the next section, I will discuss food consumption patterns in the years leading up to the fall of Yugoslavia and the economic crisis in Serbia contemporaneous with the UN embargo. Following this, I will analyse the dietary changes that ensued after the rise of hyperinflation. New recipes and ways of sourcing food will be discussed along with the social implications of procuring information about accessible food stocks. Creative ways of getting hold of food, whether growing one’s own, foraging wild foods, smuggling or trading on the black market, flourished during the period of hyperinflation, leaving long-lasting consequences that will be analysed in the concluding section of the article.

1. Food consumption and diet before the UN sanctions

In the years preceding the fall of communism throughout Eastern Europe, Serbia experienced an unprecedented rise of Western consumer culture. The first McDonald’s restaurant in Central and Southeastern Europe opened in Belgrade in 1988. The popularity of this first McDonald’s was such that in 1989 it hit record sales, becoming the busiest McDonald’s in the world and serving more than two million customers that year. The tremendous success of the first McDonald’s in this part of the world prompted the company to open another branch on Terazije, one of the busiest streets in the centre of Belgrade. In 1990, the latter McDonald’s became the first in the world to serve more than three million customers (3,585,554). It set another world record on 12 March 1991, when it served 16,823 customers in a single day. In the same year, the Terazije McDonald’s once again came close to serving almost three million people in Belgrade. Similar to the phenomenon of McDonald’s in Beijing, the popularity of this fast-food restaurant had more to do with the symbolic nature of tasting the “West” and “America” than with the actual appeal of the food or the prices, as these were quite expensive for the majority of Belgrade’s citizens in the early 1990s.

The increased consumption of Western foods went beyond McDonald’s restaurants in Belgrade. As a result of the political rift between former Yugoslav republics (Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia), in October 1990 the Serbian government introduced its own tax politics independent of federal (Yugoslav) revenue.

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11 It is interesting to note here that the first McDonald’s in Italy opened in Rome in 1986, only two years before the restaurant entered the market in communist Yugoslavia. McDonald’s. Istorija: McDonald’s u svetu. (accessed: 02. August 2014).
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This allowed the government to decide its own customs and tax politics and to control prices on its territory, as well as which goods to import and export. Consequently, the prices of imported products fell overnight, reflecting the affordability of foreign foods. Local newspapers reported a sale of 35 kilos of Dutch cheese in one day at a New Belgrade grocery shop; the shop owner told newspapers that it had previously taken a week to sell this amount of cheese. Foreign cheese, Mars, Snickers and Twix chocolate bars and Milka chocolates suddenly became not only available, but affordable to consumers in Belgrade.

The differences in food consumption between Belgrade and the rest of Serbia were also documented in sociological research about the standard of living in Serbia. This research studied all social classes (“social layers”, as the original research termed it) in Serbia in the late 1980s and revealed that Belgrade residents had a much better diet compared with the rest of Serbia. The research accounted for differences in consumption between the managerial class or layer (rukovodioce), private entrepreneurs (privatnici), middle class (srednji sloj) and working class (radnička klasa). The social structure of Belgrade residents included fewer working-class consumers and more people belonging to other layers, which resulted in a better diet compared to the rest of Serbia. Almost half of Belgrade families regularly consumed meat, fruit and vegetables, and around two-thirds consumed milk and dairy products on a regular basis in the late 1980s. With the onset of war in former Yugoslavia and the subsequent introduction of the UN embargo followed by hyperinflation, these food consumption patterns were completely changed, as we will see in the next section.

2. Bread and dripping revisited
With the economic crisis in the 1990s, consumption patterns changed once more. People quickly had to adapt their diets yet again to new conditions; new, but also often older, methods of preparing food, as well as recipes with fewer and cheaper ingredients, found their way back to everyday use. Instead of using cooking oil for shallow frying, women returned to the times of their mothers and grandmothers and started cooking with lard if they had countryside connections to supply them. As a byproduct of pig rearing, lard was easily found in the countryside. Many residents of urban centres had relatives in the countryside who reared one or two pigs for families in town, thereby securing cheaper homemade meat products, and lard.

The rapid industrialisation in former Yugoslavia after the Second World War championed sunflower oil over lard, which was more popular at the time. During the 1960s and 1970s, lard increasingly became a sign of unsophisticated

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17 Yan, McDonald’s in Beijing.
18 Yan, McDonald’s in Beijing.
20 Bogdanović, Materijalni standard, 249.
and unhealthy cooking, while sunflower oil symbolised a modern and more health-conscious diet.\textsuperscript{21} While the production and distribution of sunflower oil was state-regulated, lard production was not in the hands of the state. Lard’s return to regular use in the early 1990s suggested that people in Belgrade drew on knowledge from their pre-industrialised pasts in order to surmount the challenges sanctions had imposed on their usual diets. This shift from oil to lard consumption in the early 1990s was not only a sign of economic crisis, but also resembled a journey through time, going back half a century to the period of food scarcity during the Second World War and severe rationing after the War. Lard was used not just for cooking, but also as a spread on bread, as in \textit{mast i 'leba}, the equivalent of bread and dripping in the UK. \textit{Mast i 'leba} was a well-known staple amongst the generations who grew up in the 1940s and 1950s without the butter, margarine or cheese spreads that were later commonly used. Members of the postwar generations vividly remembered a childhood staple: a slice of bread topped with a thick layer of lard and sprinkled with salt and paprika.

Half a century later, \textit{mast i 'leba} once again became a common breakfast for many. Several of my female research participants recalled having “communal breakfast” with colleagues at work during hyperinflation, whereby someone would bring homemade bread, someone else homemade yogurt, and yet another would bring lard for \textit{mast i 'leba}. The difference this time was that bread was mostly homemade because its stock was heavily limited. Women who took to making bread at home in the early 1990s did not do so through choice or because they loved to bake, but because flour was one of very few foodstuffs one could get hold of. As one of my informants, Lola, a landscape architect, recalled:

\begin{quote}
"We had a 50-kilo sack of flour in the pantry, and I baked three times a day, as there was hardly anything else to eat: bread for breakfast, pies for lunch and buns for dinner, day after day, month after month. In the first six months after the end of hyperinflation, I refused to turn on the oven - I was so fed up with baking."
\end{quote}

This was a very different phenomenon that could not be compared to the revival of home baking in the West, where traditional methods of cooking and baking have regained popularity in the last two decades.\textsuperscript{22} The return of lard to an everyday diet in the 1990s was only temporary, however; as soon as the economic situation improved, most people stopped consuming it. Even though a sense of nostalgia was present in people’s recollections of “the days of bread and dripping”, this had no impact on more permanent changes in one’s every-

\textsuperscript{21} Croatian author Pavao Pavličić humorously writes in his book \textit{Kruh i mast} of his father, who said that in his lifetime he had eaten so much bread and dripping that the slices would reach the sky if placed one on top of another. Later on, Pavličić writes, they switched to margarine, then butter, until they stopped using any form of spread and nibbled on bread alongside salami and cheese. In the end, they stopped eating bread because allegedly it was fattening, even though Pavličić and his father were “thin as pike” when they ate bread and dripping. Similar accounts were reiterated by many during my research, questioning, with a dose of nostalgia, whether health professionals were right after all in their claims about unhealthy lard vs. healthier cooking oils and margarine. See Pavličić, Pavao. 1996. \textit{Kruh i mast}. Zagreb: Žnanje.

\textsuperscript{22} See, for example, articles about the rise in home baking throughout Western European countries such as Germany and the UK. See Weitzenbürger, Gudrun. 2013. \textit{Neue Produkte lieber selber machen}. See also Roux, Michel. 2011. \textit{Great British Revival: The lost art of bread-making}. (accessed: 02. August 2014).
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day diet. The revived consumption of bread and dripping, a childhood staple, in the 1990s was not a matter of choice, but a necessity; as such, this food served as a sensory trigger for memories of other, more difficult times. “Memory”, according to Seremetakis23, “[…] is a culturally mediated material practice that is activated by embodied acts and semantically dense objects.” In other words, the revival of bread and dripping in 1990s Serbia not only brought back memories from the Second World War, but people actually re-lived these memories through another period of hardship. This actual physical re-embodiment of one’s memories of life under duress sated nostalgic memories of one’s childhood, but moreover, it triggered a stream of memories of war, hardship and poverty. This explains why “nostalgia for hardship” did not have a more profound effect on people’s everyday diets - bread and dripping reappeared in their lives not because of nostalgia or a diet fad that suddenly reintroduced lard, but because there was literally nothing else to eat. As soon as the economic situation improved, people stopped consuming lard, storing it away - physically and mentally - for potential use in future difficult times.

3. Back to the future: return of the war cookbooks24
In the previous section, I have pointed out the importance of foodstuffs from previous periods of hardship, such as the Second World War and the years immediately afterward. The forced “re-traditionalisation” in cooking and baking in Serbia in the 1990s relied heavily on intergenerational transmission of knowledge. As Ljiljana,25 a university professor and one of my research participants remarked:

“Each generation here has ratni kuvar [a war cookbook] to which women resort in times of crisis. In difficult times, women start to recall their mothers, aunts and grandmothers, what they cooked and baked during the war; for example, how to make jam without sugar, bread without yeast, apple vinegar, etc. I called these “pauper recipes” rather than “war recipes”. It wasn’t tragic, we didn’t starve during the embargo; it was often funny and amusing [how we got by].”

Ljiljana’s example highlighted two important issues: transmission of knowledge and a derisive attitude to hyperinflation. The first was instrumental in coping with food scarcity because in the absence of any guidance from health (or any other) authorities, people relied on knowledge passed down through previous generation(s). The concept of “knowledge”, in Frederik Barth’s view, “situates its items in a particular and unequivocal way relative to events, ac-

24 It must be noted that the “war cookbook” that people referred to existed only in the form of personal transmission of knowledge. Unlike the state-organised food propaganda disseminated via leaflets, booklets and radio broadcasts during times of rationing in the UK (1939-1955) which taught women how to create meals with few available ingredients, this knowledge in Serbia was transmitted personally. However, these two examples - Serbia and the UK - were similar in that women bore the brunt of food provisioning on their shoulders. In both cases, it was women who queued up relentlessly for food, who created meals in difficult conditions and shielded men and children from the full impact of the reduction in consumption. See Zweininger-Bargiełowska, Ina. 2002. Austerity in Britain: Rationing Controls and Consumption, 1939-1955. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 99.
25 Names of research participants in this article have been changed to protect their identities.
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... and social relationships." (Barth, 2002:1). In other words, this knowledge about methods of surviving food shortages and scarcity - for example, in the form of recipes in personal “war cookbooks” - is reproduced within a particular group or social network. Ljiljana explained that a friend and colleague, who shared thrifty recipes with her during the economic crisis in the 1990s, had come across them in a war cookbook she had inherited from her mother-in-law, who in turn had compiled them during the Second World War. Ljiljana’s friend’s mother-in-law hailed from an established and well-off Belgrade family. Knowledge, as this case shows, is transmitted from one generation to the next, but furthermore, because it is embedded in social relationships, it reproduces values inherent to a particular class.

The other important aspect of Ljiljana’s example was an ironic attitude to hardship in the 1990s. People recounted hilarious situations from the hyperinflation period, such as waking up and stepping on a sack of flour that had been placed right next to one’s bed. No one complained of hunger, but all reiterated that flour saved everyone. However, to be able to feed a family mainly on flour, one had to become a dedicated baker with abundant creativity and adapt quickly to continuously changing circumstances in the food market (such as finding alternative leavening agents, for example). Lola showed me her (hand-written) cookbook from the early 1990s, which included a recipe called “Kolač od ništa” (“Cake out of Nothing”) that she had acquired from her brother-in-law. The recipe, of course, required several ingredients, and it certainly was not made of “nothing” as its name suggested. The underlying irony of this cake’s name, and the names of many other recipes from this period, points to a derisive attitude to the situation. “Embargo Cake”, “UNPROFOR Cake”, “Crazy Dough” (or “Wonder Dough”), “Cake without Eggs”, “Rolls without Eggs”, “Madjarica” (“The War Cake”) and “Embargo Schnitzel” were some of the old-turned-new-again recipes which became part of one’s everyday diet during the embargo. These recipes contained two common elements: a few basic ingredients combined with improvisation and creativity. For example, fruit could be substituted with jam or vice versa, depending on what was available. Milk, eggs and dried fruit were difficult to get hold of and as such could be omitted (or included, if available) from most cake recipes. Also, as women turned to baking bread at home, they often struggled to source yeast because it was in such high demand. As a result, they came up with a recipe for “Crazy/Wonder Dough”, which could be used in a variety of sweet and savoury bread recipes over and over again. Once the first batch of “Wonder Dough” was made, a small part of it was set aside and kept in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to seven days. This dough was then used as a rising agent instead of yeast for the next round of baking.


27 The people who took part in this research were mainly in their 40s and 50s during the early-to-mid-1990s; as such, the majority of them were employed and were able to cope much more easily than the elderly or the sick, for example, whose survival was seriously endangered by the combination of hyperinflation and the UN embargo. A tragic case in point happened in November 1993, when 70 patients died over the course of 10 days in the Gornja Toponica psychiatric hospital, near Niš in the south of Serbia, due to lack of medicine, food and heating. See Todorović, Tomislav. 1993. *Dnevno umire desetak bolesnika.* Politika, 17. November 1993, 1.
The names of the new foodstuffs signalled that these were not ordinary recipes. Their names were chosen, however unconsciously, in an attempt to distinguish such recipes from one’s “normal” diet as a collective reminder that the use of these recipes, just like the overall societal situation, was only temporary and not part of one’s usual everyday life. There was an underlying irony in the way these people described the foods they made with fewer ingredients as being “from nothing”. This ironic, self-deprecating attitude toward changes in food consumption brought on by austerity functioned as a buffer for coping with extreme and rapid changes in society.

Ironic has found its place in many societies as a means of making sense of contradictions or extreme situations. However, many varieties of irony can encode different attitudes toward social experience, or as Alan Wilde (1981) puts it, different “horizons of assent”. While Michael Herzfeld (2001) argues that use of irony among Greeks actually perpetuates, rather than eradicates, a sense of victimisation, James Clifford maintains that irony can motivate a search for stability and that “as long as one’s irony remains humble, a recuperation of humanism is possible.” Clifford’s understanding of the use of irony as a “search for stability” is instrumental in analysing the irony in discourse about food in Serbia during the 1990s. It is not surprising, then, to learn that hardly any of the recipes from the 1990s are still used today; in most cases, it took my research participants a long time to locate these recipes in their cookbooks, showing that they had long since been abandoned. The war recipes and cookbooks from 20 years ago have been replaced with “regular” recipes containing abundant and diverse ingredients. Even though many of my informants complained of the continuous difficult economic situation in Serbia, and some of them confessed that they were forced to bake bread at home because it was cheaper, no one used the war recipes any longer. If they did sometimes bake a cake with similar ingredients as the eponymous “Embargo Cake”, they gave it a different name (“Easy Fruitcake” or “Cake with Apples”), thereby affirming that, despite ongoing economic difficulties, life had returned to “normal” compared to the situation 20 years earlier.

4. Grow your own

In addition to home baking, women also resorted to using whatever vegetables and fruits they could get hold of from food markets. At that time, fruit and vegetables were commonly sold in zelena pijaca, food markets where farmers from nearby villages displayed their produce. During hyperinflation, producers tied the prices of their food to the German mark and adjusted prices accordingly during the day. The problem with this was that people’s salaries were not adjusted in line with hyperinflation. As a result, by the time one got to the market, he or she could afford to buy only a couple of eggs or a kilo of potatoes with

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29 Fernandez, Irony in Action, 30.
30 Although this title may be reminiscent of the British “Dig For Victory” campaign during the Second World War, the efforts for growing one’s own food in 1990s Serbia had nothing to do with any state-sponsored propaganda. These were solely individual efforts in which people used all available resources to bring food to the table.
an entire monthly wage. Even though fruit and vegetables were available to buy at green markets, most people could not afford the cost unless they had foreign currency savings to spend on food.

For this reason, people frequently used any piece of land they had to grow their own vegetables. Ljiljana, the university professor from Belgrade quoted in the previous section, had a sister who lived in a house in Belgrade. During the hyperinflation period, Ljiljana’s sister dug out the flowers from a small front garden outside her house and planted vegetables there instead. The majority of people in Belgrade lived in blocks of flats, not houses. However, many city dwellers were among the first generation of their families to leave the countryside and maintained strong ties to their villages, returning every weekend to take part in farming alongside their relatives in the countryside. Others had plots (plac) near Belgrade where they grew fruit and vegetables. The main obstacle in both cases was access to villages and plots, as petrol was only available on the black market at a highly inflated price of five German marks per litre (the equivalent of 2.5 euros per litre). Those who could not afford the petrol to commute to their village or plac every weekend relied on bus services which were heavily reduced and overcrowded. One of my research participants, Stana, shared an anecdote from one of these trips to the plac that she owned and tended alongside her late husband:

“It was summer 1993 and my husband and I wanted to go to our plac to harvest garden peas; however, because there was not enough petrol and the bus service to our village was suspended, we had to take an alternative route which involved an hour’s walk from the bus stop to our plac. It was a very hot and sticky day and I was wearing a summer dress and sandals. The bus that we were on was so crowded that by time I got out of the bus, the elastic band on my knickers snapped and they fell off as I got off the bus! And then we had another hour on foot to get to our plac. By the time we got there, my sandals were completely torn and destroyed.”

Stana lived with her husband, son, daughter and granddaughter in a one-bedroom flat in New Belgrade. She worked as a seamstress for the army, and her salary was so low that she could not even afford to buy a bag of potatoes during hyperinflation. Growing her own vegetables at any cost - including episodes like this, torn sandals, lost underwear and all - was the only available solution she saw to feed her family. Because she had grown up in a village in the mountains, Stana had extensive knowledge about foraging, growing and preparing food. She had seven brothers, and as the only daughter she was expected to cook, clean and tend livestock from a very early age; thus, Stana learnt to make bread and pies before the age of six, and her mother taught her about the wild foods they collected from the forest. Stana was familiar with

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31 In 1989, Belgrade had more than 1.6 million inhabitants, but only one-third of its population had been born there. Compare Kaser, Karl. 1995. Familie und Verwandtschaft auf dem Balkan. Analyse einer untergehenden Kultur. Vienna-Cologne-Weimar: Böhlau, 427. As well as Kaser, Karl. 2008. Patriarchy after Patriarchy: Gender Relations in Turkey and the Balkans, 1500-2000. Vienna/Berlin: Lit Verlag, 121. This suggests that family relationships between those living in the city and those in the countryside were quite strong, particularly during the sanctions in the early 1990s when townpeople relied much more on help with food from their relatives in the countryside. Compare Matić, Miloš. 2005. Urban economies in a rural manner: family economizing in socialist Serbian center, Ethnologia Balkanica 9, 144.
wild mushrooms and knew which ones were safe to eat; she also collected nettle and used it to make soups. Rosehips, blackberries, hawthorne berries and cherry plums were just some of the wild foods which Stana picked from a forest near her plac and used to make jams and squashes.

Stana was not an exception in this manner; several of my research participants took pride in possessing knowledge about wild foods, as well as in their ability to use it to feed their families in ways they considered healthier than merely cooking with flour three times a day. Another female informant, Gordana, worked as a commercial director in one of the major high-street banks in Serbia at the time. From Monday to Friday, Gordana was dedicated to her high-flying career, while during weekends she worked on the land in the village where she was from. Gordana’s mother and sister lived permanently in their family house in a village in southwestern Serbia; her family was well-off and owned around 10 hectares of land in and around the village. Even though Gordana did not live with them, the family members continued to pool their resources and worked the land together. Gordana went to Bulgaria and Romania to buy seed and salt for her family and neighbours in the village, since these items were difficult to obtain during the hyperinflation period. Because her family had no agricultural machinery and just owned the land, they had a “50-50” agreement with their village neighbours. In practice, this meant that their neighbours did all the machinery-related work and in return received half of all the crops from Gordana’s family’s land. Gordana and her family reciprocated by taking part in their neighbours’ seasonal work.

In addition to cultivating wheat, corn, vegetables and fruit, Gordana foraged the woods for wild herbs and foods because of their presumably higher quality compared to home-grown foods. Instead of using spinach in cooking, Gordana preferred nettle due to its higher nutritional value than cultivated leafy green vegetables:

“I regularly made soups from nettle or wild mushrooms, both of which I collected in the forest near my village. Wherever other women put spinach, I used nettle: in filo pastry pies, savoury muffins… I even used it instead of parsley to sprinkle over vegetable broths. This relationship with the land, both cultivated and wild - that was our lifeline during hyperinflation, this is what saved people from starvation.”

Once again, the transmission of knowledge of farming and foraging gained from preindustrial life was what helped women grow their own food and source wild foods safe for consumption. Because of the rapid industrialisation that took place in former Yugoslavia after the Second World War, many facets of pre-industrial life were well preserved, and practices from the pre-industrial period coexisted simultaneously with industrialised Yugoslav society (1945-1991). One’s know-how in farming and foraging, extended family connections with those who still farmed, a return to lard (over industrial oils), re-learning how to bake - all pointed to a pre-industrial lifestyle. People survived the UN sanctions and hyperinflation as this not-too-distant knowledge and skillset was reinvigorated and reintroduced. This knowledge was transmitted intergenerationally through those who experienced war, poverty and scarcity as well as intragenerationally through the experience of a simultaneous coexistence of...
industrial and pre-industrial worlds in postwar Serbia. Despite Tito’s efforts to reform the pre-industrial way of life in Yugoslavia after 1945, it continued to coexist alongside industrialised consumer society, often creating paradoxes of modern life in former Yugoslavia.\(^{32}\) This explains the irony and self-deprecating attitude of citizens during the UN embargo: people made fun of their surreal everyday lives because they possessed survival skills and knowledge that helped them to circumvent the crisis. Instead of becoming helpless victims of halted consumerism, they turned to re-creating ways of producing and sourcing food for their needs. Irony and self-mockery served as a reminder that this was yet another paradox associated with inhabiting a simultaneously modern and pre-modern society; additionally, it served to separate this “carnivalesque” period (in Bakhtin’s terms) from “normal” or “regular” life.

However, not everyone in Belgrade had relatives in the countryside or plots to grow their own food - or even the knowledge of how to grow things. These people relied heavily on their social networks, which consisted of relatives, friends, work colleagues and neighbours. These networks were a considerable source of the capital that enabled survival during the worst period of hyperinflation in the early 1990s. In the next section, we will analyse these social networks and the way people used them for everyday survival.

5. Social networks

Milena worked as a clinical doctor in the early 1990s. She lived in a one-bedroom flat in New Belgrade with her husband Voja, also a doctor, and their two children: one in secondary school at the time, and the other a medical student. Milena recalled the shock she experienced when the embargo turned the familiar into the unrecognizable seemingly overnight:

> Before the sanctions there was everything. I remember walking past the shop window in Knez Mihajlova\(^{33}\) and looking at Mozartkugel chocolate balls; they were expensive and I could not afford them, but it was a feast to see them. This abundance of food followed by such scarcity was shocking. It was so confusing to see empty shelves everywhere. For my whole monthly salary, that of a specialist clinical doctor, all I could buy was three eggs. We had no relatives in the countryside to help us with food, and our doctors’ union never really functioned, so there was no help with food from there either. But there was solidarity among people. One friend who worked for the government brought us rice once; also, I had a cousin who was a refugee from Croatia who settled in a village close to the river Danube north of Belgrade, and he once brought us a basket filled with beans and homemade jams that he and his wife made. I will never forget the sight of my cousin carrying this old-fashioned washing basket filled with foods we could only dream of then.

As this example demonstrates, the changes were rapid, and “subsistence networks,”\(^ {34}\) consisting of family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues, became

\(^{32}\) For a description of rural-urban paradox in Serbia, see Matić, Urban economies.

\(^{33}\) Knez Mihajlova is a pedestrian street in the heart of Belgrade city centre.

vital in getting hold of food. The more people one knew and/or was connected to, the more likely one was to obtain food or information about where and when food could be found. Describing the coping strategies during several crisis periods in Argentina over the last 20 years, Aguirre noted that social networks acted as a “social security system” whereby people not only exchanged food or information about food, but also provided care and protection by doing so, thereby reinforcing existing social links. In the case of Serbia in the 1990s, social networks played a very similar role: they provided people with food, but furthermore offered a broad range of services as a replacement for failed institutional support.

This exchange of services and food between friends and relatives in post-1990s Belgrade bears many similarities to Moscow during the same period, Romania during the last decade of Communism and Argentina during several crisis periods in the 1990s and early 2000s. Describing the phenomenon of exchange in Russia, Caldwell argued that it could not be classified as a traditional exchange in which a relationship between the parties involved exists only during the exchange, nor does it conform to the classical gift exchange pattern wherein a receiver is expected to reciprocate within a particular time frame. Exchanges in this traditional context exist prior to sociality, and people actually use exchanges to sustain relationships. Instances of exchange in post-communist Serbia, Russia and Argentina, however, presuppose the existence of a relationship prior to any exchange. Caldwell argues that in post-communist Russia, “acts of exchange verify and concretize existing social relations and the trust that exists between partners.” Likewise, in the case of Argentina, Aguirre noted that “[reciprocity] reinforce[d] and/or maintain[ed] existing social links between friends, neighbours, and/or family members.” As we have seen, exchange in post-1990 Serbia took place within a social network that consisted of family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Moreover, as much as kinship relationships were revived and mobilised in the post-communist period as a substitute for the collapse of institutions and institutional support, other elements of social networks, such as relationships with friends, colleagues and neighbours, became a complementary source of capital. The vacuum created in between the collapse of communism and the slow and reluctant emergence of new post-communist state institutions was filled as people in Serbia, Russia and Argentina reinforced their personal networks of family and friends.

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37 Perianu, Précarité Alimentaire.
38 Aguirre, Estrategias de Consume.
39 Sahlins, 1972, cited in Caldwell, Not By Bread Alone, 98.
42 Caldwell, Not By Bread Alone, 98.
43 Aguirre, Estrategias de Consume, 125.
The wider and stronger one’s social network is, the more capital one possesses. It may not be possible or necessary to bank on that capital immediately, but by keeping a relationship active, one holds on to a bond whose value will not change with time. Carolyn Stevens aptly termed these personal connections as “deposits in [the] favour bank.” This is illustrated well by the example of Ljiljana, the university professor, who noted that people helped one another during hyperinflation in a way that has not occurred since:

“There was a lot of solidarity at work; we exchanged our salaries from dinars to [German] marks, going to street currency dealers together to get a better rate, and if there wasn’t enough small change to divide the salaries, we didn’t mind paying more to someone because next time someone else would be in that situation. Today, many of those colleagues can’t see eye to eye with one another, but a memory of that solidarity is still there.”

This “social security system”, however, was not predicated on direct reciprocity: Milena had no obligation to return gifts to her friends or relatives, nor was Ljiljana obligated to return even a single German mark to the colleague with whom she had split her converted salary, within any particular time frame. This (relative) freedom of debt was what Milena, and many other research participants, termed solidarnost (“solidarity”). People helped others in their social network without expecting a direct return of the favour, but this did not cancel their debt. This “debt” remained as a necessary component of the social network, and as such it could be considered a “social network tax”. Solidarnost was the only way to morally release oneself from this “debt”. In other words, to be solidary was to keep up with regular payments of “social network tax”.

Milena, Ljiljana and many other research participants emphasised the difference between people today compared to the period of economic hardship in the 1990s, noting that solidarity among people no longer existed. This could be construed as a nostalgic, rose-tinted view of the past, but it could also be argued that instances of solidarity experienced in the 1990s were typical of the extraordinary socio-economic situation in Serbia. As the economic crisis eased, pressure on social networks as “subsistence networks” gradually lessened; in turn, the favours and debts incurred by those favours became smaller. This effectively led to a decrease in solidarity because “social network tax” was much lower. What changed, in other words, was not people and their morality or humanity, but the size and effectiveness of social networks that operated with reduced capacity.

6. Smuggling
So far, I have identified several survival strategies during the period of hyperinflation in Serbia: the strengthening of social networks, knowledge and dissemination of old recipes and methods for preparing food, and access to land and farming. Two additional and inseparable strategies for coping with food scarcity were švercovanje (smuggling) and the black market. The latter strategy belonged to the realm of illegal market operations; as such, it was usually in

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45 Perianu, Précarité Alimentaire.
the hands of local gangsters, popularly called “the mafia” even though it was not related to the Italian counterpart whose name it bore.

Everyone took part in smuggling because the embargo put a stop to official trade, yet people still needed petrol, food, clothes, shoes, toiletries and other everyday necessities. Even those who stayed away from the smuggling business became customers whose needs encouraged smuggling. Smuggling was so widespread that the implicit notion of illegality inherent in the concept was almost completely lost. Whilst some people condemned the practice, they nevertheless relied on smugglers for their everyday survival.

Unlike food, which people got hold of by queuing endlessly, travelling across town to a remote grocery store, baking continuously or growing their own if they had no relatives in the countryside to supply them, items such as petrol and cigarettes could only be procured from smugglers. During the embargo, petrol was normally sold on streets from canisters. People would buy anything between two and 10 litres of petrol, depending on how much they could afford due to heavily inflated prices of approximately five German marks per litre (approximately 2.5 euros or 2 GBP today). Cigarettes were another product that disappeared from regular shopping venues and moved almost exclusively to the black market. Occasionally there would be long queues outside newsagent kiosks, a sign that cigarettes were in stock. More often, however, as was the case with many other products during hyperinflation, one had to rely on the black market for a regular supply of cigarettes. In a similar way to petrol, cigarettes were smuggled on both a large and small scale - while some sold cigarettes for the “big players”, others smuggled for personal consumption.

Boban lived on the outskirts of Belgrade with his wife and four children. They were of Romani origin and as such, by his own admission, faced more challenges in everyday life compared to other non-Romani citizens in Serbia. During the crisis their situation became an even greater predicament, leading Boban, alongside many other Romanis, into criminal activities for survival:

“Before the sanctions, I worked in a factory that produced agricultural machinery. When the sanctions kicked in, production stopped and I was out of work. Everyone was out of work, and being a Rom, I had zero chances of getting a job. We lived in Surčin - that was a mafia stronghold, and faced with zero opportunities for finding work while having a wife and four kids to feed, I went to them to ask for help. The local mafia boss said that he was happy to give me money as a one-off, but he said that wouldn’t last for long and he knew I’d be back asking for more money. Instead he offered me a job, asking me to choose between selling petrol, cigarettes or toilet paper. I chose cigarettes. If I worked well, the boss said, they would reward me, and if, on the other hand, I tried to trick them, I’d get a bullet in my head. They paid regularly, and if anyone bothered me - like one time, when police raided my home and took me to the police station - it was enough to say whom I

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46 As a consequence of the UN embargo, the official import of petrol was banned and petrol stations were left empty. This ban paved the way for illegal methods of smuggling petrol into the country. On a large scale, petrol was shipped illegally from neighbouring countries along rivers and roads. Additionally, individual smugglers carried petrol in passenger cars; some had converted passenger cars for petrol smuggling by adding an additional petrol tank, which often led to disasters.

47 Surčin is located on the outskirts of Belgrade near the airport.
worked for and they let me go. I had four young children, and my wife could not find work any more as a house cleaner because even the well-to-do town women could not afford cleaners at that time. The six of us lived all in one room, without running water or a bathroom, and with single-phase electricity power, which we diverted from my father’s house. I had no other choice, really, but to join the smuggling business.”

Boban’s case was typical of two categories among those in Serbia at the time: the recently unemployed - that is, people who lost work because industrial production came to a halt with the introduction of the embargo and the Romani population, many of whom took to smuggling in the early 1990s as the only available option to securing livelihood. Boban stopped selling cigarettes several years later and instead started to fix cars for a living. As the overall economic situation improved, Boban’s wife Marta found work as a cleaner again, often taking her children to help her during weekends and school holidays. All four of their children finished secondary education; Boban and Marta proudly added that two of their children live abroad now and are earning a “decent living” from their work at checkout tills in a supermarket, enough to secure independent livelihood. Marta was a bit disappointed with her eldest daughter, who trained to be a tram driver but could not find work in that profession because of discrimination against Romanis and instead now works as a cleaner in a hospital. Their son is seriously ill and unable to work, and Boban and Marta look after him and his family. Even though smuggling provided a lifeline during the worst times of economic hardship in the 1990s, Boban and Marta insisted that their children had to finish school and earn qualifications that would lead to employment and better opportunities in life.

From businessmen and criminals collaborating with those in power to individuals travelling across the border in search of food supplies for resale or their own consumption, smuggling became an integral part of everyone’s life during the period of hyperinflation and UN sanctions. For example, my informant Stojanka worked as a post office clerk and regularly travelled to Budapest for food and clothes during the sanctions. She went along on organised coach tours from Belgrade to Budapest flea market, where she bought cheap clothes in bulk to resell. Stojanka worked mainly with women, and whatever clothes she had available to purchase would sell quickly. The money she earned from these sales covered the cost of her trips and the food she would buy for her family. This was a common practice among many with foreign currency, entrepreneurial skills and the flexibility to embrace such survival strategies. As was the case with Boban, Stojanka also abandoned smuggling as soon as the economic crisis became less acute. 20 years on, Stojanka is retired and spends most of her time looking after her grandchildren. In her spare time, she travels with ex-colleagues from work. Shopping visits to the Chinese market in Budapest in the 1990s have nowadays been replaced with visits to European landmark tourist destinations. The days of šverc ture (“smuggling tours”) to Budapest

seemed like the distant past as she talked about her recent coach trip to Italy, Spain and the south of France organised by her pensioners’ society.

Boban’s current situation is quite different from that of Stojanka, who kept her job during the crisis and is now retired with a regular monthly income. Unlike her, Boban has no security in the form of a pension - he worked for 32 years before he was made redundant, he is 60 years old and, in his own words, he is now “unemployable because he is too old”. Despite such circumstances, things have changed for the better over the last two decades for Boban as well. In 1997 he started to build a small house, noting, “When others had nothing, our situation was not too bad; thanks to the cigarette-smuggling business, we moved on from six of us sleeping in one room to building our own little house.” The house is still pretty much a “work in progress”, in Boban’s words - only one room has windows, while the others are still boarded up - but it is nevertheless a much better situation compared to two decades ago. Thanks to the success of his cigarette-smuggling business, Boban could afford to educate all of his four children. Having said that, there is a certain bitterness evident when he talks about the discrimination his eldest daughter has experienced as a Romani, unable to get a job as a tram driver in the public transport company even though she trained to do so: “What’s the point of educating my children if they are only seen as Gypsies and not as people with degrees?” He may be a bitter father because of the injustice that his children are subjected to, but Boban is certainly not a passive victim of the system: he joined one of the opposition parties early on in the 1990s, and he still attends meetings of their local branch. Party leaders have changed during the last 20 years, and he is now, in his own words, “like a granddad compared to the young leaders”, but he insists on going to the meetings because he believes the only way to make things better for the Romanis in Serbia is for them to become visible and included in political life.

The cases of Boban and Stojanka provide a useful lens to observe and analyse smuggling and the black market as coping strategies during the economic crisis of the 1990s. Both examples illustrate positive and negative aspects of the black market. Smuggling was not only a source of complementary income for many, including Stojanka, but it was a lifeline; for some, like Boban and his family, it was a way to a better life. Sociologist Danilo Mrkšić argued that “grey economy” helped the poor in particular, enabling them to survive and reducing social tension and clashes.49 Other views on “grey economy” in Serbia have been much less nuanced and focus on its negative aspects only. For example, an argument that increased activity on the black market will lead to a deeper criminalisation of society and greater social tensions50 was often repeated in public and academic discourse.51 The two examples above demonstrated that the black market opened opportunities for those who had nowhere else to turn for help and that despite being so widespread and socially sanitised, smuggling did not become part of one’s embodied knowledge, or *habitus*, even among those

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49 Mrkšić, *Dualizacija ekonomije i stratifikacija struktura*, 68.
who took part in it. As much as Boban made a living from smuggling, he used it as a means to an end - that is, for securing accommodation and educating his children. Despite a seemingly obvious assumption that smuggling stimulated the criminalisation of society, I would suggest that the black market alone probably caused much less long-term damage than the strengthening of social networks and obligations that these networks created. While the activity of the black market and smuggling could be curtailed with adequate institutional support, debts and obligations created in social networks were more difficult to cancel because they had no expiry date.

Conclusion
Creativity flourished during the period of severe economic crisis and the UN embargo in 1990s Serbia. From feeding a family almost literally on nothing or very few ingredients, to substituting familiar foodstuffs with those that belonged to earlier times, and from replacing market foods to creating one’s own - all of these examples testify to the incredible resilience and creative forces that came into action as a response to hyperinflation and embargo. Instead of living as passive victims, people became active agents in securing livelihood in the precarious socioeconomic conditions of the early 1990s. Coping strategies for overcoming austerity during hyperinflation and embargo included transmission of knowledge about “older” methods of sourcing and preparing food, social networks and solidarity, resorting to the black market and smuggling; either as consumers or providers. While transmission of knowledge secured not only one’s survival, but also social reproduction, the consequences of other coping strategies were more mixed. Strengthening social networks was pivotal in circumventing the economic crisis, but its consequences are long-term and still plague Serbian society. As much as these networks now operate with a diminished capacity because the end of the acute crisis reduced one’s need to rely on them, debts that were created between their actors remain. Debts incurred in social networks are not typical forms of exchange, where a debt needs to be repaid within a particular time frame. Social-network debts have no time frame within which they have to be settled; a debtor can be called upon at any point. Unlike the black market, which was contained with institutional support, social networks are out of remit of institutional control, although they operate as part of those very institutions. Precisely for this reason, they are so effective in times of need and yet so dangerous when the acute crisis had passed.

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53 Božović, Siva ekonomija.
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Parliamentary Elections in Serbia
2014: Replay or Reset?
Election Analysis

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Parliamentary Elections in Serbia 2014: Replay or Reset?

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Keywords: Serbia, Parliamentary Elections 2014, Serbian Progressive Party

Context of the elections
In January 2014, after two years and hence after only half of the term in office, the government of Serbia, consisting at its core of the Socialist Party of Serbia (Socijalistička partija Srbije, SPS) and the Serbian Progressive Party (Srpska napredna stranka, SNS) announced its suspension and asked for snap elections to be held in March 2014. Despite the fact that the government had a stable majority in the parliament, and was neither exposed to a no-confidence vote nor confronted with an initiative for such, this decision came as no surprise. The official explanation issued by the government was that, after having had achieved a number of crucial steps (start of the EU membership talks, deepening the dialogue with Priština, domestic reforms, fighting organized crime and corruption), the next steps in this direction would require “the highest political support of the citizens of Serbia.”1 This of course only wrapped the real reasons into an empty phrase. High SNS officials were a bit more concrete in providing explanations. Tomislav Nikolić, the President of Serbia, who was responsible for the call for elections, said that “the Government wants to prove its legitimacy,”2 while prior to this the leader of SNS and vice-president of the government, Aleksandar Vučić, explained that “the will of the people should be verified” and that the time has come to disclose what each of the coalition parties has achieved.3 The latter statement especially indicated the existing tensions in the ruling coalition. Contrary to SNS officials, their main coalition partner Prime Minister Ivica Dačić, head of the SPS, was convinced that “Serbia had more important things to care about than elections.”

According to Dačić, someone wanted to deliberately smash the winning team, meaning the government lead by him. As a solution and to avoid elections, he had offered Vučić (without new elections) the position of the prime minister,

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since SPS was the smaller coalition partner. But apparently Vučić had refused and wanted elections. This brings us closer to the real reason behind the decision to suspend a functioning government with a stable majority. They go back to 2012.

When the government was formed in 2012 it was not the strongest party, the SNS, that was leading the game, but Dačić and his SPS, since neither the Democratic Party (Demokratska stranka, DS) nor the SNS were able to form a government on their own despite being the two strongest parties. After having ruled in coalition with DS from 2008 to 2012, it seemed that SPS would continue this coalition. But after the run-off in the presidential elections held at the same time, in which the incumbent Boris Tadić (DS) lost to Nikolić, not only did SNS gain greater authority to take over the government, but the SPS also realised that it could maximize its status as the kingmaker and demand the position of the prime minister in a coalition with the weakened DS. And while the DS rejected this request, the SNS, despite being the strongest party and having had 10% more of the votes than the SPS, accepted this same offer from the SPS. The reason was apparent – after almost ten years of having been the leaders of the strongest party at each parliamentary election, but not being able to create a majority to form a government, the leadership of SNS knew that the coalition with SPS, under any condition, would be the only way to finally get in power.

The government, formed in July 2012, apart from the position of the prime minister from the SPS, was dominated by the SNS and especially by vice-president Vučić. As time passed, he estimated that the popularity of his SNS and his personal popularity were peaking, mostly due to the results of the government’s commencement of EU membership talks and the arrest of a number of tycoons. Aware of his rising popularity, he wanted to reshuffle the positions within the government, namely to take over the position of the prime minister. However, Vučić rejected a simple switch of positions within the government. Instead, he wanted snap-elections to capitalize on the popularity of his party and to gain even more support than the SNS achieved in 2012. This stood behind Nikolić’s and Vučić’s explanations (mentioned above) about the Government wanting to prove its legitimacy and to verify the will of the people. By calling for snap elections, Vučić, with the support of Nikolić, was in fact no longer willing to share the success of the government with his coalition partner, the SPS. As will be shown in the next section, it turned out that the elections were indeed a strategically good move for him and his party.

**Election results**

In the election campaign, all parties apart from the minor Democratic Party of Serbia (Demokratska stranka Srbije, DSS), the Serbian Radical Party (Srpska radikalna stranka, SRS) and the right-wing movements such as Dveri and Obraz, which called for an end to EU integration and instead for close ties to Russia, had programmes that were almost the same. Namely, all were for firm

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5 Only in 2008 second strongest, but even then not defeated by a single party, but by a coalition consisting of six pro-EU parties.
continuation of Serbia’s EU integration process and further dialogue with Priština, while defining corruption and unemployment as the biggest problems that Serbia is facing. Even their proposed solutions for all the problems were very much alike in terms of content, in terms of missing authenticity and in terms of lacking persuasiveness. Fighting corruption, bringing more foreign investments, conducting reforms and cutting state spending were just a few among many proposed remedies, which might seem effective at first sight, but which in fact remained empty, non-elaborated and common place. Above all, they lacked credibility since during at least the last four years all of these parties were in power for some time and in the position to apply these solutions, but apparently with little success.

The clear and absolute winner of the elections was the SNS. Not only did it once again become the strongest party, but it also received the majority of the parliament seats, something that has happened in Serbia only once since 1989, at the first parliamentary elections in 1990. The SPS was able to keep the same number of seats, while the DS lost dramatically, especially if not taking into account the seats of the New Democratic Party (Nova demokratska stranka, NDS), which split from DS under the leadership of Boris Tadić shortly before the elections. Apart from these four parties, only three more national minority parties, for which the threshold rule does not apply, succeeded in getting into the parliament.

Table 1: Results of the Parliamentary Elections in Serbia, 16. March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Party/Coalition</th>
<th>Number of votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Seats in Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SNS / SDPS / NS / SPO / SP</td>
<td>1 736 920</td>
<td>48.35</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS / PUPS / US</td>
<td>484 607</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>216 634</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS / LSV</td>
<td>204 767</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>152 436</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dveri</td>
<td>128 458</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDP</td>
<td>120 879</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URS</td>
<td>109 167</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVM</td>
<td>75 294</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dosta je bilo</td>
<td>74 973</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>72 303</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA Sandžak</td>
<td>35 157</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>24 301</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Serbia</td>
<td>16 206</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 The SNS formed a coalition prior to the elections with the following parties: Social Democratic Party of Serbia (Socijaldemokratska partija Srbije, SDPS), New Serbia (Nova Srbija, NS), Serbian Renewal Movement (Srpski pokret obnove, SPO) and Socialists’ Movement (Pokret socijalista, PS).
7 SPS led by Slobodan Milošević received 46.1% and 194 (of 250) seats in the parliament.
8 Party of the United Pensioners of Serbia (Partija ujedinjenih penzionera Srbije).
9 United Serbia (Ujedinjena Srbija).
10 League of Social-Democrats of Vojvodina (Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine).
11 United Regions of Serbia (Ujedinjeni regioni Srbije).
12 Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (Savez vojvodanskih Mađara).
13 Party of Democratic Action Sandžak (Stranka demokratske akcije Sandžak).
14 Party of Democratic Action (Stranka demokratske akcije).
Compared with the elections two years previously, the SNS has doubled its votes (24% to 48%), while the DS (together with the NDS) got only half (22% to 11.70% [6.03+5.70]). As mentioned above, the SPS received the same support, while the DSS, LDP and URS did not pass the threshold and will not have representatives in the parliament for the first time since 2000. Also, the SRS continues to lose support and influence.

Table 2: Parliamentary Elections in Serbia - Votes, Percentages and Seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Party / Coalition</th>
<th>Number of votes</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
<th>Seats in Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>940 659</td>
<td>1 736 920</td>
<td>24.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>863 294</td>
<td>216 634+</td>
<td>204 76719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS / PUPS / JS</td>
<td>567 689</td>
<td>484 607</td>
<td>14.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>273 532</td>
<td>152 436</td>
<td>6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDP</td>
<td>255 546</td>
<td>120 879</td>
<td>6.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URS</td>
<td>215 666</td>
<td>109 167</td>
<td>5.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVM</td>
<td>68 323</td>
<td>75 294</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>180 558</td>
<td>72 303</td>
<td>4.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA Sandžak</td>
<td>27 708</td>
<td>35 157</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDA</td>
<td>13 384</td>
<td>24 301</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the offered answers</td>
<td>22 905</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Together (Minorities)</td>
<td>24 993</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter turnout</td>
<td>3 912 904</td>
<td>3 592 375</td>
<td>57.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Republic Electoral Commission - Republic of Serbia18

What is notable is the result of the civic movement Dosta je bilo-Restart, led by Saša Radulović, the former Minister of Economy, who entered the government in the summer of 2013 with Vučić’s invitation. Back then, Radulović was supposed to be in

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13 Russian Party (Ruska partija).
14 Montenegrin Party (Crnogorska partija).
15 Patriotic Front (Patriotska fronta).
17 Shortly before the 2014 elections, Boris Tadić, the former president of the party and of Serbia, left the Democratic Party with a number of its members and formed the New Democratic Party.
charge of initiating and developing necessary economic reform. However, after proposing his strategy and being eager to stick to his agenda for the reforms, he apparently started to lose Vučić’s and Dačić’s support. They both feared that these measures would be unpopular and mostly hit the SNS and SPS electorate, but also the financial sources of their parties. Their following confrontation led to Radulović’s resignation shortly before the call for snap elections was announced. He then formed a civic movement and managed to attract the attention of nearly 75,000 voters despite being heavily attacked by the SNS-controlled media and the fact that there were only a few weeks left. With a very small budget and a humble campaign, which focused mostly on web-channels, Radulović got more votes than LDP in the city of Belgrade and more votes than NDS and LDP in some city districts of Belgrade.21

Consequences of the Elections
In his first reaction to the elections, the leader of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians, Ištvan Pastor, described the clear victory of the party coalition gathered around SNS as a “political tsunami,”22 which then became a common dictum among other politicians too. However, considering that a tsunami is one of the biggest natural disasters and catastrophes, this expression in the context of the election results in Serbia is rather exaggerated. While the tremendous success of SNS is for sure striking, as is the fact that a party won the majority of the seats in the Serbian Skupština for the first time after 1990, it is neither such a catastrophe, nor something that came as surprise. It is also not completely unexplainable. Rather, there are two very plausible explanations for this success.

The first one addresses the fact that SNS simply took over the ideology and the party programme of its biggest opponent, DS. By proclaiming Serbia’s EU integration its main goal and by not only giving up the extreme nationalistic position towards Kosovo, but also fostering the dialogue with Priština and promising to fight corruption and organized crime, SNS basically offered the same as DS. The DS had apparently lost some credibility in achieving these proclaimed goals after having had direct political control and leading positions continuously from 2000 to 2012.23 The SNS, on the other hand, had gained credibility since 2012, mostly due to the opening of the EU memberships talks and the achieved settlement with Priština in 2013. Also, apart from theory and ideology, there are three more features the SNS retained from the DS. First is the control and misuse of media for their own purposes (glorifying and exaggerating own achievements and creating a cult of personality, while also discrediting political opponents, relating them to corruption and private and business related scandals and putting pressure on media that criticize the government). Second is the tendency to use clientelism for the control of the state apparatus, while the third and final feature is the tendency to bypass all mechanisms made to secure separation of powers and to provide a system of checks and balances. All of these features are something that the DS introduced in one way or another under the leadership of Boris Tadić, in particular in the period between 2008 and 2012, while Vučić has perfected and radicalized them starting in 2012.

23 Apart from the period between 2004 and 2007, the DS has been part of the ruling coalition. Between 2008 and 2012 it was even the leading party and had the position of the prime minister. Also, Boris Tadić, who was the president of DS, was the president of Serbia from 2004 to 2012.
The second, main reason for the success of the SNS goes back to the current weakness and crisis of the DS, but also of all the small parties originating from the former Democratic Opposition of Serbia (Demokratska opozicija Srbije, DOS), the broad coalition that defeated Milošević in October 2000. For the first time since 2000, none of the parties or movements, excluding the DS, that were part of DOS gained the trust of the voters and so remained without representatives in the parliament. This weakness and crisis are to a great extent due to their loss of credibility mentioned above, as the voters apparently felt that these parties, most of all DS, have had their chance and responsibility to implement their party programme and to make crucial steps toward Serbia’s EU integration. Instead, they had failed or at least did less than the voters had considered as potentially feasible.

With these two explanations in mind, one of the consequences of the election was that it was not the policy and ideology of DS which suffered a defeat, but only the party structure and apparatus carrying it. In other words, it was not able to carry it. At the same time, the victory of SNS cannot be seen as a victory of the parties and the ideology from the 90s because both SNS and SPS not only distanced themselves from the policies of their parties/predecessors in the 90s, but more importantly brought their policies and party programmes – at least in theory – almost completely in accordance with those parties which are considered pro-European and which used to be identified as the successors of DOS. So, paradoxically, with the victory of the SNS and the SPS, the ideology of DOS won, not through the parties that constituted the DOS coalition, but rather through their one-time opponents. What consequently remained consistent – and this could be considered a second outcome of these elections – is that in all elections since 2000, at least 50% or more of Serbian citizens continuously gave support to parties which define Serbia’s EU integration as their main goal.

The third consequence stands in inverse correlation to the previous. Parties that have openly had an anti-EU policy, that are keen on Serbia having close ties to Russia and finally, that are rejecting any dialogue and negotiations on the status of Kosovo are consistently losing support. Two notable parties with such policies, DSS and SRS (and also the movement Dveri), not only lost popularity compared to the elections in 2012 and 2008, but also did not even pass the threshold in 2014 (SRS for the second time). This can be seen as a rebuff for these policies and ideologies among the voters in Serbia.

A forth consequence of the elections is that they led to a crystallisation of the party landscape in Serbia, and hence a step forward in the process of democratic consolidation. Apart from the parties of national minorities, only three parties (SNS, SPS, DS) proved to have the capacity to pass the threshold. If this tendency continues, it can be a stabilising factor since it ascribes more power to a limited and small number of parties, while at the same time forcing them into more transparency and responsibility without the chance to hide behind a broad coalition when it comes to failures or misuses of power. Relating to this conclusion, these elections showed that the scenar-

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24 Ultimately, supporting Serbia’s EU-integration and making steps towards a sustainable resolution for Kosovo being the two most important of them.

25 Although the smaller parties of their coalition contributed to the overall result, they would not have passed the threshold on their own, so we can consider these small parties as unsustainable except within pre-electoral coalitions.
io of Serbia heading towards a bi-party system is not likely anymore, as SPS developed into a strong party with a share of around 15%. Rather, we can talk of the formation of a multiparty system with one dominant party, presupposing that the alternative to SNS, which is right now DS, will be able to recover and reshape itself, possibly by fusing with smaller former DOS parties, and then return to its level of 2012.

A fifth, rather negative consequence of these elections, deriving indirectly from the one previously mentioned, is, as Florian Bieber correctly argues, that they increased the authoritarian temptation of the governing party. The call for early elections was already a sign that the dominant party could not resist this temptation, as this call was a clear caprice of the SNS aiming to capitalise on current popularity and secure their own party’s dominance without any use for the Serbian society. In addition, the fact that SNS received the majority of seats in the parliament leads us to the assumption that, without being dependent on a coalition partner, Vučić will have little motivation to self-impose mechanisms that would control him and the power of his party. He will also not have an interest to release the control of the media. The only actors who might thwart his ambition are a recovered and strong opposition and the EU, which could block membership talks if Vučić continues to weaken state institutions and to discredit the opposition through controlled media.

However, an indicator that Vučić and his party are rather cautious and aware that not resisting this temptation might be punished at the next elections is that they decided to govern in coalition with the SPS and to appoint a number of independent experts as ministers despite having a clear majority. There are a number of reasons behind this decision, especially behind the decision to include the SPS in the government. First, the coalition with the SPS has been a functioning and, from the perspective of the SNS, a winning team from 2012 to 2014, so there are grounded expectations that they will continue this way. However, the SNS will claim the success more for itself. Second, by having a coalition partner, the SNS can always share the responsibility for possible failures, and in a well-known scenario even blame the coalition partner for them. Third, had SNS left the SPS in opposition, the SPS could have possibly become the opposition leader and the SNS would have risked losing voters to the SPS, as both parties are predominantly addressing the same social categories of the population. So, the decision to rule in a coalition with the SPS can be seen as a mixture of measurements that should ensure the dominance of the SNS in the coming four years, at the price of having a controlling mechanism embodied in the SPS.

**Conclusions**

Despite not having many reasons to be over-optimistic about the capacities and intentions of the SNS and its leadership to give up clientelism and to impose mechanisms that would control their power, enhance the rule of law and strengthen state institutions, the success of the SNS at the recent elections does not necessarily need to be seen as an impending catastrophe. By appointing a number of independent and proven experts in the government (e.g. Kori

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26 An assumption often emphasized between 2004 and 2012 when SRS/SNS and DS were having the biggest share (around 30%) at the elections, while a number of smaller parties were between 5% and 8%.
Udovički, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Dušan Vujović, Minister of Economy, Tanja Miščević, Chief Negotiator to the EU), who are not tied to party interests, the SNS is at least sending a signal for a reset. It is expected that these experts, similar to Saša Radulović in the former government, will propose needed, but probably painful reforms and crucial cuts, regardless of the unpopularity related to such measures. Hence, the success/failure of these ministers can be used as a possible litmus test for the intentions of the government. This could show whether their appointment was a window dressing strategy that will end with a scenario similar to the one with Radulović at the end of the last government or whether their appointment is a serious attempt to reset and improve the functioning of the state. If the former is the case, then Serbia might lose four more precious years and be trapped even deeper by clientelism and unconsolidated democracy in 2018. The only hope which remains in this worst case scenario is that the voters in Serbia will, in accordance with their rational choices in all elections since 2008, most probably not be so patient or so ready to buy excuses. So, if this government does not achieve a tangible, better economic standard of living for the majority of people, the citizens will likely no longer buy populist explanations or provide another chance to SNS, but simply vote for another option. This is, of course, presupposing that an alternative option will arise between now and then.

Bibliography
The 2014 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Macedonia: More of the Same
Election Analysis

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The 2014 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Macedonia: More of the Same

Zhidas Daskalovski*

Keywords: Macedonia, Elections, VMRO-DPMNE, SDSM

Context
In April 2014, Macedonia had both presidential and parliamentary elections. While the presidential elections were, indeed, scheduled for this time, the parliamentary elections were called early. The incumbent president, Gjorge Ivanov who is affiliated with the Internal Macedonian revolutionary organization – Democratic party for Macedonian national unity” (VMRO-DPMNE), became candidate on 1. March 2014; proclaiming that his campaign will be based on three principles: honesty, sincerity and values. Ivanov’s candidacy went against the demand of the ethnic Albanian, junior coalition partner, Democratic union for integration (DUI), who demanded from VMRO-DPMNE the appointment of a “joint consensual candidate.” In principle, the DUI demanded from the VMRO-DPMNE that an Albanian hold one of the three a key posts - president, prime minister or parliamentary speaker - something Gruevski’s party was not willing to agree upon. The parliament was dissolved on 5. March 2014 at the initiative of the DUI, but with the support of the VMRO-DPMNE. Thus, early parliamentary elections were scheduled together with the second round of the presidential election on 27. April 2014. The parliament is elected for a four-year term. Out of the 123 elected members, 120 are elected under a proportional representation system in 6 electoral districts. The remaining three are elected in a majoritarian system in three, out-of-country districts - Europe and Africa, North and South America, and Australia and Asia. No legal threshold is required for a party to enter the parliament. Votes are tabulated using the D'Hondt formula. At least 30 percent of the candidates on each party list must be of different gender.

On 13. April 2014, Macedonia had its first round of the presidential elections. The candidates were Gjorge Ivanov, supported by the conservative VMRO-DPMNE, faced three challengers: Stevo Pendarovski, a professor and former advisor of the late president Boris Trajkovski, and supported by the opposition Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM); Iljaz Halimi, a former minister

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president and vice-president of the parliament and from the ethnic Albanian opposition party, DPA; and Zoran Popovski, a professor and former deputy minister of education from the newly founded GROM (Citizen Option for Macedonia). There were two other persons who attempted, but failed, to collect citizens' signatures to be approved as official presidential candidates: the independent professor Biljana Vankovska, as well as the president of the non-parliamentary party Dostoinstvo (Dignity), Stojance Angelov. As expected, DUI boycotted the presidential elections and actively campaigned to stop their kin from voting contributing to a lower turnout in the predominately ethnic Albanian areas. The decision of the electoral commission to use visible ink to mark voters added to the pressure on ethnic Albanian citizens in the first round, as their decision whether to vote or not was visible.

Electoral Campaign: Messages, Strategies and Battles

Overall, the turnout was 49%, less than in 2009, when the first round of presidential elections saw 57%; and much less than the last local elections last spring, when turnout was 67%. Since none of the candidates received the required majority of the total number of registered voters to be elected, a second round was announced between Ivanov, who received 51 per cent of cast votes, and Stevo Pendarovski, who received 37.51 per cent of cast votes. In terms of absolute votes in the first round, Ivanov received 449.068, Pendarovski 326.133, Halimi 38.966, Popovski 31.366, and 23.604 invalid votes. Since the country has a parliamentary political system, which only shifts towards a semi-presidential system when strong presidents are elected (Gligorov) or become strong in due time (Trajkovski towards the end of his mandate), the electoral campaign for the first round of the presidential elections was a prelude to the parliamentary election campaigns. Ivanov's campaign was, in fact, de facto synchronised with the overall VMRO-DPMNE campaign, while Pendarovski presented himself as more independent from the SDSM candidates. While the incumbent projected himself as part of a winning team, cooperating and aiding the good deeds of the government, the SDSM challenger attempted to portray himself as a man of the people, a consensual candidate. Much of the rhetoric of both the VMRO-DPMNE and Ivanov was about the number of projects implemented, investments made and forthcoming. Ivanov's main electoral message was “The state above all.” Although, he also used a number of other, typically patriotic, and conservative slogans such as: “Gjorge Ivanov for president,” “Holding resolutely to our roots,” “Proudly and with dignity,” “Determinedly and securely,” and “Heritage and tradition.” Presenting himself as a person close to the people, Ivanov let his campaign be initiated by a group of public figures and celebrities calling themselves “Team Macedonia.”

The SDSM and Pendarovski both criticized the passivity, and alleged servility, of Ivanov to the ruling party leadership, and promised economic reforms that will end the misery of the Macedonian common people. Thus, the electoral slogan of the Pendarovski was “Macedonia deserves a president,” presenting himself as a capable politician who would use his presidential powers to restrain the “authoritarian tendencies” of the government. In addition, somewhat confusingly for a very short electoral campaign, Pendarovski used an additional slogan that stated, “Stevo, my president;” an attempt to vie for the
youth and voters from the Albanian minority. To that aim, at the end of the campaign, Pendarovski visited, and gave a speech, in Kosovo. Whereas, SDSM accused the ruling party of authoritarian tendencies, VMRO-DPMNE noted that Pendarovski had not made clear his position on the Greek insistence that Macedonia change its name. Thus, indirectly accusing SDSM of being non-patriotic, and only being thirsty for power. Both parties presented, to the public, a number of corruption scandals by leading members of the opposite party. On the whole, SDSM used more negative political communication during their campaign than VMRO-DPMNE. Hoping to have discovered a game-changing scandal at the end of the campaign, SDSM presented audio recordings alleging that the prime minister received a bribe for the privatization of Makedonska Banka. In response to this accusation, the prime minister announced that he would file a defamation lawsuit against the SDSM leader.

At these elections, SDSM promoted a number of new candidates while its leaders, Zoran Zaev and Radmila Sekerinska, did not actually run, although being active in the campaigns. VMRO-DPMNE, on the other hand, presented a candidates list led by current and former ministers, other high ranking party members, and leaders of the smaller parties in the diverse, 24-party coalition. For a number of years now, VMRO-DPMNE has successfully used political marketing - the utilization and adaptation of marketing techniques and concepts by political parties - in its rule and electoral battles. The party is organized on the basis of the market-oriented party model, mastering tools like market intelligence and segmentation, opposition research, e-marketing, market orientation and strategy, internal marketing, product redevelopment, branding, local political marketing, marketing in government to win and retaining power.

This year, as in previous elections, VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM competed for votes mainly among ethnic Macedonians, while DUI and DPA competed for Albanian support. However, as in previous elections, both VMRO-DPMNE and SDSM led a coalition with parties representing various smaller ethnic groups such as Serbs, Turks, Roma, Bosniaks, and Vlachs. DPA and DUI on the other hand, competed independently. The two parties in the ruling coalition, VMRO-DPMNE and DUI, appealed to voters giving them the necessary mandates to strengthen their leverage, and to avoid having to make concessions to the other party. The prime minister repeatedly called on voters to give the party a clear majority, of at least 62 seats, to avoid any further pressure, influence or blackmail from the DUI in any future negotiations on forming the government. Meanwhile, the DUI asked its supporters for high turnout for the parliamentary elections, so the party could win a maximum number of seats, in order to improve their negotiating position. The DUI’s stronghold is in the Kichevo area, where most of the former, leading “rebels turned DUI politicians” come from. In this municipality, the DPA hardly wins any votes at all. Meanwhile, the electoral race in Tetovo and Gostivar is highly contested, because a very strong party office in the Skopje municipality of Chair gives the

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DUI an advantage over its fiercest rival, the DPA. Moreover, a disagreement within the DPA, between the leader Menduh Tachi and the Struga branch leader Zijadin Sela, over candidate lists resulted in a branch’s boycott of the early parliamentary elections in electoral district 5, and a weak party result there. Overall, in its electoral campaign, the DPA focused its energy on criticizing the leader of the DUI, Ali Ahmeti, and alleging corruption by DUI ministers and public office holders.

GROM, led by Stevche Jakimovski, the former high party dignitary of SDSM and the opposition Liberal Democratic Party, ran a neutral campaign, trying to position itself in the centre, aligning with neither the SDSM nor the VMRO-DPMNE. The stronghold of GROM is the Skopje municipality of Karposh, where the party leader won the mayoral race last year. Besides Karposh, which is in Electoral District 1, GROM stood a good chance of winning seats in a number of other electoral districts, including 2 and 4, where this party co-opted popular local political leaders (Viktor Cvetkovski and Pancho Minev). The Alliance for Positive Macedonia was another newly founded party, who was competing for the first time at the 2014 elections. Its leadership consists of one of the richest Macedonian businessmen, the manager of Mak-Steel, Mincho Jordanov; the former SDSM Prime Minister, Vladimir Buchkovski; and the Kapital media owner and businessman, Ljupcho Zikov. The party also had a neutral and positive campaign; even commending some of the governmental policies. It ran on an electoral program that focused on further economic reforms, and support of local businesses.

Winners and Losers
At the parliamentary elections, the VMRO-DPMNE won 42.98% of the votes to claim victory ahead of the SDSM, with 25.34%, and DUI, with 13.71%. The 123 seats in the Sobranie were won by six political parties and coalitions, with VMRO-DPMNE winning 61 seats, SDSM winning 34 seats, DUI winning 19 seats, DPA winning 7 seats and GROM and NDP winning 1 seat each. At the presidential elections, Ivanov won with 534,910 votes, while Pendarovski received 398,077 votes. However, on Election Day, just as voting ended, the SDSM's leader, Zoran Zaev, announced that SDSM and its allies will “not recognize the election process, neither the presidential nor the parliamentary.” Thus, accusing the VMRO-DPMNE of “abusing the entire state system to its own advantage.” The ruling party immediately dismissed the opposition allegations as false and an “attempt to manipulate public opinion.” Elected SDSM politicians resigned their parliamentary seats, while the party leadership is calling for a “caretaker” technical government to be established. Dissenters among the SDSM took their parliamentary mandates, while the ruling VMRO-DPMNE announced that it would discuss any issue with the opposition, except the formation of a “technical government.”

Reporting on the elections, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) noted that the presidential election and early parliamentary elections were efficiently administered, occurring on election day. Although the OSCE stated that candidates were able to campaign without obstruction, and the freedoms of assembly and association were respected, it also noted how the campaign of the governing party did not adequately separate its party and
state activities. It also noted that voter intimidation allegations persisted throughout the campaign. While the State Election Committee, led by an opposition member, declared the elections “regular,” the OSCE reported that the “highly unbalanced media reporting was criticised as the majority of monitored media was largely biased in favour of the ruling party and its presidential candidate and mainly negative against the main opposition party.”

Despite the complaints by the SDSM of electoral manipulation, it is clear that the trend is negative for the main opposition party, who, since 2002, has failed to break the 400,000 vote mark, a feat now regularly secured by the VMRO-DPMNE. More importantly, for Zoran Zaev, the SDSM’s parliamentary results this year were much weaker than in 2011, when the campaign was led by Branko Crvenkovski, the party leader and prime minister in the 1990s. On top of this, the SDSM presidential candidate, Pendarovski, also had an improved result compared to the 2009 elections. He managed to win over 100,000 votes more than the party. Among the ethnic Albanians, the DUI had a historically best result, over passing the DPA by almost 90,000 votes. While the government coalition, the VMRO-DPMNE and the DUI, was expected, it is not clear if the leaders of the SDSM and the DPA, Zaev and Shekerinska and Tachi, will remain party leaders following their parties poor performance. All of the small parties, except the newly founded GROM and the regional ethnic Albanian NDP, were losers in these elections, not being able to win any seats.

Appendix

Table 1. Parliamentary elections in Macedonia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SDSM</th>
<th>VMRO-DPMNE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>165 338</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>291 695</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>279 790</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>497 342</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>218 463</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>233 284</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>368 496</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>283 955</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DUI</th>
<th>DPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Votes</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>145 607</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>114 301</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>126 522</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>115 092</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>153 646</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>


Table 2. Presidential elections in Macedonia 2009-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election rounds</th>
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<th>VMRO-DPMNE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994 first</td>
<td>715,087</td>
<td>197,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 first</td>
<td>343,606</td>
<td>219,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999 second</td>
<td>514,599</td>
<td>591,973</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 first</td>
<td>385,347</td>
<td>309,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 second</td>
<td>550,317</td>
<td>329,179</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009 first</td>
<td>202,691</td>
<td>345,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009 second</td>
<td>264,692</td>
<td>453,426</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014 first</td>
<td>326,133</td>
<td>449,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014 second</td>
<td>398,077</td>
<td>534,910</td>
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Table 3. Parliamentary elections in Macedonia 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Seats</th>
<th>+/-</th>
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<tr>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE led coalition</td>
<td>481,615</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>+5</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDSM led coalition</td>
<td>283,955</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUI</td>
<td>153,646</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>66,393</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROM</td>
<td>31,610</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>17,783</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMRO Narodna</td>
<td>16,772</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alijansa za pozitivna Makedonija</td>
<td>10,566</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dostoinstvo</td>
<td>9,265</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other parties</td>
<td>11,485</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid / blank votes</td>
<td>37,550</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,120,640</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registered voters/turnout 1,779,572 62.95


Bibliography


Doctus Perfectus, Homo Applicandum
and Professor Fortuna

Conceptual Analysis

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Doctus Perfectus, Homo Applicandus and Professor Fortuna

Karl Kaser*

Keywords: Area Studies, SEE Studies, Academic Field

Introduction
When the future or, more specifically, a redirection of South-East European studies is discussed in a series of essays in this journal, one has to have in mind that this is not the first discussion of this kind – and for sure not the concluding one. In an increasingly globalizing world, area studies are under permanent critical observation. What can particular findings related to an area contribute to the understanding of the whole, the global, and how is the global represented in the particularities of an area? However, this kind of critical self-reflection that can sometimes result in self-deprecation was not always the case in the long history of the study of South-East Europe.

One crucial observation in this regard is that debates of this kind hardly existed before 1989. The world seemed to be stable since it was divided into the two ideological and military blocks of ‘the East’ and ‘the West,’ as well as a third area consisting of countries that were members of the non-aligned movement for decades. Area studies, conceptualized as the study of ‘the other’, were considered an indispensable ingredient of a world order that seemed to be chiselled in stone forever. The consequences of the collapse of this world order were manifold. The questioning of traditional area studies focused on its rather insignificant outcomes – compared to the macro-structural shake-up of political, economic and cultural relations, of the relationship between the global north and south and the relationship of the USA to the rest. However, insignificance can become significant when identities of area-study scholars are at stake and when voices pleading for a complete rethinking of area studies become louder.

In this short essay, I aim to show that (1) the study of South-East Europe has been reinvented several times in the previous quarter of a century without resulting in profound changes and that (2) some considerations might explain that a developmental strategy can hardly be implemented even in a rather comprehensive discipline or a bunch of disciplines that operate under the name

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of South-East European studies. It should be underlined that (1) I do not include South-East European studies in the region itself, but exclusively studies of the region taking place outside of it and that (2) my perspective is primarily a historical one.

**Reinventions without profound change**

In the quarter of a century that followed the fatal year of 1989, South-East European studies and several sub-disciplines have been reinvented multiple times without being profoundly changed. This situation reminds us of one of Mexico's leading political parties, called the 'Institutional Revolutionary Party,' that had at the beginning of the 20th century promised to institutionalize revolution. Similarly, South-East European studies can be characterized as 'Institutional Revolutionary Studies' – on the one hand, permanently reinvented and redirected, at least in programmatic essays of some of their representatives. On the other hand, our field (or fields) has so far in practice not developed in revolutionary ways. What has changed can be described as tradition clothed in new fashion, as scholarly makeup or as old wine in new skins.

I see two quantitatively dominating and related research fields in the previous two or so decades that I would like to call the 'premier league of South-East European studies': Yugoslav war/post-war studies and identity studies. The reason for their dominance is probably that the pre-1989 academic personnel could relatively easily serve these two research fields, as the gap between Cold War studies and Yugoslav war/post-war studies could be easily overcome. Identity studies constituted an ideal field for those who thought that people in an ethnically mixed problem-region must have had problems with their identity. Within this field, nationalism has been a grateful object of study. Of course, South-East European studies constitute a wide field and not everybody has been playing or has intended to play in their premier league. Other approaches or thematic fields, such as social history, historical anthropology or gender studies, had problems of being fully acknowledged if they could not be related to topics of the premier league. This is not a critique of anything or anybody, but an attempt to explain why profound changes in this research field have not taken place.

The desire to play in a certain league has something to do with the intention to make an academic career. I think that in making a career, one tends to position oneself in mainstream research, rather than on its margins. This is another factor that stabilizes rather than destabilizes a research discipline. Young researchers and their academic supervisors come into play here. Do they want to be on the alleged safe side (premier league) or do they seek their future on the fringes of mainstream studies? Are they ready to risk something in order to establish alternative ground-breaking research goals and fields? What does this have to do with the pre-academic socialization of a researcher and his or her general aims in life? How is one to make a career in a time that is poisoned by the spirit of neo-liberalism and excessive competition? This destructive competition takes place primarily within the cohorts of young researchers and has replaced the probably more productive, more innovative and sometimes fierce competition of a younger generation with an established one.
I think it is too short-sighted, however absolutely necessary, to formulate the glorious future of a discipline or an area study only in theoretical terms without taking into consideration the above mentioned and additional dimensions that in the name of innovation undermine innovation. I have done the former in various essays and others have done the same. If we put them together, we could easily state, and not without irony, that South-East European studies will land in a glorious heaven – although not without contradictions. They will be, of course, inter-, trans- and multi-disciplinary, they will be trans-local, trans-national and trans-focal and they will be characterized by gender, as well as by post-colonial positions, by increasing importance of visual studies and by a new intellectual history of our region. I don’t think anybody would disagree in regard to this. Why there is a region that is considered as South-East Europe or the Balkans and what constitutes its geographical, ideological, historical and contemporary framework remains disputed. However, there is something like a European region that can be termed in that way. As a historian, I famously prefer a Eurasian-Minor perspective, but this is not the real problem. The real problem is reality.

To think and to write about the bright future of our South-East European studies is one thing; to put such a great program into practice is another one. The premiere league is a fact and its research agenda differs significantly from the wishful one. Is the reason for this the fact that we are too few to know the complete ropes? Maybe.

**Homo applicandus, doctus perfectus and professor fortuna**

I think the more urgent question is which circumstances foster innovation and which ones diminish it. In this regard, the ideal figures of the *doctus perfectus*, the *homo applicandus* and the *professor fortuna* play a crucial role: the perfect scholar, the third-party funding application automat (very free translation) and the professor of coincidence. These figures can be attached to specific factors that have an impact on the development of scientific disciplines. One crucial factor of stability and change in disciplines is marked by the professional lifespan of appointed university professors, which is approximately twenty years. This is a considerable amount of time if we consider the fact that this species usually tends to be innovative at the beginning of its career and then starts to ‘institutionalize’ innovation, which, as a matter of fact, consists of the prolonged administration of previous innovativeness. The latter tendency does not necessarily have to be considered negative since this kind of persistence may function as effective protection against short-lived conjunctures – something that also happens in academia.

The concrete orientation of university disciplines does not only depend on its internal innovativeness; there are additional, more or less visible external constraints that have an impact on disciplines, but also on the type and personality of appointed professors. One of these constraints consists of the observation that somehow exaggerated, the university has become a quasi-

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enterprise with the aim to produce surpluses – whatever this means. In this neo-liberal concept, figures and statistics have become relevant indicators of success and fiasco. As almost everywhere, the faculty of sciences is on the winning side, while the humanities are on the losing side. Since universities have not become real enterprises, of course, and their surpluses in knowledge production can never be actually evaluated, the acquisition of third-party-funded research has become crucial. This is relatively easy for faculties of sciences and medicine, but is rather difficult for the faculties of the humanities, whose tradition has found satisfaction in individual intellectual adventures and holds the view that their right to exist in a society, which is proud of its classical tradition in education, had been self-evident.

This time is definitely over. In a world that is shaped by neo-liberalism, processes of globalization, global competition and economic crises, the humanities have lost their former virginal innocence and the traditionally styled professor-type (the doctus perfectus) has become a phased out model. Exposed to the constraints of being somehow profitable, a new type of academic entrepreneur has been emerging: the homo applicandus. This new type of academic is shaped by his or her capacity to develop competitive research projects, to write smart applications, to meet application deadlines of national and international third-party-funded research programs and to manage, as well as to execute, research projects.

Conclusion
Until now, academic capitalism and neoliberalism have resulted in two opposite camps. The first is the docti perfecti, whose members assemble themselves behind the banner of 'slow science,' protesting against the 'Stalinism of excellence,' and who refuse to abandon the traditional university culture. The second camp consists of those who represent the new figure that has emerged in academia, the academic entrepreneur; in the humanities, this is concretely the successful homo applicandus. The institutionalisation of university-business linkages creates a new partnership, new forms of knowledge, new types of actors, but also many new constraints and exclusions. We at the humanities will find it hard to establish business linkages, except with non-profit organizations, which are not very useful. We have to specialize in writing successful applications to research agencies.

This new type of professor, the homo applicandus, is in relatively sharp opposition to the traditionally styled doctus perfectus, who is probably lacking management qualities, but is equipped with other significant qualities that foster the discipline’s development. If the homo-applicandus-type professors become gatekeepers in their field, they will keep the gate open to those who are of similar style and personality and keep the gate closed for the doctus-perfectus-type. The opposite may also be true – they will close the gate for a potential competitor and open it for a potential loser.

The decisive question is not only whether or not one politically and/or morally prefers this aspect of commercialization of research, but also, more importantly, whether this mechanism is productive or unproductive with regard to innovations in the respective research field. Experience shows that
the application mechanism tends to situate an application in the centre of a discipline's content in order to minimize risks. Innovation, however, does not usually come from the centre or the premier league, but rather from its fringes. If we accept the consideration that appointed professors, who usually recruit their staff to fit their profile, are crucial for the further development of their respective disciplines, then the selection procedures of appointments committees, deans and rectors play crucial roles for the future of a discipline.

At the University of Graz, there is a clear tendency to decrease the role of appointments committees and to increase the role of the rector's administration in the selection procedure. This means that an administration, which does not and cannot have a clear idea of the internal peculiarities and necessities of specific disciplines, will take over the leading roles in the advertisement and the description of the positions. The rector already has the final decision in appointment matters. It does not seem that the best-qualified person, the *homo-applicandus* or the *doctus-perfectus*-type, has always been appointed, but rather the one who sells his or her soul the cheapest to the university. In other words, *professor fortuna* becomes an increasingly important reality. Furthermore, if we consider that additional factors, such as gender and age issues, can become decisive in appointment procedures, a certain or wishful outcome is hardly foreseeable.

To conclude, there cannot be any doubt about the necessity of critically reflecting on the status of South-East European studies in light of achievements in other area studies, as well as in the temporarily oriented disciplines. Also, it is beyond question that we need to think carefully about the future of our studies. What I wanted to show in this short essay was that the likelihood that things turn out differently from ideal concepts is high.
Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Revolution, Evolution or Stagnation?

Election Analysis

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Contemporary Southeastern Europe, 2014, 1(2), 99-109
Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Revolution, Evolution or Stagnation?

Adnan Huskić*

Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Presidential Elections, Parliamentary Elections, Plenum

Introduction
On 12 October 2014 some 3.2 million Bosnians eligible to vote cast their ballots at the General Elections for their representatives at the state, entity and, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), the cantonal level legislatures. Voters also elected the three members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the President and Vice-presidents of Republika Srpska (RS). A total of 69 political parties competed for legislative assembly seats, while 16 parties nominated their candidates for all levels. In addition to political parties, a number of independent candidates ran for different levels. Significant presence of independent candidates is not a novel occurrence. At the local elections in 2012, a number of mayoral posts went to independent candidates. This trend is certainly a reflection of the public's deep mistrust of the established political parties, as the recently published study (Analitika) shows that only 14.3% of citizens trust political parties. If we add to this years of economic downturn, a protracted government formation negotiations in 2010, which took some 14 months, and the fact that the previously existing ideological progressive-conservative division simply ceased to exist or make sense, dissatisfaction becomes easier to grasp. I deliberately use the progressive-conservative dichotomy to describe the political dimension in Bosnia, instead of the usual left-right one, as it more accurately represents the roles that were ascribed to some parties by the public in the past.

Turnout, political participation and activism
The turnout at the elections, despite some excessively optimistic polls, was 54%, which is in line with the trend from the last several elections when the turnout was slightly over 50%. Turnout in the RS was somewhat higher than in the FBiH, which was mainly due to the extreme political bi-polarization. Absence of a serious analysis of the voting process makes it tremendously difficult to identify who votes at elections and to establish trends over time. As a result, we have a number of bluntly designed projects aimed at, for example, increasing youth participation at elections. Serious disregard for the fact that

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1 The president and the Vice-presidents of the FBiH are appointed by the FBiH Parliament.
youth is an amazingly heterogeneous group that can hardly be appealed to as a group is of no concern to donors and implementing agencies. Furthermore, while some might argue that participation of over 50% at elections is hardly worrying, the state of Bosnia’s unconsolidated democracy in essence requires much higher participation. One way to increase participation at elections would be to introduce compulsory voting.

One of the events that many hoped would influence the shape and form of politics in BiH were the protests in February. The realization that the traditional political elites in Bosnia are mainly concerned with their own wellbeing, while having virtually no regard for the concerns of the majority of the underprivileged, took the form of violent protests. These protests followed frequent, but disconcerted and otherwise fragmented protests throughout the country. The February protests quickly got out of hand in several cities in BiH, mainly in the FBiH where enraged protestors burned government buildings in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Mostar. Protestors also attacked private properties of politicians, parties’ buildings and clashed with the police. In the aftermath of the protests, Bosnia was once again in the world news headlines and on the covers of magazines. Hailed at the time as the final awakening of the genuine grass-roots civil society movement and the beginning of the end of corrupt and irresponsible political elites in Bosnia, the protests would soon morph into an exercise aimed at leaderless direct democracy in the form of Plena. Plena became the place where numbers of the disadvantaged, disenfranchised and underprivileged got to voice their grievances while getting support from an emphatic audience. Plena were soon ideologically hijacked by neo-Marxists and anti-capitalists who mistook them for the core of a new political system based on fundamentally different grounds and treated them as the real-life laboratory for their ideas and concepts (Keil, 2014). Over time Plena lost momentum and gradually dissolved, achieving in essence very little and revealing a profound lack of the public’s basic understanding of the economic and political problems in Bosnia. What was discussed there was “better” redistribution of public money, while virtually no one or very few ever addressed the issue of the unbearable size of public spending except when it came to cutting benefits for politicians. There is, however, a change that was probably triggered by the February unrest in Bosnia and it concerns the approach undertaken by the EU and other international actors in Bosnia. International actors seem to have indeed become more attentive to the needs and concerns of citizens, as some analysts suggested, instead of limiting their engagement only to discussions with party leaders.

Riding the wind of change was the leader of the Alliance for a Better Future (Savez za bolju budućnost, SBB) and media mogul Fahrudin Radončić. He presented himself in public as a politician who stood by citizens in times of crisis and prevented the police from violently supressing protests. As the Minister of Security on the state level, Radončić claims that he deliberately decided not use any of the police forces on the ground against protesting citizens. However, complexities and intricacies of power-sharing on the state level would hardly allow Radončić to effectively use security forces even if he had tried to do so. It is entirely possible that Radončić portrayed his inability to do anything as a deliberate restraint. In a surprising turn of events, the Social Democratic Party (Socijaldemokratska partija BiH, SDP) initiated his removal.
from the position of Minister of Security, a decision that Radonić used as an opportunity to present himself as the victim of corrupt political elites who fear change.

While largely confined to the FBiH, protests were taken quite seriously by Dodik’s autocratic regime, which immediately embarked on discrediting them as an attempt to destroy the RS and impose a centralized government in BiH. The way this was framed is hardly a new thing for Dodik, who was actively creating a narrative that revolved around a number of external threats both to him and the RS (frequently used interchangeably). The culmination of the spin (and craziness) was the publication of a book on the official Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata, SNSD) website under the title Bringing the RS down – Theory and Technology of a Coup. In the book, a number of NGOs, activists and media outlets that were critical of the government’s and Dodik’s performance were labelled enemies of the RS. Nikola Špirić, Dodik’s Minister in the Council of Ministers, would expand this conspiracy theory during the election campaign. Špirić even presented the official badges of anti-RS conspirators, which resembled police badges, to journalists at a press conference. This stunning level of paranoia indicated the very serious possibility that SNSD could ultimately lose power.

Campaign dynamics
Campaigns in BiH are normally a place for heated rhetoric that is usually preceded by a radicalization and a general worsening of the political situation. Mobilization of the masses and closing ethno-national ranks in an unfinished country that is Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been the safest and most secure way to garner support at elections. These elections were not strikingly different at the first glance, but some differences have to be mentioned. It seems that this time, fault lines did not run between two entities / three ethnicities, but rather within them. Infrequent occurrences of “others” and “nationalist” escapades still popped up here and there, mainly in the RS, but the campaigns mostly focused on the incumbent governments’ performances, stability, crime, corruption and the wellbeing of citizens.

The SNSD was challenged by a coalition formed around the ur-nationalist Serb Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka, SDS), previously of Radovan Karadžić, which made it quite hard for them to play the nationalist card. Deprived of this tool, Dodik relied heavily on his control of public money by increasing salaries in the public sector, buying equipment for hospitals and by promising that pensions in the RS will increase by two percent just two days before the official end of the campaign.

There were ten contenders for the position of the Bosniak member of the Presidency and, according to almost legendarily unreliable polls in BiH, four of these were serious candidates. Essentially, the main struggle was between

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3 Those were the candidates of the Party of Democratic Action (Stranka Demokratske Akcije, SDA), the SBB, the Democratic Front (Demokratska fronta, DF) and the SDP.
Bakir Izetbegović (SDA) and Fahrudin Radonić (SBB). Very early in the campaign negative aspects began to dominate, which in the end resulted in severely strained personal relations between the two candidates. The negativity has now spilled over into negotiations on the government formation.

In the FBiH, the ideological space vacated by the SDP was filled by a new party, the Democratic Front (Demokratska fronta, DF) of Željko Komšić. Komšić is the two-term Croat member of the Presidency and a populist social-democrat. His party is an offshoot of the original and currently ruling SDP of Zlatko Lagumdžija with whom he broke ranks after a dispute over the SDP’s agreement with the Croat Democratic Union (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica, HDZ) two years ago, which effectively undermined the base upon which Komšić was elected. Their electoral success was evident, but strongly exaggerated in a number of polls conducted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) prior to the elections. Time and again these polls showed that the DF commanded the majority of votes in the FBiH ahead of the SDA. The unreliability of election polls in Bosnia is legendary and has probably more to do with deliberately skewed methodology than with some innate inability of statistics to grasp the voters’ preferences in Bosnia. The DF’s primary targets were disillusioned SDP voters and elusive civic-nationalist groups that identify themselves as Bosnian. The DF largely remained silent during the campaign, trying to maintain its early advantage that was diminishing as the campaign progressed and with every successive poll published. Not surprisingly, the front lines in the Federation ran between the DF and the SDP and between the SBB and the SDA. The two Croat parties, the HDZ and the HDZ 1990, ran slightly different campaigns, where the HDZ based the whole campaign on the so-called Croat question (the status of Croats in the FBiH and BiH, as opposed to the asymmetric power-sharing arrangements), while their splinter party HDZ 1990 and its candidate for the Croat member of the Presidency also sought support in the Bosniak part of the FBiH.

Fairly explicit and undiplomatic involvement on the part of some international actors in BiH brought back distant memories of the past when the international community in Bosnia played an active role in micromanaging the country. Unlike the previous two general elections when internationals assumed almost a too obvious hands-off approach in line with their general disengagement strategy, some actions by foreign diplomats this time around raised eyebrows. USAID and some US diplomats (Barth and Miller, 2014) went beyond the usual diplomatic etiquette.4 Criticized by some media as “a below the belt blow to democracy in Bosnia” or “Americans telling the BiH citizens who they should vote against” and welcomed by others supportive of the opposition, these actions serve as a stark reminder of the obvious absence of sovereignty of BiH.

Slow counting, government formation and the holiday season
It took the Central Election Commission (CEC) an incredible fifteen days to publish the final preliminary results of the elections. Strong criticism was

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4 USAID TV Spot #1 in its ‘Get Out the Vote’ campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (accessed: 3. December 2014).
addressed at the Commission for its sluggish and inefficient counting procedure and indolent behaviour in general. At midnight on Election Day, the CEC was able to publish the final turnout at the elections and the preliminary results for the Presidency of BiH and the President of the RS based only on 52.03% of counted votes in the RS and 76.52% in the FBiH. To make matters worse, the CEC ended the press conference at midnight announcing the next one for 14.00h the next day, even though the elections for the Serb member of the Presidency and the President of the RS were incredibly close at that time. This indolent behaviour on the part of the CEC was seen by some, especially opposition parties, as election fraud and it certainly undermined confidence in the electoral process.

On 27. October the CEC managed to count all of the votes and published the final results. Dodik managed to get re-elected as the President of the RS by a narrow margin of just 1% (45.21% to 44.18%) over the opposition bloc candidate Ognjen Tadić of the SDS. However, his party’s candidate for the prestigious position of the Serb member of the BiH Presidency, Željka Cvijanović (Prime Minister of the RS), lost the race to Mladen Ivanić of the Party of Democratic Progress (Partija demokratskog progres, PDP), which is part of the SDS-led opposition bloc. In the National Assembly of the RS, Dodik’s party with its old coalition members could potentially command 42 votes, which represents the narrowest possible majority (42 out of 83). That is, of course, if all members of the coalition respect the deal and do not defect. Forming the government based on a narrow majority is tremendously risky and limits Dodik’s manoeuvring potential severely. It is likely that he might have to broaden the ruling coalition even if that means that he will have to water down his own agenda, especially the secessionist one. One such partner could be the Coalition Homeland (Koalicija Domovina), which is comprised of parties residing in the FBiH. These parties have, according to some leaked memos, advised their voters to support the SNSD candidates for the positions of President of the RS and the Serb member of the Presidency of BiH, which might indicate the existence of a pre-election agreement. During negotiations, two of the SNSD’s long-standing junior coalition members, the Democratic Peoples’ Alliance (Demokratski narodni savez, DNS) and the Socialist Party (Socijalistička partija, SP) that is affiliated with the SP of Serbia, have indicated that they expect much more and announced their desire to get the PM post and to also talk with the opposition, respectively. Meanwhile, they have toned down their requests and the most recent information confirms that they will stay true to Dodik and the SNSD, but they will in turn get the position of Speaker of the National Assembly of the RS. To increase his leverage in the talks, Dodik has revived the state-level partnership with the HDZ and Dragan Ćović, and is thus trying to ensure the participation of the SNSD on the state level. The Mostar meeting of the two parties is meant to help persuade the potential coalition members that Dodik is still in control of the situation and dissuade possible defectors. Dodik has lost his grip on power and his rhetoric immediately softened once the results became known. Talks of secession and the unfeasibility of the Bosnian state have given way to talks about speedy reforms and accession to the EU.

In the Federation, the relative winners are the SDA, an old Bosniak ethno-nationalist party of the late Alija Izetbegović, and the DF. The SDP, on the
other hand, suffered the worst defeat in its history following its greatest electoral success in 2010 (see table 1).

“Social-democracy” in crisis?
During the period between 2002 and 2010, the aforementioned progressive-conservative division gradually disappeared as the former progressives in the RS, the SNSD, shifted rhetorically and overtook the previously unchallenged ethno-nationalist SDS from the right (apparently upon suggestion by some serious US political consultant). Though successful in the short term, this tactical move soon became the main ingredient of Dodik’s politics, placing the SNSD strongly into the conservative camp and turning him into the enfant terrible of Bosnian politics. Another former progressive, the SDP BiH, pursued a different path, largely as a result of different structural conditions in the FBiH. It first entered into a coalition with its archenemies, the ethno-nationalist SDA and a number of smaller parties with questionable backgrounds, only to later dissolve the coalition unilaterally. In the process, the FBiH and BiH were plunged into the most serious government crisis that would last until the elections of 2014. While the crisis mainly had to do with the SDA not wanting to leave the government and in the process exploiting a number of tools and mechanisms for obstruction of the government reconstruction, it was the style and performance of the SDP-led government that would be the main reason for its demise at the 2014 elections. Both parties have become internally autocratic, which is not uncommon on the Bosnian leader-based political scene, but it is a worrying development for the progressive parties. Once in power, both parties have mainly continued with their business as usual, to the dismay of those with progressive thinking, which could account for their electoral failures. The SNSD will probably manage to remain in power, but under different conditions and with severely curtailed power. That the SNSD has remained in power is a direct result of the fact that it ruled the RS virtually unchallenged, commanding and controlling a large public sector, finances and the media. A further reason for the SDP’s utter defeat is the emergence of another party that has positioned itself in the centre-left and that has capitalized on the voters’ dissatisfaction with the SDP.

Table 1: Rise and Decline of Social-Democrats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>SDP</th>
<th>SNSD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>30000</td>
<td>20000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>20000</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>10000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1000</td>
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Source: Author’s own illustration
Tremors of the election shock still resonate through the SDP, with its complete base now calling for the resignation and departure of the “perennial” president, Zlatko Lagumdžija. These elections represent just the final stage in the downfall of the SDP that started with the protracted 2010 post-election calculations, the short-lived and unprincipled coalitions with the SDA and the smaller fringe parties that followed, the subsequent unilateral breaking of the coalition by the SDP and finally its inability to complete the government reconstruction. Coupled with numerous scandals surrounding Lagumdžija’s immediate circle of confidants and the authoritarian style of rule (note the similarity with the other social-democratic party, the SNSD), the SDP was finally punished by its own voters, who mainly switched to the DF after perceiving it as a new, potent force.

**Rise of ethno-nationalists?**

The apparent return of the Big Three has been the main topic after the 2014 elections. If we compare the results of the previous elections, all three parties were losing support until 2006 (see table 2), but then seemed to rebound, with the exception of the SDA, which was losing support more gradually and rebounded strongly after the last elections. If we look for explanations of these trends, we could partially ascribe them to the structural conditions prevailing in Bosnia until 2006. These were characterized by a heavy-handed international involvement that was followed by strong state-building efforts. In terms of policies and general political orientation, both the SDS and the HDZ worked in opposition to the efforts of the international community at the time. As such, they were heavily subdued both politically and financially, as well as in terms of their rhetoric. As a result, both parties suffered in terms of electoral outcomes, while the SDA suffered only minor setbacks largely because it had pro-state policies that tended to converge with those of the international actors on the ground. The period after 2006 is characterised by a change in the character of the international presence in Bosnia and the severe curtailing of the use of executive powers by the High Representative. With the US out of picture and the altered balance of power in the Peace Implementation Council, Bosnia was suddenly emptied of any significant international presence. Sensing the changing balance, political parties revived long dormant goals based mainly on the principle of ethnoterritorialism.

Table 2: Return of the Big Three

![Graph showing the return of the Big Three parties over different years](source: Author's own illustration)
Since the 2009 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in a landmark case of Sejdija & Finci vs BiH, there has been a strong pressure on domestic political elites to remove the discriminatory provisions of the Constitution of BiH. The constitutional reform also figures prominently on the EU accession agenda, as it is inextricably linked to the EU integration process. However, achieving the broad consensus required for the constitutional reform seems virtually impossible. Side effects of these protracted negotiations include severely strained relations between the three communities and the emergence of the most serious political crisis in the country since the end of the war. Reforming the Dayton Agreement—the Constitution of BiH is Annex IV of the US-brokered peace deal struck in Dayton, Ohio—is very difficult. All sides have come to believe that they were dealt a bad hand in Dayton and so the debate once again revolves around the typical who-gets-what in terms of territory and control.

The most vocal player in the debate is certainly Milorad Dodik, the leader of the SNSD. Dodik adopted a strong secessionist position, advocating for a referendum and the dissolution of Bosnia shortly before the 2010 elections, which ensured him and his party a landslide victory. Four years later, however, it seems that talk of independence alone will not suffice for an election victory. During the last eight years, the RS has seen a dramatic worsening of the socio-economic situation. Rampant corruption that is largely associated with Dodik himself, widespread nepotism, his heavy-handed style of rule and a lavish lifestyle for him and those around him tarnished his reputation beyond repair. Repeated attempts on his part to put the independence back on top of the agenda during the campaign mostly failed. The most recent global secession/independence events, such as the Scottish referendum, the Crimean annexation and the crisis in the East Ukraine, figured prominently into Dodik’s campaign, but surprisingly solicited no response from the FBiH. Dodik’s opposition successfully kept the focus on the deteriorating economic situation, widespread corruption and nepotism. Neglecting everyday problems of his constituency and the pauperization of the population in the RS clearly required a bit more than the empty nationalist agenda that worked so well in 2010. There is a wealth of evidence that supports the claim that Dodik’s pursuit of independence never amounted to anything more than lip service and the permanent smoke screen that concealed widespread misuse of public funds and the privatization in the RS. Dodik will now have to make some serious decisions regarding his future course of action. He could give up on the secessionism and pursue a different and more constructive course of action aimed at stopping the socio-economic decline of the RS, or he could continue his divorce from the West and the EU by following in the footsteps of Crimea and Scotland. The prospect of losing elections and facing the loss of everything he gained during his time in office could push him either way, but the consequences of pursuing the latter would put him on a collision course even with the current Serbian government.

Making sense of results: long winter and hot spring?
The Alliance for a Better Future (Stranka za bolju budućnost, SBB) of the media mogul Fahrudin Radončić fared quite well and became the second biggest party in the FBiH despite gloomy pre-election predictions. The HDZ
Adnan Huskić

won against its rival, its splinter party and frequent coalition partner, the HDZ 1990 in the legislature and in the race for the position of the Croat member of the Presidency.

New governing coalitions remain unclear for the time being. Some responsibility for the slow government formation process lies also with the Central Election Commission that failed to complete the counting procedure for an amazing twelve days after the elections. Its sluggish and irresponsible manner of dealing with the counting procedure has prompted widespread criticism. In an unconsolidated democracy that is Bosnia, such mismanagement of the electoral process brings into question the very integrity of the electoral process. To make matters worse, the extremely high percentage of invalid ballots of nearly 10% across virtually all levels does not seem to bother the CEC. According to IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance), the average number of invalid ballots worldwide stands at around 3-4%. The absence of any reaction or post-election analysis of this phenomenon by the CEC escapes any logical explanation. It is highly likely that the public will remain in the dark concerning the nature of these invalid ballots, which also means that any attempts at rectifying deficiencies that could be the probable cause of such a situation will remain unaddressed.

Furthermore, some shape of the governmental structure seems to have emerged following the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation between the SDA, the DF and the Coalition Zajedno za promjene, which consists of the SDS, the PDP and the NDP, which effectively made the SNSD the opposition on the state-level and additionally undermined its efforts to assemble the majority on the RS level. At the Mostar meeting of the SNSD and the HDZ, which took place before the signing of the abovementioned Agreement on Cooperation, Dodik attempted to reactivate the state-level partnership and ensure the participation of the SNSD at the state-level. The meeting also served as a persuasion tool for both his potential coalition partners, the DNS and the SPS, and elected delegates from his own party. The SNSD is currently unable to complete negotiations with its former partners and the number of MPs it commands remains unclear. Both of its partners have refused to commit themselves in writing to the old-new coalition. Dodik has found himself in an unfavourable position. He must appease his coalition partners, whose appetites have grown considerably during the last few weeks. At the same time, making large concessions to coalition partners is putting Dodik in a difficult situation within his own party. Aware of the fact that Dodik is caught between a rock and a hard place, the opposition Coalition is generously outbidding Dodik by spoiling his potential coalition partners with positions they could not possibly get from Dodik. Several web portals in Bosnia recently published an audio recording of an alleged conversation between the current Prime Minister of the RS, Željka Cvijanović, and another woman, where they discuss the "buying" of individual MPs and the unreliability of some coalition partners. It is clear now that the gloves are off in the power struggle in the RS and, having in mind what is at stake, this should come as no surprise. Resolution of the post-election drama now rests on the outcome of the government formation negotiations in the RS. If the above mentioned opposition Coalition manages to form the majority, it will deal a final blow to Dodik's SNSD and send it to opposition at all levels. The ensuing cohabitation, Dodik as President of the RS
versus the opposition in the government and the National Assembly, might be difficult at the very beginning, but it would probably lead to more strict legal demarcation between different branches of government in the RS. So far, the effective centre of power in the RS has depended on the incumbent person. During Dodik’s tenure as the Prime Minister, this position had absolutely dominated over the President of the RS. However, Dodik’s decision to run for the Presidency of the RS in 2006 led to a situation where the position of the President of the RS assumed a dominant position over that of the Prime Minister. However, if Dodik manages to assemble the necessary majority to form the government, we will be in for a longer government formation negotiation and much more heated rhetoric. The HDZ will ultimately have to decide whether to forfeit on the partnership with Dodik and join the government majority on the state level that is ideologically closer to it. In April 2014, five EPP-affiliated parties in BiH signed a “Declaration on European values and common goals for parties from BiH that belong to or support the EPP grouping”. Two of the major opposition parties from the RS are signatories to this declaration, which puts the HDZ in a situation where it now has to choose between the old partnership with Dodik on one and their ideological family on the other side. This will be the litmus test of the HDZ’s true commitments.

Regardless of the future shape of the government structure in Bosnia and its two entities, there is hardly any reason to believe that the new governments will be able to stop the socio-economic free fall of the country. All successive governments in BiH since 1996, regardless of their composition, have increased public spending. While everything points to the obvious, meaning that Bosnia’s economic problems require severe cuts, saving measures and responsible budgetary and fiscal policies, the very structure acts as a disincentive in this sense. According to some analyses, in addition to nearly 6,000 positions formally reserved for politicians in legislative and executive bodies on all levels, there are nearly 20,000 positions in the public administration that are considered professional and free from political influence, but that are in effect filled almost exclusively via party support. If we add to this a vast array of quasi-social and various other categories that are financed by public money and the public procurement system, which is the most significant source of income for a significant number of private companies in BiH and which is neither transparent nor shielded from the conflict of interests as indicated by successive reports by a number of watchdog organizations, only then can we fully appreciate and comprehend the durable character of this system. Reversing the inherently inflationary character of public spending policies in BiH would require a commitment to long-term policies and the assumption of responsibility for which the parties in BiH are simply not ready. Concern over re-elections and the significant spoils available to election winners are simply too big of obstacles for such a progressive and visionary approach to politics.

The unsustainable economic situation will not benefit from prolonged government negotiations. The first item on the agenda for all newly elected legislative bodies will be a discussion on budgets. Any delay in government formation will therefore jeopardizes the financial stability and will likely result in social unrest, strikes and demonstrations. Even the most optimistic scenario with quick government formation, urgent budget adoption and serious efforts
at socio-economic stabilization does not guarantee that the spring of 2015 will not be as hot as the spring of 2014. It may be even hotter.

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The Presidential Election in Turkey: History and Future Expectations
Election Analysis

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The Presidential Election in Turkey: History and Future Expectations

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Keywords: Turkey, Presidential Election 2014, Popular Vote, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, AKP

Introduction
On 20 January 2012, the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey passed a law concerning new rules and procedure by which Turkey's future head of state would be elected. According to this law, Turkey's next head of state was to be elected by popular vote, in lieu of the Parliament, for the first time since Republican Turkey was founded. Based on the official election results, the former Prime Minister and head of the ruling party, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected in the first round as the 12th President of the Republic of Turkey for a period of five years, winning more than 52% of the votes on 10 August 2014. The other two candidates were Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu and Selahattin Demirtaş, who received 38.44% and 9.76% of the votes respectively.

At first glance, this election seems to be a regular one, yet the new legal condition has not only affected the procedural electoral system, but has also directly influenced the political atmosphere. In other words, during previous presidential election periods, Turkey would have discussions about the leaders, the nominated citizens and public figures, the potential candidates, the political parties, debating which would have enough seats to elect their candidate into the national parliament, and the candidate-based coalitions. Despite all these old political and social habits, in the last presidential election Turkey preferred to debate on the candidates' ideological perspectives and commitments.

The main reason for this is the new electoral system, which provides new powers to the head of the state. These new powers include greater political legitimacy and a number of constitutional rights and responsibilities, such as a more active role in both domestic politics and foreign policy, a political mandate to deliver on election promises, a larger representative capacity of the public and a more powerful role in ensuring good working relations between state

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bodies. In this respect, the candidates’ backgrounds and their approaches to previous political events become prominent points. Therefore, it is possible to argue that it is quite complicated to understand the election process and its future potential without clarifying the recent political and social atmosphere in Turkey.

In this respect, this article will first clarify four main considerable events that happened in the past two years and that continue to have an effect on Turkey. The first one is the Gezi Park Protests, which started as an attempt to protect a green area and then expanded to all over the country as a way to protest the AKP government and the Prime Minister Erdoğan’s policy. The second event is the corruption scandal that was directly related to some ministers and their relatives. The third one is the tension between the AKP and the Hizmet Movement that has ignited after the corruption scandal in both political and social arenas. The last event is the explosion at a coalmine in Soma, caused by an underground mine fire, which appears to be the worst labour accident in Turkey.

Secondly, this article is going to disclose the presidential election candidates’ main qualifications, sources of support, mottos and campaign strategies. Furthermore, in this section I will not only note the percentage of votes each candidate received, but I will also point out what is happening in Turkey’s political state of affairs by explaining the meaning of these percentages. The last part of the article will be about what the new president and the government mean for the main political system discussions.

**Turkey’s Recent Milestones**

**The Gezi Park Protests**

*“This is just the beginning, the struggle will continue.”* This slogan clearly showed that the protests in Turkey would extend far beyond the intention of saving a park in the centre of Istanbul. The point I am trying to make is that, without any doubt, the protests that started in May 2013 have been a turning point for Turkey’s political and social life. Therefore, it is important to clarify that some prominent scholars and thinkers of our day have been trying to categorize these protests as the public reaction to Turkey’s recent economic and political structural rules. For instance, Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Noam Chomsky and Slavoj Žižek have identified the main reasons for this protest by referring to neo-liberal normative bases of a capitalist economic system and its destruction, as well as to an inner autocracy of representative liberal democracy, which have been directly related to the AKP’s and Erdoğan’s...

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polices. In addition, they have also shown protestors how to achieve much more non-discrimination by using their declarations.

Moreover, protests in Turkey are quite extraordinary when compared to Western, Eastern and Arab examples. To understand the Turkish case, it should be noted that on 27. May 2013 excavators attempted to demolish the Taksim Gezi Park, an urban green space in the Istanbul city-centre, as part of the “Taksim Pedestrianization Project.” The government aimed to replace the Gezi Park with a reconstruction of the historical Halil Pasha Artillery Barracks that would host shopping malls, residences, etc. This attempt was one of the typical assaults of the AKP government to turn the entire country into a great building site in line with its neoliberal urban policies.

The protests to save the park and Taksim Square by a group of environmentalists turned into a nationwide uprising with almost 3 million participants and protests in 79 cities across Turkey. According to the Turkish Medical Association report dated 10. July 2013, there were 5 deaths and 8,000 injuries in 13 cities. Among these, 61 people had severe injuries, 104 had head traumas and 11 lost their eyesight. The main reason for this grievous situation was the AKP government’s harsh policy against the protestors.

The most interesting and valuable element when examining these protests in comparison to the ones in the rest of the world was the diversity of participants. Socialist groups, social democrats, Kemalist groups, non-Muslim and non-Turkish minorities, workers, middle class members, secular nationalists, left-wing Islamists and members of the Alevi population, football fans supporting opposing teams, LGBT organizations, large masses of people with no particular party or group affiliation and people from different professional backgrounds were on the ground. Both the old and the young went out into the streets, chanted slogans, clashed with the police, occupied parks and acted in solidarity with one another.

Moreover, the May 2013 protests in Turkey developed into a reaction to different political and social issues. This process has a problematic and catastrophic background, which is very much related to the AKP’s and Mr. Erdoğan’s harsh political conduct against almost all public groups that stood against his main ideas. In other words, Gezi Park embraced protests that were directly against the AKP’s harsh social and economic policies and Mr. Erdoğan’s angry, segregating and polarised discourse. From that point of view, the Gezi Park case is among the key determinative ones for the voters during the presidential election.

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Corruption Scandals and the Tension between the AKP and the Hizmet Movement

In the early years of the AKP government, a sort of liberal transformation was launched into the Republic of Turkey’s legal and political structures. The AKP acted in accordance with European Union criteria regarding the principles of liberty, freedom of religion and democratization in areas like educational reform, the open market economy and military guardianship. From this point of view, it is possible to argue that the AKP created a huge coalition that embraced different groups, such as liberals, prominent scholars, columnists, key members of the financial sector, Muslim and non-Muslim groups, ethnic minorities and civil society organizations, by using these arguments. At that point Mr. Erdoğan played a prominent role in the establishment of these normative and practical coalitions.

Among these social coalition partners of the AKP, the Hizmet Movement should be defined as a special ally. The Hizmet Movement is a network organised under the ideas of the Islamic scholar and preacher Fethullah Gülen, who is the indisputable moral and ideal vanguard of the Movement. The Hizmet Movement has a contemporary Islamic core, which is transnational and voluntary. It is said that the Hizmet Movement has expanded to almost 160 countries in the world by using its voluntary workers in its educational centres. In this respect, it is related to both Turkey’s and the world’s economic, social and political issues.

Whereas the other coalition partners had supported the AKP and its policies in one or two areas, the Hizmet Movement has been actively working with the AKP both in Turkey and abroad. Moreover, the AKP cadres and the Hizmet Movement’s volunteers share a common social background, in contrast to some of the AKP’s other informal coalition partners. According to Berna Turam, the Hizmet Movement and the AKP had been working in a direct coalition up to 2009-2010. She also argues that the Hizmet Movement not only supported the AKP’s policies and decisions, but also had a substantial influence on them. From this point of view, it is possible to argue that the Hizmet Movement supported the AKP by using its intellectual platforms, media and public figures. Therefore, the Hizmet Movement was also working as a soft power of the AKP government by using their schools and cultural activities outside of Turkey. Meanwhile, through the AKP government, members of the Hizmet Movement managed to reach the top positions in the state bureaucracy. This seems logical as they shared common values and perspectives for Turkey’s future.

Despite the fact that this coherent coalition seemed to continue for ages, the relationship worsened after 2010 because of their perspective differences regarding foreign policy, education, communal rights and individual and media

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13 Çağır, Ruşen and Semih Sakallı. 2014. 100 Soruda Erdoğan-Gülen Savaşı. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 56.
freedoms. In addition to these, the biggest tension began with the 17 December and 25. December 2013 corruption investigations that involved the prime minister at the time and some other ministers of the cabinet. According to the government, the Hizmet Movement was actually trying to perform a civil coup d'état through these judicial investigations. On the contrary, I argue that the AKP government was trying to pacify the Hizmet Movement by counteractions in light of the abovementioned differences in various policies. According to Mr. Erdoğan, the Hizmet Movement is not a civil society organization, but a sort of illegal one that stood against the elected government and the state. Thus, Mr. Erdoğan started to talk and establish judicial policies against both Fethullah Gülen and the movement's voluntary activities, including schools, intellectual platforms and charity organisations. Print and social media characterized the government’s actions as a “witch-hunt” against the Hizmet Movement.

At the end of the day, the tension between Mr. Erdoğan and the Hizmet Movement is without a doubt of vital importance for both Turkey and internationally. Therefore, despite the fact that Mr. Erdoğan won the presidential election, the tension is still present and has been causing shifts among Mr. Erdoğan's and the Hizmet Movement’s fans.

The Soma Mine Accident
Mining accidents are common in Turkey because of poor safety conditions. According to a report issued in 2010 by the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye Ekonomi Politikalari Araştirma Vakfi, TEPAV), there were 7.22 deaths per 1 million ton of coal mined in Turkey in 2008. This is the highest figure in the world, 5 times the rate in China (1.27) and 361 times the rate in the US (0.02). Official statistics record that more than 3,000 coal miners died in mining accidents from 1941 to April 2014. In 2012, 78 miners were killed in accidents, while 95 died in 2013.

On 13 May 2014, there was an explosion at a coalmine in Soma, Manisa caused by an underground mine fire that went on until 15 May. In total, 301 people were killed in the worst mining disaster in Turkey's history. According to experts, scholars and some prominent investigative journalists, the main reason for the accident was the neglect of the private mining company, which should have been under government audit. In other words, it is possible to argue that patronage relations between the government and some private companies happen to be the main cause for the accident.

Despite the fact that the government was one of the major liable parties, after the accident Mr. Erdoğan acted as if they had the upper hand. For instance, he had badly misjudged the Soma disaster by delivering an insensitive speech bristling with self-defence. He also addressed the relatives of the deceased miners with the statement that “these types of incidents are ordinary things.”

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14 Çakır and Sakalli. 2014. 100 Soruda, 54.
This was his way of deflecting any kind of responsibility for the blast in the wake of reports that the government ignored safety concerns about the privately owned mine, which were raised as recently as two weeks prior by opposition MPs. Therefore, the government and its media mouthpieces had jumped into self-defence mode and Mr. Erdoğan's speech was typical of the belligerence that marks his response to any kind of criticism. Moreover, he recounted a long list of mining disasters that occurred abroad, stretching back to a British disaster in 1862, and lingered on accidents that occurred in America, a country that "has every kind of technology." 18 His advisors seemed to have spent precious hours researching foreign mining history, instead of coming up with a detailed course of action to assure the public of Mr. Erdoğan's commitment to finding those both directly and indirectly responsible for the blast.

All in all, the government and Mr. Erdoğan's attitudes to all these events in Turkey in the recent past were both angry and reactive towards the citizens who have suffered. Therefore, the Soma mine accident was a significant example of the workers' conditions and the general attitude of the AKP government. I can easily argue that after the Soma mine accident, labour safety emerged as an important topic of debate among those candidates running against Mr. Erdoğan.

The Presidential Election: The Candidates, the Election Period and the Result

On 20. January 2012 the Turkish Parliament passed an act containing new rules and procedures by which Turkey's next head of state would be elected. The head of state was to be elected by a popular vote, in lieu of the Parliament of the Republic of Turkey, on 10. August 2014. This would be the first time the head of state would be elected in such a way since the country was founded. This was actually more significant in light of the fact that President Abdullah Gül's seven-year term was coming to an end.

Given that Turkey's next president was to be elected by a popular vote, the presidential elections took on a character very reminiscent of the US presidential elections. The candidates could accept personal donations for their campaigns, with the caveat that an individual donor could not donate more than 8.259 TL (approximately 2.950 €) per candidate. What is different from the US presidential elections, however, was that the electorate was being denied the valued opportunity of a presidential debate. Two of the candidates had publicly expressed their willingness to take part in such a debate, while Mr. Erdoğan had remained quiet on the issue.

For the presidential elections on 10. August, there were three candidates. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was the AKP candidate. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) from 2004 to 2014, was a candidate of Turkey's two main opposition parties - the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) – as well as nine smaller

18 Yetkin. Not Easy for Erdoğan.
political parties from the various ends of the political spectrum. Finally, the third candidate was Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş, who was the Turkish/Kurdish candidate of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) and who had the support of seven other political parties from the left.

I should now give some basic information about the candidates and their campaigns. First of all, Mr. Erdoğan used his social validation as a means to turn his presidential candidacy into a social acceptance through strategic PR initiatives. Adopting conciliatory rhetoric, in contrast to previous elections in which he ran, he introduced himself as an inclusive candidate with the slogan “Man of the People.” However, I can argue that Mr. Erdoğan’s campaign strategy was actually based on standing up against the Hizmet Movement and the groups that were directly opposing the AKP. On the other hand, despite the fact that Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu tried to create an inclusive campaign path, he was not successful because of his conservative background. In other words, he could not consolidate the young social democrats and leftists, who played an active role during the Gezi Park Protests, because of his conservative background. Therefore, he could not consolidate the CHP and MHP supporters, as he did not find a common propaganda tactic. I can argue that, in contrast to the others, Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş’s campaign strategy was the most significant and successful one. Although his campaign budget was relatively tight, he managed to have a huge impact on the population. One of the main reasons for this was that he had a spirited and effective discourse. In addition to that, he managed to give the voters positive energy by getting into close contact with them.  

The campaign was marred by inequality of media coverage provided for the three candidates. For example, between 14 and 20 July, the campaign coverage time allocated for the three candidates on the national state news channel the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu, TRT) was as follows: Erdoğan – 8 hours, İhsanoğlu – 3 hours and Demirtaş – 1.5 hours. The inequality was even greater in the earlier weeks of the official campaign period. As a result, the Supreme Committee of Elections fined the TRT after the election due to its unequal campaign coverage time distribution.

According to the main results, Erdoğan became the 12th President of the Turkish Republic when he managed to win more than 50% of the valid votes, even though this corresponds to only 37% of the total registered electorate. In this respect, I should give some information about the turnout rates in order to clarify the level of legitimacy of the election. The first startling aspect of this election was that the turnout rates were apparently lower than at the previous local and general elections. For instance, whereas the turnout rates were 89% and 91% in Istanbul and Ankara for the local elections in March 2014, in the presidential election they were reflected as 71% and 76% respectively. An overall turnout of 74% seems to have a significant impact on the first round’s outcome. According to the preliminary observations and analysis, the main reasons behind this lower rate are the unsatisfied voters’ decisions to boycott the elections, the summer holiday and the university students and seasonal

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workers’ inability to cast their votes in their own constituencies. In this respect, 51.8% was sufficient for Mr. Erdoğan to become the first president of Turkey elected by a popular vote, which gives him the leverage to redesign certain aspects of the state apparatus in the upcoming period. However, this delicate percentage may also lead him to reconsider his stance and discourse for further policy-making decisions, particularly in his ambition to initiate a constitutional change in the current parliamentarian system.\footnote{Turkey Institute. \textit{Heading Towards}. (accessed: 3. November 2014).}

Although Prof. İhsanoğlu was nominated as a candidate for the presidential election by two mainstream opposition parties (the CHP and the MHP) on the basis of aiming to attract the median voter preferences, 38% signifies that his lower popularity in the eyes of the Turkish public, alongside a lack of charismatic leadership, prevented him from winning the election. On the other hand, Mr. Selahattin Demirtas performed relatively well during the election and increased the votes for his party to almost 10%. Besides, his stance may make a contribution to the political life in Turkey as long as he keeps up the encompassing democratic discourse in further public discussions.

\textbf{The New Government after the Presidential Election}

The election results might have a number of consequences for Turkish politics. First, if President Erdoğan intends to put his pre-election viewpoint into action, then the status of democracy and rule of law in Turkey would be exacerbated. Secondly, Prof. İhsanoğlu’s failure in the elections may encourage dissidents in the CHP and the MHP to speak up against the current leadership. And finally, Kurdish political actors are likely to become publicly more visible, as well as to be active in solving Turkey’s lingering problems. Despite these optimistic expectations, it currently seems that all the issues have remained almost the same in Turkey. In other words, Turkey has been discussing the tension between the AKP and the Hizmet Movement and coming face to face with new labour accidents and some protest movements regarding different issues. Moreover, Mr. Erdoğan’s harsh and segregating attitude has not changed after he won the election. His new presidential palace, the White Palace (\textit{Beyaz Saray}), and new presidential plane are some of the other topics of dispute due to legacy and budgetary problems.

In addition, Turkey now has a new government and Prime Minister. Turkey’s 62nd government was formed and announced by the 26. Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic, Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu, on 29. August 2014. During the days following the cabinet formation, PM Davutoğlu unveiled a road map of his government that placed a strong emphasis on the economy, a dialogue-oriented foreign policy and a more democratic environment in domestic politics. In tune with Davutoğlu’s public speeches, as well as the statements in the government’s road map, Turkey now needs a number of concrete actions and policies to reach those targets concerning an advanced democracy, sustainable economic development and a rational/balanced foreign policy. In other words, for the domestic political arena, a new government should play a leading role in
establishing a well-functioning democracy on the basis of deliberative political participation.\textsuperscript{21}

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