

Abstract:

The relationship between citizens and the state has intrigued scholars for centuries. This research proposes a new approach to investigating this interaction: the Bipolar Theory Framework. The Framework presupposes that citizens live between two clusters of elements, grouped in the Positive and the Negative pole, which exert diametrically opposite influences on their political loyalty. The Positive Pole acts to foster feelings of loyalty and is based on factors rooted in shared heritage. These elements include shared ethnicity, territory, religion, and symbols. On the other hand, the Negative Pole primarily comprises elements pertaining to the socio-economic and political environment and works in the opposite direction. The elements presented here are political corruption, low SES, and poor quality of public services. The final question that this Framework aims to address is which of these poles has a greater impact on citizens when they make the decision to emigrate from their state. This is presented under the presumption that emigration is the highest act of disloyalty a citizen can commit in times of peace and war alike. However, in order to get there, this thesis followed a carefully developed structure that addressed multiple hypotheses.

The first task was to prove the effect of the listed factors on the political loyalty of citizens, which was conducted and verified through a comprehensive qualitative literature analysis. Secondly, case studies focused on countries subject to this research—Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina—with the aim of identifying these factors within these countries. The results show a high manifestation and impact of Positive Pole factors and a moderately high presence of negative pole factors. Subsequent research on the motives behind emigration finds a substantial level of correlation with elements of the Negative Pole. The research comes to an interesting conclusion: not only are the motives for emigration highly linked to the elements from the Negative Pole, but even when these factors are less intense and have an upward trajectory, they still tend to exert a substantial influence on citizens' decisions to emigrate. This observation leads to the conclusion and policy recommendation that, should the states wish to keep citizens from emigrating, it is highly recommended that the institutions focus on negating the adverse consequences of Negative Pole factors. Perhaps an ultimate goal would be to reach a balanced societal environment where the positive and negative poles are in harmony with one another.

Keywords: Citizens, State, relationship, political loyalty, emigration