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Master's thesis

2023

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**Relationship Between Citizen and State in the Countries of
Former Yugoslavia: Interdisciplinary Investigations**

Master's thesis

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Study program: International Economic and Political Studies

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Year of the defence: 2023

Declaration

- 1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.**
- 2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.**
- 3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.**

In Prague on 1st of August, 2023

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Bibliographic note

Tasic, Nikola. *Relationship Between Citizen and State in the Countries of Former Yugoslavia: Interdisciplinary Investigations*, Prague, 2023. 76 Pages (55 Pages text). Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Economic Studies. Supervisor Prof. Janusz Salamon, Ph.D.

Length of the thesis: 164 614 characters with spaces, without abstract, appendices and bibliography.

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

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Opening Chapter

Introduction

The relationship between citizens and the state is complex and can vary based on the political system being looked at as well as the historical period under consideration.

In ancient civilizations, individuals were assigned citizenship at birth, which was tied to a specific empire or city-state. During the Middle Ages, views on citizenship were often based on feudal loyalty and vassalage, as monarchs or other aristocracies would provide protections in exchange for services from lower echelons of society. Only during the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of citizenship as a legal status was characterised by a set of rights and responsibilities, primarily seen as an allegiance to a single government. (Bellamy, 2022)

In today's times, the state predominantly consists of institutions and structures with the authority to create and enforce laws, whereas citizens are the individuals who reside under the authority of these laws.

Citizens are subjected to the laws and regulations established by the state and are expected to comply with them, while the state is expected to safeguard the rights and well-being of its citizens.

Indeed, Zilbershats (2002) defines citizenship as the most significant connection that can be created between an individual and a State.

In the words of the United States Supreme Court:

“Citizenship is membership in a political society, and implies the reciprocal obligations as compensation for each other of a duty of allegiance on the part of the member and a duty of protection on the part of the society.” (Luria V. United States, 231 U.S. 9, 1913)

Even when presented in relatively simple terms as above, the bond and interactions between citizens and the state allow for practically infinite numbers of questions to be generated. And without a doubt, this was the case over the years. Thanks to the importance of the topic, this relationship has been researched in countless works and approached from various different angles in a multitude of academic sectors.

Hence, it requires significant narrowing down in order to be encompassed in the scope of this research.

Zilbershats (2002) further argued that the role of the State in the life of the individual is not limited only to the establishment of a defence mechanism that ensures the individual's protection. The State also serves as a national-cultural framework for the inhabitants of its territory. Elements of the national-cultural framework include the state's language, its symbols, and the state's history, as well as the history of its inhabitants. In this regard, the State substantially contributes to the formation of the identity of the people who reside on its territory.

This definition of a State is particularly important as it seamlessly integrates with the theories and research objectives outlined below.

This study will start by presenting the Framework, dubbed a **Bipolar Theory Framework** that aims to provide lenses through which the relationship between citizens and the state will be looked at in the countries subject to this research. As the title of the thesis suggests, these countries will be the ones formed by the dissolution of the Socialistic Federation of Yugoslavia: Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Hercegovina, with the exclusion of Slovenia and Northern Macedonia.

The Positive Pole, which primarily is thought to induce positive emotions, and the Negative Pole, which is theorized as the cause for negative emotions, are the two opposing clusters of elements that the Bipolar Theory Framework assumes can cause a spectrum of emotions in citizens towards their state. Indeed, as it will be clear once the Framework is presented, the ways in which one can go when aiming to develop further research are many. Consequently, to formulate a research question that is tangible and that can be properly assessed in this paper, as per the time and resources available, a discernible & measurable metric will be extracted from this theory.

This project will thus focus only on the Positive and Negative Poles' effects on the **political loyalty** of citizens towards their respective states.

Political loyalty towards a state based on its function as a previously mentioned national-cultural framework is more subjective than state loyalty based on the state's functioning as a protection-providing entity alone. The former establishes a connection and alliance between the various residents of the state and broadens the framework of loyalty beyond the prohibition of harming the state.

Loyalty, which results from the State being a national-cultural framework, necessitates that the individuals residing there engage in actions that foster and preserve the State's language, history, symbols, and constitutional values.

Exactly because of that, this study will present an argument that claims the ultimate act of disloyalty of a citizen towards his or her State is the decision to leave it.

In the second chapter following this one, the framework will be presented, and elements of each of the Poles will be listed.

In order to establish their relevance, importance, and effects on citizens' political loyalty, research will be conducted citing appropriate scholarly works, followed by personal observations and logically deduced opinions.

This chapter will simultaneously serve as a literature review due to the extensive number of academic terms that will need further clarification in the context of the thesis.

The third chapter will be the first case analysis section. The paper will look at the countries as case studies using a "*zoom-in*" tactic. The goal will be to identify, inter alia, important events, discourse, and opinions of citizens in order to identify and corroborate the existence and relevance of the Framework's elements in countries subject to the research.

As this is expected to be established, the research in Chapter 4 will expect to show that factors from the Negative Pole bear higher significance in the decision of citizens to leave their state, thus decreasing their loyalty more than the factors from the Positive Pole are increasing it.

Lastly, a conclusion and proposal for policy improvement will be given.

Positive Pole and Negative Pole: Overview

Positive Pole

The first cluster of factors, labelled the positive Pole, is hypothesized to be the source of citizens increased political loyalty towards their state.

Expanding on that, elements in the Positive Pole are thought to have a high level of interdependence and thus can cumulatively impact citizens' views of the state.

All of these factors can be classified as elements of *pre-political* or *identity-based patriotism*, as defined by Sardoc (2017). He has distinguished between two versions of patriotism:

First one is "*political*", where pride, loyalty, and emotional attachment are primarily derived from common principles and values. The second one, however, he dubbed "*pre-political*", where the focus is on shared history, culture, and traditions. The geographical area inhabited by other members of the group also plays a significant role.

In other words, the first one is *value-based* patriotism, whereas the second one is *identity-based*. It is precisely the second one from which the factors fostering increased loyalty towards the state will be derived.

This paper will argue that these elements from the Positive Pole act in a way to increase feelings of belonging to the community, foster higher political trust, and give legitimacy to the state.

These factors are *ethnicity, territory, religion, and symbols*.

Negative Pole

In contrast to the Positive Pole, another cluster of factors was identified and dubbed the Negative Pole.

In this paper, this cluster is argued to be working inversely to the Positive Pole, acting to decrease citizens' political loyalty to the state.

In a similar fashion to factors from the Positive Pole, the premise is that elements from the Negative Pole are also tightly related and can have an unfavorable summative effect on citizens' political loyalty towards their state.

These components are defined as those pertaining to citizens' socio-economic and political realities.

They are presumed to play a crucial role in determining the overall well-being and experiences of citizens within a society. Furthermore, these serve as facets that are thought to profoundly influence individuals access to opportunities and resources and can greatly impact their daily lives.

The argument posed in this part of the thesis is as following: it is presumed that when the impact of these aspects is high, it generally has a negative impact on citizens' daily lives and thus is damaging to the level of their political trust.

The variables in question are *political corruption, low socio-economic status, and poor quality of public services*.

Political Loyalty

Now that we have presented the elements that are going to be analyzed, it is important to define the spectrum through which they will be observed; hence, it is of crucial relevance to define political loyalty carefully. Loyalty in itself is a form of behavior pursued by one actor towards another, dubbed persistent partiality. It is almost always motivated by a specific attitude, which is in fact an affective attachment. In turn, affective attachments are driven primarily by a shared sense of social identity and belonging to the group, as well as the interaction between the subject and object of loyalty. (Poulsen, 2020)

The second part of the definition will be especially important for the Framework presented in this thesis; however, more on that will be discussed below.

In an attempt to define the term "*Political Loyalty*", it is safe to conclude that it is not an easy one to delineate. Indeed, a multitude of different definitions have been offered in the field of political science.

In the classical European conception of a state, it appears to be inextricably tied to and used along with concepts such as obligation, legitimacy, and identity.

Furthermore, the concept is undeniably underlined by the bilateral and reciprocal relationship between the State and its citizens. (Waller & Linklater, 2003)

This reciprocity is observed in the role of the State as a defense and protection mechanism, and in turn, the citizens should be loyal and obedient and aim to ensure the continuity of the state.

In Waller's and Linklater's book it was further highlighted how loyalty is important for institutions, but institutions are also important for the presence or absence of loyalty. This aligns well with the second part of the initial loyalty definition above, which highlights the importance of interaction between citizens and the State.

For Delanty (2003), the tenants of political loyalty are "*legitimacy, trust, and community*"

The three identified aspects will serve as guideposts and benchmarks for analyzing the effects of elements from both poles. Due to the significant interdependencies between these factors, it is essential to consider them holistically. This will imply that we will not always be able to examine these factors independently but must consider how they interact and influence one another in order to comprehend their effects.

With all the definitions and views outlined above, the paper will thus present the Theory Framework as follows:

1. Elements from the Positive Pole foster increased citizens' loyalty towards the State stemming from shared group identity. The elements that will be looked at are shared *ethnicity, territory, religion, and symbols*.
2. Conversely, elements from the Negative Pole tend to decrease citizens' loyalty to the State as they undermine the State's legitimacy and public trust. These are *public corruption, low socio-economic status & poor quality of public services*.

This will simultaneously be our first hypothesis which will be analyzed through an extensive literature review.

Defining the Tenants of Political Loyalty

As noted above, the benchmarks through which political loyalty will be viewed in the context of this research are *political community, political legitimacy, and political trust*.

When expanding the research on elements of poles, these tenants will serve as a guiding criterion while exploring academic literature in order to substantiate the argument that elements of our poles increase or decrease political loyalty. Although there is no escaping the fact that they must be looked at holistically, given their interconnected nature, an attempt will nevertheless be made to first define them and then also delineate them in order to use them more precisely when analyzing the elements from the poles.

Political Community

The majority of present-day conceptions of a political community are derived from the ancient Hellenic understanding of a political community that saw it as a group of equal citizens ruled collectively. Even between members of this group who have never met, a high level of solidarity is expected and observed. This has shown to be able to motivate them to make countless acts of sacrifice for their political community, most notably the act of going to war to defend it. Indeed, certain academics have argued that conflict is necessary for the ethical health of the political community. (Linklater, 1998).

But for the purposes of our research, the view of political community as defined by Bodin (1976) is of the utmost importance. He saw the political community as a group that attributes much of its survival to the fact that the social bond between citizens and the state does not extend to political foreigners. In reality, it is precisely because of this exclusivity that the political community is so powerful. And in history, this exclusivity was forged in the aftermath of countless wars fought or in the unifying struggles of obtaining national independence. This definition will be kept in mind when looking at the elements from the Positive Pole and how they increase levels of attachment to the political community and, by extension, to the state.

Political Legitimacy

In his attempt to define political legitimacy, Gilley (2006) argues that *"a state is more legitimate the more that it is treated by its citizens as rightfully holding and exercising political power."* This definition is very valuable for the research, as it views all citizens as key players in how they shape legitimacy. It promulgates that the assessment of legitimacy depends on a variety of citizen *"responses"*, both attitudinal and behavioral, as opposed to proclamations by monarchs or assessments by external observers.

As judged by Avery (1988), legitimacy must be distinguished and separated from power. And finally, it looks at the state not only through its institutions and processes but also as a bearer of norms and ideas, or, as stated in the introductory parts, as a national-cultural framework.

Political Trust

Political trust is defined as the confidence that citizens have in their state-wide political institutions and actors. (Berg & Hjerm, 2010). It is crucial for efficient policy-making and also for citizens' compliance with said policies, as well as fostering ethically and morally sound behavior. (Scholz & Lubell, 1998)

Norris (2011) defines the institutions of the state as a specific set of objects towards which trust is projected. Alongside the institutions (parliament and government), he also includes the procedures for actions conducted by these actors. An important aspect of this characterization of political trust is that, at least for the moment, it excludes more abstract aspects such as the previously mentioned notion of community and other democratic principles that might be prone to higher volatility when attempting to measure political trust. (van der Meer, 2017).

For the purpose of this research, political trust will be viewed through this definition as it can be meaningfully applied in our Framework, particularly elements from the Negative Pole such as political corruption and poor quality of public services.

Hypotheses and Methodology

As stated above, the first task of this research is to validate and demonstrate the significance of the factors outlined in the framework, i.e., to prove the hypothesis that the components listed under the Positive Pole are indeed acting to increase political loyalty, whereas the ones under the Negative Pole would act in the opposite way. This analysis will be conducted through a comprehensive examination of existing literature and the use of qualitative analysis methods.

If this hypothesis is to be validated, the logical standpoint from which it will proceed is to argue that citizens living in the countries subject to this research are living in the tension between the poles.

The second part of the research will assess the following hypothesis: Elements from both the Positive and the Negative pole will be found present in countries subjected to the research. Moreover, they are expected to be very visible and have high severity (especially applicable to the Negative Pole factors).

The principal resource to showcase elements from the Positive Pole will be a book titled "*Strategies of Symbolic Nation-Building in South Eastern Europe*", authored and edited by Pal Kolsto. It is expected that tactics used for nation-building are great examples of how political loyalty can be harnessed, sometimes naturally and sometimes artificially. Moreover, the book contains a survey with a substantial amount of data on identity and other questions. This will also be used to illustrate the existence and importance of Positive Pole elements.

Demonstrating Negative Pole factors is expected to be somewhat easier since they are mostly straight-forward

numbers and analyses of various international organisations.

Provided that the above is also confirmed, the central question can emerge as follows: In what ways does the tension between the Positive and Negative poles and their conflating impacts on political loyalty affect the decision-making of citizens in our countries?

Albeit this question can be answered in many different ways, for the purpose of research and providing a meaningful answer given the constraints of time and resources, it will focus on the question of emigration.

Therefore, the answer expected to be substantiated is simultaneously the final hypothesis: The Negative Pole has a greater influence on citizens' choices to emigrate from their respective states.

This statement will be tested by analysing the data on emigration from the states under study over the past 30 years. The research will look for any correlation between the factors that make up the Negative Pole and the reasons for emigration. The primary source of validation will be surveys of public opinion on emigration.

Limitations

In this research, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, following limitations are expected to be encountered:

1. Lack of data - One of the limitations that is expected to be encountered when conducting research about the region is the lack of readily available data when assessing some of the topics. There could be multiple reasons for this, such as a lack of government transparency or a lack of infrastructure to collect and disseminate data.

Similarly, there may not have been enough academic interest to tackle some of the topics concerning the countries in question. Lack of funding or political instability might be some of the reasons for this.

In order to surpass this limitation multiple sources of data will be looked at, such as already mentioned journal articles, books and surveys but also interviews, and secondary data sources like newspapers, and other publications. Finally, research will try to collect information from international organisations or other sources that may not be publicly available.

2. Broad scope – Another limitation is that the scope undertaken appears to be too broad. Moreover, the analysis includes four different countries which need to be assessed on the individual basis.

Therefore, the researcher will do his best to conduct a precise research and draw meaningful conclusions on a broad & complex topic, and to properly assess it using the case studies.

3. Conflating the notion of a nation & the notion of the state – This topic will be addressed immediately for purpose of a better research flow.

Generally speaking, nation refers to a group of people who share a common culture, history, language, and identity. A nation is often based on a sense of shared ancestry, traditions, and values. It can be defined by geographic, ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural boundaries. A state, on the other hand, refers to a political

entity with a defined territory, a government, and the authority to make and enforce laws. A state is a legal and political entity that has sovereignty and the power to govern its people. It has a defined territory and recognised borders, and its government represents the will of the people within that territory. With this in mind, it can be posited that factors listed in the Positive Pole can be more readily associated with the concept of nation. Conversely, components outlined in the Negative Pole may be more appropriately linked to the concept of state.

Therefore, a significant limitation of this research is anticipated to be the difficulty of aligning the concepts of nation and state with the theoretical framework outline, or, perhaps more accurately, aligning the notion of the nation with the notion of the state.

There are a couple of steps that will be presented now in order to overcome this limitation: The initial phase of this process involves investigating the idea of a "nation-state".

The concept of the nation-state can be viewed as a political and geographical entity that is made up of a specific group of people who share a common culture, language, and history.

This group of people, or "nation," is governed by a single, unified political entity, or a "state". The idea of the nation-state is that the nation and the state are united and mutually reinforcing; the nation gives the state a sense of national identity, and the state gives the nation a sense of political unity. Expanding on this, the research will look into the process of "nation-building" during the creation of nation-states. This concept refers to the process of creating a sense of national identity and loyalty among the people in a particular territory and linking it to a state.

For the countries of the former Yugoslavia, this process was most intense and important during and immediately after the Yugoslav War. (Taylor & Kent, 2016) Nationalism ideologies, which supported the formation of a nation-state or the unification of a particular nation within a state have played a significant role in this process. Indeed, Asaturov & Martynov (2020) point out that nation-building in the Balkan states is predominantly based on ethnic nationalism as opposed to modern integration into supranational European structures and values. Further, in order to gain the population's acceptance for fighting and enduring wars, government leaders tend to provide public goods and adopt policies to create a sense of national unity. They do this by promoting a homogeneous culture among the population and fostering "positive" national sentiment, emphasising the benefits of the nation. (Alesina et al., 2020)

In view of overcoming the limitation mentioned, this paper will argue that this is exactly what was happening in the aftermath of the Yugoslav War. In this sense, the state can be seen as representing the nation, and the nation can be seen as represented by the state. The boundaries of the state and the nation are often co-terminous, meaning that the state is made up of the people of that nation and represents them.

It is expected that more data will be found to solidify the claim of nation and the state being interchangeable in the context of this research.

Defining the scope

As visible from the Framework and the literature review presented above, the subject of the relationship between citizens and the state can be overwhelming and difficult to tackle.

Hence, narrowing the scope of this research project is crucial in order to design a plan and also implement it effectively.

Some fragmentation was already conducted above in terms of defining different elements from a literature review, which will be looked at.

However, further clarification of the scope is required in order to make the research clearer and increase the chances of obtaining meaningful conclusions.

Countries subject to the research

Some of these similarities are the fact that they were all involved in the Yugoslav War, which had a significant impact on the nation's building from its end onward, have Slavic majority populations and yet a significant number of each other's minorities (especially before and during the said War), share a similar mix of cultural, historical, and linguistic influences, and have similar political systems.

Also, they have economies that are dependent on tourism and agriculture and have international disputes and unresolved issues inherited from the past.

Finally, with the relative recent exception of Croatia, all other countries are in the process of EU accession.

It is expected that these similarities will provide a strong foundation for research, and the discussion for each of the case studies is expected to yield the same or similar conclusions. It is, however, also anticipated that the research will reveal certain differences in the perceptions of the mixed history, religion, Yugoslav Wars, contemporary events among these countries, and more, which in turn will add value to this thesis.

Countries excluded from the research

This analysis excludes two countries of the former Yugoslavia: Slovenia and Northern Macedonia. The reasons for this omission are explained in the following two sub-chapters:

- Slovenia

Slovenia was the first country to declare independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, and it experienced a relatively peaceful transition to independence.

Unlike other countries included in this research, Slovenia did not experience significant violence or population displacement during the Yugoslav Wars from 1991 to 1995. Moreover, Slovenia had a relatively homogenous population, with more than 90% of the population being ethnically Slovenian.

This ethnic homogeneity played a role in the country's ability to avoid the large-scale ethnic conflicts that affected other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Most of the population shared a common language, culture, and history, which helped to reduce the potential for tension and violence. Similarly, a large percentage of the population in Slovenia adheres to the Roman Catholic religion.

This also contributed to the country's relative stability, as the majority of the population shared a common religious tradition as well.

Finally, Slovenia also had a significant geographical distance from the main aggressor in the war, the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), which was actively taking orders from Belgrade and was predominantly active in areas with large populations of ethnic Serbs.

This distance is thought to have helped to insulate the country from the worst of the violence and destruction that affected other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

Another reason for excluding Slovenia from this research is that they have always had feelings of culturally belonging to the "West", "Central Europe," or simply "Europe," and never the Balkans.

They have objected particularly strongly to the notion of being placed in the Balkans (Bebler, 1998).

This is the case even though two of their closest "Western" neighbours, Austria and Italy, with whom they share history and economic cooperation have been historically adamant to place Slovenians in the Balkan bundle. (Patterson, 2003)

This Slovenian understanding of their identity is perhaps best depicted in the words of Ivan Cankar (2010) in his work "Slovenci in Jugoslovani" ("Slovenians and Yugoslavs") originally published in 1913:

"By blood we are brothers; by language we are cousins at least. But by culture, which is the fruit of many centuries of separated development, we are much more like strangers to one another than one of our peasant farmers from the Carniolan highlands is to a Tyrolean, or one of our vineyard-keepers from Gorica is to his counterpart from Friuli."

Bojinovic Fenko & Svetlicic (2017) also made some successes in advancing the argument that this history of shared Western elements made it easier and more natural for Slovenia to join the EU in 2004.

This is further proved by Slovenia's smooth transition to EU membership, as evidenced by their easy implementation and adoption of EU guidelines.

This fact contrasts greatly with the ongoing difficulties faced by other countries from the former Yugoslavia in their pursuit of EU membership. Even Croatia needed almost one more decade to achieve this goal.

Unlike these other countries, Slovenia's entry into the EU had a minimal impact on the daily lives of its citizens and did not result in any negative consequences.

They experienced no "EU shock" because they implemented all changes prior to joining the EU. (Lavrac & Majcen, 2006)

This information highlights the significant differences between Slovenia and the other countries of the former Yugoslavia included in this research and serves as the justification for excluding Slovenia from the analysis.

- Northern Macedonia

Similar to Slovenia, the Republic of North Macedonia, which was known as the Socialist Republic of Macedonia at the time, was not directly involved in the majority of Yugoslav War conflicts that took place between 1991 and 1995.

The country declared its independence from Yugoslavia in September 1991 and was recognised as a sovereign state by the international community in April 1992.

During the Yugoslav Wars, North Macedonia maintained a policy of neutrality and did not take sides in the conflicts. The country's leadership made a conscious decision to avoid getting dragged into the violence and destruction that were taking place in other parts of the former Yugoslavia.

However, one of the main reasons for excluding Northern Macedonia from this analysis is that it has a distinct set of ethnic issues and challenges. We would have to include whole another set of factors also pertaining one additional ethnic group – Albanians, which are the country's biggest minority.

Perhaps the best example of the uneasy relationship between the Northern Macedonians and Albanians was the conflict arising from the 2001 Albanian insurgency.

While it could be argued that this event is an extension of the Yugoslav War, it is distinct in that it contains a multitude of other factors that warrant separate examination and hence will be excluded from this research along with the whole situation in Northern Macedonia.

The argument that Northern Macedonia, like Slovenia, has a distinct cultural history and connection to the West is not applicable.

Despite having some similarities in this regard with the other countries of the former Yugoslavia that are included in this research, Northern Macedonia is excluded from the analysis primarily due to its unique set of ethnic issues mentioned above.

Additionally, the researcher has chosen to limit the scope of the analysis, which also contributed to the decision to exclude Northern Macedonia.

Time Frame

For this paper, the research will focus on the period from 1991 to the present day.

The reasons for selecting this particular time period can be grouped into two important developments that took place during this time:

1. The formation of modern nation-states in the shape they exist
2. Transition from socialist to democratic state governance Adoption and implementation of these principles with the goal of joining the

If the research were to extend beyond the Yugoslav War and consider a broader historical context, a multitude of additional factors would need to be taken into account.

This would greatly expand the scope of the research and make it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions related to the research question.

Finally, it is important to note that while certain historical events prior to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav War may be mentioned, this will only be done because they are thought to hold significant relevance in the context of the defined time frame.

Chapter 2: Defining the Elements

Positive Pole Elements

Ethnicity:

Ethnicity is inherently complex, as it can be manipulated and modified to serve political agendas and therefore changed in the process.

Not only is it prone to alteration, which leads to significant change throughout history, but it also has a primordial character. Thus, it can at the same time be a given, objective, subjective, or a creation. (Hettne, 1993).

According to Jones (1997), ethnicity refers to the social and psychological traits connected to a culturally formed group identity. In this sense, an ethnic group is any group of people that is differentiated from others by their own or others' perception of cultural differences and who distinguish themselves or are distinguished by others with whom they interact or live together. Phelps & Nadim (2014) go on to expand this definition by including that these groups also shared myths of common origin, descent, and history.

Baumann (2004) argues that one ethnic group should consist of six main features: a common proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with the homeland, and a sense of solidarity within the community. As this paper will be looking separately into these features, such as symbols of the culture and territory, with our Framework in mind, ethnicity will be primarily based on the importance of the other four features: name, ancestry, history, and sense of solidarity.

Finally, it is important to note that differences between notions of ethnicity and nation are to be harmonised for the purpose of this research, as previously mentioned under the *Limitation* section.

In looking at various definitions of the *nation*, Schulman & Bloom (2014) conclude that most interpretations describe a group of people that share a certain set of historical, cultural, or political elements, or a combination of these. In his 1993 essay titled *Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Calhoun (1993) provides a significant amount of justification for why one can't be separated from the other.

I will thus argue that the similarity of interpretations of ethnic and national groups allows for their reconciliation and a higher freedom of using them interchangeably.

This premise would be difficult to sustain in the majority of Africa, India, and other areas that were under colonial rule.

Indeed, Tilly (1985) substantiates this claim exactly by stating that European nations consolidated over years of struggles, whereas the same can't be applied to most of the newly emerging states.

Therefore, I am still committed to asserting that it is applicable in Europe because most ethnic groups are still living in their nation-states, and this will be particularly important when examining our case studies, where nation- and state-building occurred almost exclusively along ethnic lines. (Kolsto, 2014)

When speaking on the loyalty of the ethnic groups towards their respective states, Jankovic (2013) states: "*The issue of loyalty is tightly connected with the sense of belonging, which in turn is essentially an issue of identity.*"

Dahl (1961) postulated that ethnic politics thrive when the ethnic group is put in an environment where they have to compete with other ethnic groups within the larger state. Wolfinger (1965) further argued that this is possible only once the group has developed sufficient human capital to sustain a political leadership. This puts ethnic politics at the forefront when looking at it in conjunction with interactions involving other groups. Indeed, as Kolsto (2014) points out, individuals within a group may perceive their membership in a particular nation as a direct result of their shared experience of hardships and atrocities imposed on them by outsiders.

As the case is that most of the wars, especially since 1945, are ethnic conflicts (Sadowski, 1998), it is justifiable to maintain that having ethnic ties (and especially so in times of war) increases the feeling of belonging to a political community, thus having a positive effect on the overall political loyalty to the corresponding state.

Furthermore, in their research on the importance of the concept of nation, Shulman & Bloom (2014) conclude that one of the most common dictums is that it provides political legitimacy.

Their results on the case study of Ukraine prove this, where they concluded that nationhood always had a positive impact on citizens' loyalty. (Shulman & Bloom, 2014)

In terms of political trust, it can be argued that ethnicity is very important by looking at political representation in more ethnically diverse countries. If the citizens perceive their ethnicity as properly represented, they will tend to view the state in a more favourable light and also trust it more, as showcased by Banducci et. al (1999) in their case study in New Zealand.

The impact of ethnicity on political loyalty can be seen by observing the attitudes of immigrants in European countries, who are mostly of different ethnic backgrounds than the host group.

And as the report from the Council of Europe from shows, immigrants quite often exhibit strong loyalty levels to states other than the one where they currently live. ("*Political and Social Participation of Immigrants Through Consultative Bodies,*" 1999)

In addition to that, ethnicity plays a significant role in voting patterns, as generally acknowledged by the academic community. (Landa et. all., 1995)

Finally, even in countries with a long tradition of multi-culturalism such as the US, which is also often called the "*melting pot*", data suggests there are discrepancies in the political trust among the ethnic groups (which, in the case of the US, also tend to be racial groups).

As Koch (2018) concludes in his work, "*An increasingly multiracial society will experience considerable tensions as minorities distrust government decision-makers of a different race.*"

Territory

Territory refers to a geographical area that is controlled or claimed by a particular group or entity, with different meanings in different contexts, such as political, ecological, or organisational. However, for this paper, territory will be viewed as an important aspect of an ethnic group's identity and sense of belonging. Duffy Toft (2002) claims that for ethnic groups, territory is inevitably tied to their identity. Controlling it secures their survival. It can serve as a physical manifestation of the group's history, culture, and values. For many ethnic groups, their territory holds great historical, cultural, and spiritual significance and is often seen as a sacred place.

It has been shown that for ethnic groups, even worthless or unimportant pieces of territory would pose an indivisible issue, which would result in conflict. (Tir, 2010)

The concept of geographical imagination is one of the fundamental ingredients for understanding a nation. The linkage of nationhood with territories, whether real or only imagined, allows people to form a special connection and affection towards a territory.

Because of this, territory becomes an important factor in defining the group of people living within it. And not only are they defined by it from the outside, but they themselves also begin to identify with the territory from within. (Herb & Kaplan, 1999)

Hence, it can be concluded that territory holds an important position in the promulgation group's collective identity and their feeling of belonging to a specific political community.

For Dzankic (2014) specifically marked territory can also represent ethnically homogenous political spaces that are safe and secure enough to facilitate "proper democratic majority citizenship of the population".

Territory can also be a political tool for ethnic groups, providing them with a sense of autonomy and self-determination. This can be seen in cases where ethnic groups are fighting for independence, self-government, or greater autonomy within a larger nation-state. (Spiliopoulou Akermark, 2013)

Perhaps the most important definition of territory in this context is provided by Goddard (2006), who argues that territory can be and, indeed, most of the time is, used as a tool for generating political legitimacy. However, when political elites are not careful with their strategies, it can lock them into unfavourable negotiation positions where they are unable to recognise the demands of their opponents as legitimate, thus

enabling the territory to become an indivisible issue. In her words, this is a "*deeply political process*". Goddard argued that this is a global occurrence, as was the case with a number of territories such as Kosovo, Jerusalem, Kashmir, and Ulster.

I would further argue that political trust, especially in the case of territory, is even more closely connected to the matter of political legitimacy.

As trust in the state tends to increase in the face of threats such as an armed conflict (Kudrnac & Klusacek, 2022), it is not difficult to see why, once the territory is deemed an indivisible issue, politicians often invoke it not only to increase their legitimacy further but also to present themselves as the only ones able to solve it. In this manner, they aim to garner the citizens' trust for their government structure and potentially other hidden agendas.

Examples are many, ranging from Adolf Hitler's claims on Eastern Europe over Milosevic's Kosovo issue to more recent ones such as Putin's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Religion

Religion is a set of beliefs, practises, and institutions that pertain to the worship of one or more deities, spirits, or other transcendent or supernatural entities. It typically involves a moral code, ritual practises, and a concept of the afterlife. Religion may also be associated with a particular organisation or institution, such as a church or temple. However, religion also plays a significant role in shaping culture, politics, and social norms.

There are various works that point out the link between religion and ethnicity. (Oppong, 2013; Padgett, 1980; Reitz, 1980)

Some ethnic groups, such as the Amish, Hutterites, Jews, and Mormons, are directly linking their identity with their religion. Religion can also be one of the factors influencing and enhancing the feeling of national pride (Sharipova, 2019) as well as a powerful catalyst for nation-building, as seen in Kazakhstan (Shapirova, 2019), Nigeria (Okpe, 2018), Pakistan (Sayeed, 1963), India (Kinnvall & Svensson, 2010), and many others. The significance of religion in augmenting the sense of belonging to one's political community is thus immense.

Religion and its institutions are often key players in enhancing the political legitimacy of a state and its current leaders.

In his extensive research on the role of the Russian Orthodox Church in legitimising the Russian state's policies during the wars in Syria and Ukraine, as well as on other topics, Mackle (2023) demonstrates how this is being accomplished. In this specific case, it was revealed that the ROC does not have any say in the shaping of the policies (as may be the case for some other countries and their respective religious authorities), but rather it simply serves as an incubator and disseminator of ideas whose aim is to legitimise the state's actions amongst the religious populace, who still foster a high level of trust in this institution.

For adherents of Islam in the Middle East but also in Africa, Asia, and Europe, the majority agree that religion ought to have at least a certain degree of influence over political affairs. (Hashemi, 2014)

The power of religion to grant legitimacy to state actors can be observed through a lot of examples, such as the Iranian Revolution in 1979, the Taliban rising in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s, and more recent ones, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. (Hashemi, 2014)

And lastly, its impact on political trust is shown even in more secular countries such as the US, Canada, and Japan. In his study of eight states with over 13,000 responses, Vaugh (2022) finds clear evidence that religious involvement tends to increase political trust.

Symbols

One cannot view symbols without referring to the notion of culture.

Culture, however, is a broad topic that is composed of a group's shared ideas, values, customs, behaviours, and, of course, symbols.

It can be transmitted from one generation to the next as well as influenced and permanently altered by various integral and external factors, such as topography, political systems, contact with other cultures, immigration, technology, etc. Peterson (1979) summarised four different aspects of culture: values, norms, beliefs, and expressive symbols. The fundamental principle of symbolism can thus be viewed as deeply rooted in culture. (Eriksen, 1987) Expressive symbols can be many: flags, escutcheons, statues, streets, and anthems, but they can also be almost anything, depending on the time and place.

Fascinating insight about the power of expressive symbols is offered by Posner (1998) where he noticed how they have very little direct impact on citizens and yet can cause a massive shift in societies.

A person burning an American flag in front of the Capitol will prompt a massive public uproar, legislators' condemnations, and swift judiciary action, and yet he didn't really harm anyone. The importance of symbolism is shown not only as a powerful catalyst for strengthening a sense of community but also as a tool to "whitewash" the nation's history and provide justifications for today's actions. (Elgenius, 2011)

As Kolsto (2014) further argues, the symbols are used as the "*glue*" that holds nations together.

Politics is about unification, integrating many individual voices into a consolidated whole. And in this process, symbolic activity undoubtedly plays a crucial role.

Perhaps its importance can be best presented in the following statement by Walzer (1967):

"In a sense, the union of men can only be symbolised; it has no palpable shape or substance. The state is invisible; it must be personified before it can be seen, symbolised before it can be loved, and imagined before it can be conceived".

In this perspective, symbols are not only used to enhance feelings of belonging to a group; they are also used

to create the group itself. By studying the usage of symbols in order to enhance political legitimacy in West Africa, Hayward & Dumbuya (1983) observed that effective usage of symbols created a remarkable degree of popular support even amidst severe economic and political turmoil. Important to mention is that, albeit they concede it is mostly a manipulative game played by the politicians, they are often also as "taken in" by the power of symbols as are their constituents. The significance of symbols, especially in times of hardship, comes primarily from their ability to provide reassurance to the distressed community.

Not only can symbols effectively be used to increase citizens' trust in the state, but also, as astonishing results from the research by Alon- Barkat (2019) show, people have tendencies to trust less-logical and unpersuasive policies that were presented with symbols as opposed to more soundly presented legislation without symbols. Alon-Barkat tries to explain this by saying that symbols distracted the citizens from logically scrutinising the text of the policy presented.

Negative Pole Elements

Public Corruption

There are countless academic works on corruption. These were written not only by political scientists and sociologists but also by psychologists, lawyers, and economists, essentially by thinkers from all spheres of life. Numerous broad definitions of corruption are applied. Perhaps one that most successfully encapsulated them all is that by Transparency International (2017), which delineates it as "*the use of public office for private gain*". Later, it was broadened to encompass corporate and business corruption, articulating it as "*the misuse of entrusted power for personal benefit*." (Albanese & Artello, 2019)

Broadly speaking, the typology of corruption can be divided into public and private according to the space in which it occurs.

Conceptually, they also differ immensely, as when a person or an entity is exploited in the private realm, they can choose a different provider or raise a case with relevant authorities to seek protection.

In the public sphere, however, dealing with the state means that the state has a monopoly on those goods or services. Private corruption affects only some people, whereas public corruption affects everyone. Moreover, controlling private corruption is dependent on not having issues at the public level.

Corruption in the public sphere can thus pose a significant public health risk and countless other consequences. (Albanese & Artello, 2019) Adopting an empirical approach in formulating a public corruption typology, Albanese & Artello (2019) looked at 2419 prosecuted cases over the last 30 years in the US.

They were able to identify eight different types of public corruption: *receipt of a bribe, solicitation of a bribe, extortion, contract fraud, embezzlement, official misconduct, obstruction of justice, and violation of regulatory laws*.

Another important lens through which political corruption can be viewed is "*state capture*". It implies a process in which political actors penetrate and infiltrate the state apparatus via clientelist networks.

As Hellman & Kaufmann (2001) theorise: "*While most types of corruption are directed towards changing how existing laws, rules, or regulations are implemented with respect to the bribe payer, state capture refers to corrupt efforts to influence how those laws, rules, and regulations are formed.*"

Different elements of all these types are expected to be found in the analysis of our case studies. It undermines the rule of law, erodes public trust in government, and can lead to a range of negative consequences for society, including economic stagnation, social injustice, and political instability. It can also create a vicious cycle of corruption, where individuals and organisations that engage in corrupt practices gain an unfair advantage over others, making it harder for honest actors to compete and thrive. (Vittal, 2001)

Chayes (2016) points out how corruption can shake the state to its core and make it fragile and brittle. Multiple scholarly works have shown that social movements and uprisings are potent catalysts for corruption.

(Johnston, 2005; Beyerle, 2014; Chayes, 2018)

Skolnik (2021) has concluded that in different post-communist countries where corruption is high, citizens who perceive politicians as corrupt are more likely to approve public demonstrations.

Indeed, as stated in the module, when people perceive that corruption is pervasive and corrupt actors are not held accountable, they lose faith in leaders, social systems (public institutions), and sometimes in society and ethics as a whole. (*Effects of Corruption*, 2023)

Research by Reisinger et. al. (2016) clearly shows in the case study of Russia that the citizens who encounter corruption more often are less satisfied with the regime and decrease their trust in it.

Further studies have examined the impact of public corruption on institutional or political trust by analysing citizen- or country-level survey data and corruption perception indicators. Anderson & Tverdova (2003) conducted research on sixteen different countries, including various different political cultures and histories, and concluded that citizens in more corrupt states are prone to exhibit much less trust in the said State.

Many more works appear to substantiate this claim (Moreno, 2002; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006).

Low Socio-Economic Status

Socio-economic status, or SES for short, is a term used to describe an individual's or group's position within a society based on their economic and social standing. It is often used as a way to represent a variety of factors about a citizen, such as income, education, occupation, and wealth. (Akhtar, 2012) In general, SES is divided into three categories: high, middle, and low.

There are many studies showing that a low SES is often attributed to citizens feeling less efficacious and thus having a low interest in politics and, conversely, lower political participation as opposed to their counterparts

belonging to the higher echelons of the SES scale (Scott & Acock (1979); Lindquist (1964); Hansen (1978)). Further, it appears to be the case that citizens of lower SES have less political trust as opposed to their better-off peers. (Bornand & Klein, 2022)

Economic inequality plays a huge role in citizens support for democracy and the state's institutions.

Kriekhaus et al. (2014) pointed out that high inequality will lead to a decline in support for democracy and institutions.

With that being said, the factors that will be specifically looked at when speaking about SES are the unemployment rate, income, economic inequality, GDP, and poverty rate.

Poor Quality of Public Services

Public service is defined as the "business of supplying a commodity or service to any or all members of a community" ("Public Service", 2023). Some examples of public service include, but are not limited to, healthcare provisioning, education, law enforcement, and infrastructure. The role of such services in the well-being of everyday citizens is unquestionable.

Therefore, the case being made here is that poor governance of institutions can and does lead to citizens feeling discontented and less loyal to the state.

Indeed, as Ariely (2013) shows, improved institution performance leads to higher public contentment, which spills over into higher government approval ratings. Conversely, a worse performance would lead to public discontentment. That is exactly the idea that served as the foundation for numerous governments over the past few decades in their attempt to restore the failing public's trust (Kampen et. all., 2014)

Literature provides more empirical proofs of the positive correlation between the delivery of public services and trust in political institutions to manage those entities (Kampen et. all., 2014). Finally, an important detail to note is that poor governance overnance is leading to worse economic status (Sharma, 2012) and has a strong link to corruption (Javaid, 2010) confirm the initial premise that the factors grouped in the Negative Pole are all intertwined and affect citizens lives on many levels, thus also the way they feel towards their state.

Concluding Remarks – Chapter 2

Even although it is very broad, the extensive literature review on each of the identified factors show distinct patterns on how they influence citizen's political loyalty, as viewed by having the tenants outlined in mind. Positive Pole elements tend to have a positive influence on feeling of belonging, which can be translated into fostering the political community.

On the other hand, Negative Pole factors, depending on their severity can have a very dangerous implications on political legitimacy and trust, thus also resulting in weakened political loyalty amongst the populace.

Therefore, it can be concluded that our first hypothesis is corroborated and the research can move forward.

Chapter 3: Case Studies

Positive Pole

The main method to validate the hypothesis of the existence of the Positive Pole is by looking at nation-building tactics employed in the countries of the research.

The argument goes that precisely because these factors create such emotional attachment and loyalty towards the state, the political elite was able to use them so effectively to further their objectives during the volatile times of the 1990s, and this still continues further into the 21st century.

An important thing to mention is that a nation will be looked at as an abstract community, as theorised by James (1996). He posits that the nation, or its social life, is being carried out throughout a range of time-space dimensions, encompassing not only in-person contacts but also more disembodied interactions mediated by electronic media. Brubaker (2004) further expands on this, arguing that seeing a nation this way also opens up the possibility that individuals within a community can also attribute themselves to various perceived "groups" within that nation. The nation is effectively viewed as a cognitive category.

To effectively use this approach for the purpose of nation-building, Brubaker argues that it is required to frame facts and events in certain frameworks that maximise the difference from other groups. He calls them "*identity schemas*".

Yet, they are not created *ex et ab nihilo*; they are hinged not only on historical commonality (religion, language, territory) (Smith, 1971; 1979),, but also on aggressive public policies, media activism, and symbols such as flags and heraldry. (Dzankic, 2014)

The argument postulates that it's precisely the political elites' ability to align themselves with the state and direct the masses towards their political aims, harnessing the strength of the factors from the Positive Pole, that allows us to conclude these elements indeed foster positive sentiments towards the state.

The four factors of the positive pole won't be individually dissected in separate paragraphs in the analysis. Given their intertwined nature, a more holistic approach will be adopted, viewing them in the collective context of the country as a whole.

However, within the analysis, the focus will be to try to assess each one of these factors and give it its rightful place in the text.

In conjunction with this, empirical data will be presented in an attempt to justify the connection between Positive Pole factors and the loyalty of the citizens towards the state in different aspects such as overall feeling of loyalty, voting behaviour on referendums, mobilisation for war, etc.

Having established the relevance of the literature and the foundational factors of our Framework, the research will now move to the analysis of case studies.

The main goal of this analysis will be to confirm the second hypothesis, which postulates that all factors from the Framework can be found and identified in the countries subject to this research. Their importance is also expected to be considerable.

They will be presented according to their relevance and prominence in relation to one another. As previously mentioned, a great starting point in all of these case studies will be nation-building strategies starting in the 1990s.

Montenegro

Montenegro's national identity

Montenegro's national identity or ethnic configuration has historically been marked by duality, with a significant portion of the population identifying as either Montenegrin, Serb, or both. This identity duality hinged largely on historical ambiguities and competing narratives, reflecting the complex socio-political landscape of the region.

This duality of ethnic identity in Montenegro, which Darmanovic (1992) calls "*Montenegrin homo duplex*," is a reference to the fact that being Montenegrin and being Serb have not been mutually exclusive for a long time.

This ambiguity has a lot to do with how the country's ruling elites and faith leaders have operated in the past. The elites of Montenegro, and particularly highly influential Church bishops who all adhered to Orthodox Christianity under a Serbian Orthodox Church, referred to citizens of Montenegro as "Serbs".

This has led to two different ideas of who they are, with some people calling themselves Montenegrin and others Serb. This duality has been a big part of Montenegrin identity for hundreds of years and is still an important part of the identity system.

However, exactly this close association of Montenegrin identity with Orthodox Christianity, and thus with a Serb identity, created a conundrum for Djukanovic's political party, the Demokratska Partija Socijalista (DPS), which was seeking to distinguish a separate Montenegrin identity.

Demokratska Partija Socijalista (DPS) & its role in ethnicity and religion of Montenegro

DPS is the continuation of the Communist League of Montenegro, with the party changing its name in June 1991. (*Istorijat*, 2023)

The DPS was originally allied with Slobodan Milosevic's regime in Serbia during the early and mid-1990s, which also included their support for the idea of a common state with Serbia. However, this changed with the DPS's internal split in 1997, where two different factions emerged: one led by Milo Djukanovic and the other by Momir Bulatovic. The Djukanovic faction favoured distancing Montenegro from Milosevic's Serbia and strived towards greater autonomy and later independence for Montenegro, even though he was aligned with Milosevic during the beginning of the Yugoslav War. On the other hand, the Bulatovic faction, which also subsequently became a different political party, "Socijalisticka Narodna Partija," or SNP, favoured closer ties with Serbia, following the ideology of the then-ruling regime of Slobodan Milosevic. (Scekic, 2012)

Milo Djukanovic emerged as the winner and became the President of Montenegro in a tightly contested Presidential race in 1997. The result was less than 5 000 votes in favour of Djukanovic, although Bulatovic continued to claim the election was stolen (Scekic, 2012). Nevertheless, this political split marked a turning point in Montenegro's political scene as the Djukanovic-led DPS embarked on a path towards greater autonomy and eventually independence from Serbia, ultimately leading to the 2006 referendum where Montenegro voted for its independence, but more on that event will be written below.

One of the first steps towards generating positive sentiments towards the Montenegrin state undertaken by DPS in the early 1990s was a systematic effort to reinforce the Montenegrin ethnicity as distinct from Serbian identity, i.e., deconstructing the "*Homo Duplex*". (Dzankic, 2014)

This move was key to fostering a separate sense of national identity, which is intrinsically connected to the creation of an independent state.

Further, in order to attract minority votes and ensure electoral victories, the ruling elites under Djukanovic started to dissociate Montenegrin identity from the Orthodox Christian faith, which during the Yugoslav wars had been associated with hostility towards Islam and Roman Catholicism.

This policy was aimed at broadening the Montenegrin identity to be more inclusive of those adhering to different religions, reducing the previous ascription of the Montenegrin identity to Orthodox Christianity. The aim was to create a more inclusive national identity, detached from the Serb identity, to drive positive emotions and support for an independent Montenegrin state.

The main tactic at the time was the support of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, or CPC, which is still canonically unrecognised, using it as a means to differentiate Montenegro from Serbia religiously.

This move was not merely symbolic; it aimed to reshape religious affiliations as an integral part of the distinct Montenegrin identity. By supporting the CPC, the political elites were signalling that being Montenegrin did not necessarily mean adherence to the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Moreover, the authorities also sought to attract the non-Orthodox population, notably Muslims, who constitute a significant minority in Montenegro. This was seen as a strategy to make the independence movement more inclusive and strengthen its support base.

In summary, religion in Montenegro has been politically harnessed to serve the nation-building project.

Through support for the CPC and efforts to include non-Orthodox groups, the ruling elites have used religion as a tool to construct a distinct Montenegrin identity, underscoring the importance of religious affiliations and beliefs in shaping national identities.

Kubo (2008) argued that the actions of distancing Montenegrin identity from the Serbian Orthodox Church led to the belief that it was more inclusive, whereas Serbian ethnic identity was not, still bearing the burden of the 1990s Yugoslav War aggression.

It could be concluded that this strategy worked long-term, as loyalty scores of religious groups other than Serbian Orthodox are all determined by high loyalty scores towards the Montenegrin state project. (Dzankic, 2014)

Moreover, it seems that this intentional separation of Montenegrin identity and ethnicity from the Serbian Orthodox Church resulted in redefining the definition of what it means to be "Montenegrin".

This could be best explained by looking at three population censuses and two referenda conducted between the early 1990s, at the time of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and mid-2006. In 1991, 62% of people identified as Montenegrins, 9.4% Serbs, and the remaining population was made up of various ethnicities. (Geshakova, 2003)

In the March 1992 Montenegrin independence vote, 95.4 percent of the 66 percent turnout chose to keep Montenegro as part of a joint state with other former Yugoslav republics that also wanted to do so. The aforementioned figures show that in the early 1990s, the majority of the population that fell under the Montenegrin category preferred a joint state with Serbia over independent statehood, a conclusion that can be drawn due to the fact that ethnic minorities abstained from the vote in 1992. (*Izbori - Referendum 1992.*, n.d.)

And yet, in the most recent census conducted in 2011, the percentage of Montenegrins was approx. 45% and that of Serbs was 28%. (*Statistical Office of Montenegro - MONSTAT*, n.d.)

Furthermore, the division of ethnicity also manifested itself in the spheres of politics and loyalty towards the government. As the study by the Political Science Research Centre (CPI) in Zagreb showed, those who identified themselves as ethnically Montenegrin demonstrated a significantly higher loyalty index towards the Montenegrin government's nation-building policies as opposed to those who saw themselves as ethnic Serbs. (Dzankic, 2014)

Never again 1918

In 1918, after the end of World War I, the Serbian army drove the Axis forces away and liberated Montenegro, while simultaneously occupying the Montenegrin state. The controversial Podgorica Assembly (Podgoricka Skupstina) was held, and it voted to unify Montenegro with Serbia, effectively ending Montenegro's status as an independent entity, even though Montenegro belonged to the Antanta forces that won World War I.

The Podgorica Assembly, which consisted of 168 representatives, was convened under the watchful eye of the Serbian army, which had occupied Montenegro at the end of World War I. It is important to note that the circumstances of this meeting were highly contested. The representatives, who were largely unelected and lacked the mandate to decide on Montenegro's statehood, voted in favour of dethroning King Nikola I of Montenegro and unifying the country with Serbia to form what would later become the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. (Vujovic, 1989)

This act was viewed by many Montenegrins as an annexation rather than a union, and the tension culminated with the so-called "Christmas Uprising", on January 7, 1919, in Cetinje.

Forces loyal to King Nikola of Montenegro, under the command of Krsto Zrno Popov, clashed with pro-union loyalists, supported by the army of Serbia, but were ultimately crushed.

Many Montenegrins still view the 1918 unification as an illegitimate act imposed by Serbia. They believe that Montenegro's sovereignty was violated, creating a "historical wound" in the Montenegrin national consciousness. This sentiment has been used by politicians in modern Montenegro, particularly those advocating for Montenegrin sovereignty and independence.

Indeed, in contemporary Montenegrin political discourse and culture, the phrase "*nikad vise 1918*" (never again 1918) is quite frequently invoked. This slogan serves as a reminder of the historical injustice when Montenegro's sovereignty was ruthlessly dissolved and the country was unified with Serbia. The phrase shows the determination of a significant segment of Montenegrins to preserve their ethnic identity and independence. The slogan is however also often used by politicians and public figures who advocate for Montenegro's sovereignty and independence, serving as a rallying cry to mobilize support among those who share a sense of historical injustice about the 1918 unification. Furthermore, "*nikad vise 1918*" has also Montenegrin culture, appearing in various forms of expression, such as literature, music, and public commemorations.

One of the examples of such an event was the March of Komite ("Komitski Mars") in 2019, which marked the one hundredth anniversary of the Podgorica Assembly. The ethnic tensions were running high as the marchers were chanting various pro-Montenegrin slogans while waving Montenegrin statehood red and Komite green flags. (CDM, 2019)

This can also be observed as an instance in which a territorial aspect has morphed into a symbolic element.

Expanding further on a symbolic level, measures like establishing or reintroducing the specific red Montenegrin flag, a new anthem in 2004, and a new national holiday helped further enhance the "newly" established identity (Vlada Crne Gore, 2020). In 2007, the new Montenegrin Constitution declared Montenegrin as the official language, and in 2009, two new letters were incorporated into the alphabet (Radio Slobodna Evropa, 2017). This was widely seen as an attempt to create artificial distinctions in Serbian grammar. (DW, 2019)

The ultimate test of loyalty for Montenegrin citizens came in the form of the independence referendum held on May 21st, 2006. The vote decided whether Montenegro would dissolve its state union with Serbia and become an independent nation.

The distribution of votes clearly reflected the country's regional and, more importantly, ethnic divisions. Regions bordering Serbia and BiH, where many ethnic Serbs reside, predominantly voted against independence, with rejection rates around 60% to 70%. The case was the same with the Serb-majority municipality of Herceg Novi in the coastal area. In contrast, regions which have historically identified as Montenegrin, favoured independence with a moderate majority, usually ranging from 50% to 60%. Cetinje, the traditional centre of Montenegro and the old royal capital, strongly supported independence, with an impressive 86.38% vote in favour.

Moreover, municipalities in the south with minority Serb population voted mostly for independence. The coastal southern Ulcinj municipality, an ethnic Albanian majority town, showed strong support for independence, with more than 80% votes in in favour.

Similarly, regions bordering Albania and Kosovo, populated primarily by minorities other than Serbs (Bosniaks & Albanians), were overwhelmingly pro-independences, especially in Plav and Rozaje.

The independence bloc ultimately won, in combination with votes from ethnic Montenegrins and due to strong support from Albanian and Bosniak minorities. (CEMI,2006)

As presented above, elements from the Positive Pole were not only present in Montenegro but were effectively used to generate political loyalty towards the political establishment that identified itself with the State.

Serbia

Unlike in the case of Montenegro, at the beginning of the 1990s and the start of Yugoslavia's dissolution, the Serbians were entering this period with a national identity already formed and rooted deep in the collective conscience. Scholars generally agree that Serbian identity was developed in the 19th century, with three factors serving as pillars for its creation and subsequent longevity. This longevity persisted despite the difficult times of conflict, being conquered, or being part of larger states such as the Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. (Trbovich, 2008)

These were the Serbian Orthodox Church, Kosovo symbolism, and the Serbian language. (Trbovich, 2008) Mylonas (2003) further calls Orthodoxy the "sacralization of the Serbian identity".

Apart from religion, the Serbian identity has been intricately woven through the centuries by the thread of epic poetry, becoming an enduring fabric of the nation's collective consciousness.

These verses from various works were infused with tales of heroism and valour, which served to magnify the glory of the Serbian mediaeval kingdom and entrench ethnocentrism within the psyche of the Serbian people. This epic poetry served as a collective rallying cry, a conduit that carried the echoes of the past into the present, shaping the narratives of national identity. Each tale spun around historical events, figures, and significant dates was not merely a recounting of the past but a strategic revival aimed at intensifying nationalistic feelings. (Colovic, 2007)

The figureheads of these narratives often hailed from celebrated dynasties from the past, such as the Nemanjics, each meticulously portrayed in a favourable light.

Their heroic deeds, immortalised in verse, served as a source of national pride and reinforced the grandeur of Serbian heritage, allowing political elites to utilise them and persuade Serbians to participate in the re-creation of these glorious kingdoms. (Popovic, 1998)

This profound ethnocentric thinking, continuously fostered over centuries, found its modern political manifestation in Ilija Garaanin's "Nacertanije", written in 1844 and published for the public in 1906.

As pointed out by Hehn (1975), this was the blueprint for a Greater Serbia and the origin of the modern Pan-Serbians. Furthermore, "Naertanije" served as a pivotal point in Serbian political thought, marking the culmination of historical narratives and ideals born out of the nation's rich cultural heritage.

The potency of this work survived the Communist era and was the one to inspire Milosevic's policies in the 1990s. As Perovic (2012), previously highly influential political figure in Montenegro, claims, "Nacertanije" was the document Milosevic admired and used as guidance in his political activism.

The Serbian political elite didn't have to emphasise their identity to create it, as it already existed deep in the collective memory of Serbians.

Hence, I would argue that, while in Montenegro nation-building policies were focused inward and aimed to reshape the very core of the identity of Montenegrins, Serbian politics were looking to utilise factors from the Positive Pole in order to further their agenda outward. Another difference is that while in Montenegro the political goal was clearly to separate the Montenegrin identity and strive for a separate state (as also in Croatia), Serbian political elites never really successfully formulated their goal for the final form of the state. (Jovanovic, 2014)

The central figure in Serbian and indeed Yugoslav politics and events of the 1990s around whom this analysis will revolve is Slobodan Milosevic, a powerful politician who was directly or indirectly in charge of Serbian politics until his downfall on October 5, 2000.

Slobodan Milosevic

Following the death of Tito in 1980, the transition mechanism in Yugoslavia appeared to have worked smoothly, but a cocktail of problems was brewing under the surface.

Communism was increasingly perceived by the public and the elites as a failure; the socio-economic standard was spiralling down, and rations were imposed for the first time since 1950 for gas and other commodities. The conflicts in Yugoslavian political spheres that followed were primarily those between Slobodan Milosevic and Ivan Stambolic, his former friend, political patron, and longtime Communist Party comrade. After Milosevic's appointment as the head of the Serbian branch of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in 1986, arguably one of the most influential positions at that time, Sell (2002) argues that his appetite for power grew. He was looking not only to solidify his position of power in Serbia but also towards the outside, which he later admitted himself to in one of his rallies in Belgrade in 1988. (Sell, 2002)

On September 3, 1987, Aziz Kelmendi, a conscript of the Yugoslav National Army of Kosovo-Albanian descent, killed four soldiers in the barracks in Paracin in an event later named the "Paracin Massacre".

Even though only one of the four soldiers killed was Serbian, Belgrade's media, controlled by Milosevic, used the chance to further his narrative of the Serbian plight at the hands of Kosovo Albanians.

In a series of political actions that came to be known as the "eight sessions" in the following years of 1988–89, Milosevic was able to oust not only Ivan Stambolic but also all representatives of the autonomous regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo, effectively granting him total control of the Serbian state apparatus.

By the beginning of 1989, the process of Milosevic's ascension was complete, with him being the most notable personality in a country still ruled by "grey bureaucrats".

Out of eight, he controlled three federal units.

The mission was clear: take over the whole of Yugoslavia, and his first target was to crush the Kosovo leadership and obtain control over it.

As Sell (2002) points out: *"The Kosovo issue, with its central place in the Serb national psyche and powerful images of a beleaguered peasantry under assault by ancient enemies, was made for a demagogue, and Serbia was about to get one."*

In the discussion that follows, I make the claim that Milosevic was able to utilise the factors from the Positive Pole to invoke feelings of loyalty, pride, and emotional attachment to the state.

This deception played a key role in his rise to power and the start of the subsequent conflict that led to thousands of deaths and an even greater number of refugees, thus providing evidence for my hypothesis of the existence and importance of the Positive Pole factors.

The Power of Ethnic Pride and the "Usable Past"

As Silber (1996) points out, there were only a few in Serbia who realised that the beginning of the 1990s saw Serbia sliding into a disaster. Instead, they were preoccupied with the nationalist euphoria that was emanating from the state television under the control of Milosevic. Following the Garashanin *"Nachertanye"*, Milosevic was aiming to create a Greater Serbia, all under the pretext of ethnic and religious danger, which the Serbs living in other republics were threatened by.

Jovanovic (2014) coins the term *"usable past,"* which refers to the strategic and selective usage of historical narratives and events by political leaders or movements to validate current policies, ideologies, or action. This included reinvigorating the memory of past injustices, the romanticization of historical figures, and the evocation of territorial claims.

The definitive point in Milosevic's politics was his fiery speech at Gazimestan on June 28, 1989, which marked 600 years of the Kosovo battle in 1389 and is widely perceived in Serbian national consciousness as the ultimate act of bravery of Serbian forces in face of the Ottoman conquerors.

Even though the outcome of the battle was indecisive, the Ottomans were able to conquer Serbia in the years that followed. Nevertheless, oral traditions and remembrance of this battle served as a potent catalyst for the revival of Serbian nationalism and pride under Milosevic. (Spahic, 2023; Vucetic, 2021)

Albeit his speech did contain some messages calling for unity and solidarity, his most controversial part of the speech clearly alluded to the subsequent war:

"Six centuries later, now, we are again engaged in battles and are facing battles. They are not armed battles, although such things cannot be excluded yet. However, regardless of what kind of battles they are, they cannot

be won without resolve, bravery, and sacrifice—without the noble qualities that were present here in the field of Kosovo in the days past."

With this speech, Milosevic was able to tap into a narrative of Serbian victimhood and resistance. The atmosphere that was created during the speech was electric, with the crowd triumphantly chanting "Kosovo is Serbia" and singing praises to Milosevic, dubbing him as a "little Lazar", in connection to Tsar Lazar, who was the leader of Serbians during the battle. (Sell, 2002)

However, Milosevic was not operating alone. Jovanovic (2014) points out the immense role played by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Science (SANU) and the mass media (especially the longest-standing newspaper "Politika", which was also believed to be the most reliable) (Vucetic, 2021).

In the years prior to the outbreak of war in 1991, SANU launched a "cultural offensive", with the aim of having culture serve as a preparatory phase for war and a subsequent fallback position.

Nationalist poet Matija Beckovic stated that in Kosovo *"there is so much Serbian blood and Serbian holy objects that it will remain Serbian even when there are no Serbs left there"*. (Jovanovic, 2014) Apart from SANU and the media, the rise of the so-called "Kosovo Questions" was also not possible without the ardent support of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which played its part in evoking the ever-present ethnocentric tendencies of the Serbs. (Vucetic, 2021)

In 1989, the myth of Kosovo was successfully revived, and as Vucetic (2021) states, it was *"a skillfully implemented propaganda campaign with the aim of mobilising the masses for future wars"*.

One could argue that this campaign of galvanising the Serbians was extremely successful, not only in the short term but also in leaving deep and lasting consequences on the collective Serbian conscience.

A survey conducted in the late 1990s on Belgrade students, though they were the group with the most liberal tendencies, still showed that Kosovo was "sacrosanct" for them. (Nedeljkovic, 2006) This persisted further, as a survey a decade later, in 2011, showed that an astonishing 75.6% of Serbs still saw Kosovo as something sacred to them, whatever that might mean (Jovanovic, 2014).

Concentration Camp Jasenovac

As the war began and focus shifted to Bosnia and Croatia, the Kosovo theme lost its usefulness, and the new *"usable past"* was crimes committed against Serbians at the hands of *"ustase"*, Croatian paramilitary units collaborating with the Nazis during World War II. The most notable example of invoking this past was the concentration camp Jasenovac, where *"ustase"* are thought to have killed a significant number of Serbs and other minorities in Croatia. Indeed, the numbers of victims are manipulated continuously by both Serbian and Croatian politicians and academics to further their agendas at that time. While the latest number of victims published by the Jasenovac Memorial Site lists around 83 000 people (with around 47 000 of those being

Serbs) (JUSP-Jasenovac, 2023), this number ranges up to 700 000 people and even 1 million, which was highly contested and accused of being used for nationalistic propaganda. (Odak & Bencic, 2016)

According to the IPSOS Survey in 2011, years of media propaganda resulted in 41% of the respondents in Serbia still believing that at least 500 000 people perished in Jasenovac. (Jovanovic, 2014)

Jovanovic (2014) further demonstrated clearly how this selective reading of history, focused primarily on previous conflicts, helped push the narrative during the wars in Yugoslavia, with the aim of their solidification in the collective memory. Serbs were shown as constant victims and under a direct threat of annihilation, a premise that echoed strongly in the Serb community in Croatia, which still remembered the crimes of Ustasa.

"By proving their own victimisation at the hands of Croatian enemies, Serbs portrayed their machinations in Croatia as self-defensive, preventing a "repeated genocide" of Serbs." (MacDonald, 2003)

Finally, Odak & Bencic (2016) conclude that this past of World War II in fact became a new present in the conflicts of the 1990s, used as a powerful symbol to galvanise masses for and advance the pro-war policy.

As the fighting in Croatia and Bosnia concluded or was coming to an end, the focus of the *"usable past"* shifted back to Kosovo. When Serbia *de facto* lost control of the province in 1999, the revived Kosovo myth served again to shift attention from the outcome of the war, which was by no means favourable for Serbia, and push the agenda of Serbian victimhood in front. (Jovanovic, 2014)

Nationalistic Symbols & Culture

Milosevic seems to have understood the power of the national insignia. He held an extravagant presidential inauguration in 1997 and decided to conduct his presidential tasks from Beli Dvor palace, the previous residence of the Karadjordjevic dynasty. Although it is used by many other nations, the Cyrillic alphabet was also utilised by the Serbian nationalistic core in the 1990s and onwards in their attempt to elevate it as uniquely Serbian and as an emblem of "Serbness". Even within the linguistic realm, we can observe the above-mentioned perpetual attempts to present Serbs as victims, under constant attack by their adversaries. In the past, those were the Ottomans, and more recently, it is Western culture and influence. (Mladenov Jovanovic, 2010)

A closely related theme to the idea of constantly being either attacked or under a constant threat is that of the uniqueness of the Serbian nation and its representation of continuity.

This was nurtured by focusing on the strong mediaeval Serbian state, conveniently omitting the Ottoman times, and then perceiving Serbia as a logical successor of Yugoslavia in all its forms.

A notable part here was played by museums that supported this idea: the National Museum of Serbia and the Museum of Yugoslav History have been set up in a way to formulate and enhance this continuity (Jovanovic,

2014).

In 2006, when Montenegro voted to leave the federation with Serbia, the song "God Of Justice" (Boze Pravde) became the official anthem of Yugoslavia.

As Kelen & Pavkovic (2010) correctly point out, this anthem is prayer-like and, similar to all other narratives and symbols undertaken by the Serbian elite from the 1990s onwards, is closely connected to Serbian national identity, has a "self-congratulatory" aspect to it, and fosters the narrative of being attacked and surviving.

Along with the very popular Serbian tri-colour flag with monarchist insignia, another symbol that was created and brought to mass use is the three-finger salute.

In Serbian Orthodoxy, it represents the Holy Trinity, albeit it was popularised in the public sphere by Milosevic's opposition, Vuk Draskovic, who later said that his idea was to have this salute represent Serbian ethnic idols, Saint Sava, Njegos, and Karadjordje. (Danas, 2009)

The tri-colour flag and three-finger salute have been seen at practically every major political, sporting, or cultural event in Serbia since its revival in the 1990s.

As Dutceac Segesten (2011) concludes, the *salute remains a distinctive sign for the ethnic Serb and a symbol for belonging to the Serbian nation.*

As it is safe to conclude that these symbols foster a sense of community and positive emotions towards the state, one can't overlook the religious aspects of all of them.

Indeed, the Serbian Orthodox Church could also be seen as the national church and guardian of the national tradition. Its role as a steward of significant historic symbols, such as the use of churches and cemeteries for glorifying the dead and the living, provides direct links to national identity.

It could even be referred to as the curator of liminal symbols. (Kaser & Halpern, 2000). As such, its role in Serbians' perception of their state cannot be overstated.

Observing the numerous instances of nation-building processes in Serbia during the 1990s and beyond, it can be seen how the strategic employment of these historical, geographical, religious, and cultural elements by the ruling elites effectively manipulated the populace.

The goal and the result were to increase their political legitimacy and trust while simultaneously emphasising the elements that fostered sentiments of attachment to the group, all of which translated into political loyalty.

Croatia

Croatian War of Independence

What many in Serbia and internationally call the Yugoslav Civil War in Croatia is almost exclusively called the Croatian War of Independence or Homeland War. This war became a symbol of Serbian aggression, and it obtained the discursive element of saving a nation from annihilation.

It didn't take long for the Croatian political elite, most notably Franjo Tudjman, to exploit these elements and build their careers on the argument that the Croatian people's thousand-year-old dream was indeed to achieve their independent nation-state, which was always slipping through their fingers. (Pavlakovic, 2014)

Historical Narrative

To a certain extent similar to Serbians, Croatian politicians aim was to further the argument of the longevity and continuity of a Croatian nation-state, even though it was annexed by other states for most of its existence.

Certain events, such as the signing of the Pacta Conventa in 1102 or the union with the Habsburgs in 1527, were used to justify this. Further, the institutional continuity claim was supported by citing the titles of Ban (viceroy) and Sabor (parliament).

The historical narrative part of nation-building that has its roots in ethnicity was two-fold: one was to dive deep into the past and create a story of the almost mythical reemergence of a Croatian nation, and the other (tightly connected to the first one) was to delegitimize any form of Yugoslavia.

Prime examples of this are the stories of the highly questionable arrival of the Croats on the Adriatic coast, as well as the emergence of their Regnum Croatorum (mediaeval kingdom of Croats), which are relevant in today's Croatian society as well documented and verifiable events. (Pavlakovic, 2014)

A key political player in this process of symbolising nation-building and harnessing the support of Croats through emotional and historical narratives was indeed Franjo Tudjman and his political party HDZ. The first important symbolic move was restoring the pedestal of the statue of King Tomislav, positioned conspicuously in front of Zagreb's main railway station.

Following that, numerous streets and squares were renamed—their socialist-era names were removed and reassigned to Croatian nobles and ancient kings.

Another notable event of this sort was the restoration of the statue of Ban Josip Jelacic. Similar to the previously mentioned Gazimestan Speech by Milosevic, this occurrence was followed by a wave of nationalistic euphoria on the eve of the Yugoslav War. The pinnacle of these efforts could be seen in the restoration of an old fortress, Medvedgrad, above Zagreb. Tudjman has also instructed to have the Altar of the Homeland built within the fortress walls and proclaimed that Medvedgrad was supposed to be a "royal city",

even though evidence suggesting that this place ever functioned as a royal residence was severely lacking (Pavlakovic, 2014). Nevertheless, during the 1990s, all-important holidays and memory days were celebrated at this Altar, thus proving Tudjman's understanding of the importance of unity symbols.

Catholic Church

The role of the Catholic Church and religion in the Croatian nation-building process cannot be overstated. As Pavlakovic (2014) points out, it was serving as an important metric to distinguish Croats and Serbians (and other Yugoslav ethnicities), but more than that was possible through the similar language.

It played a key role in the purported *martyrdom* myth. Similar to Serbian political discourse through the centuries and in the 1990s, the Croatian Catholic Church was aiming to put forward and emphasise the self-sacrifice of martyrs who fell for the glory of Croatia, even though some of these events occurred long before the concept of a Croatian nation-state.

Indeed, as Kolsto (2014) argues - individuals within a group may perceive their membership in a particular nation as a direct result of their shared experience of hardships and atrocities imposed on them by outsiders. Moreover, by assigning the Church to a Croatian ethnicity and indeed the state, the Church served as a living institution and therefore a proof of Croatia's continued existence and statehood.

Its constant opposition to Communism was further utilised to back up the longevity claim.

Short-lived territory claims

Unlike Serbia's ambitions during the 1990s War, Croatia's territorial ambitions were primarily concentrated on self-preservation and defence.

Instead of attempting to expand its frontiers, Croatia was more concerned with defending its current territories. This pattern was broken when some Croatians raised the topic of annexing Herceg-Bosna, a region in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a significant Croatian population. Nonetheless, this effort was brief and did not define Croatia's overall strategic position during the conflict.(Pavlakovic, 2014)

Symbols

Nation-building discourses in textbooks being served to the youth in Croatia have become ethnonationalized and full of political rhetoric. Yugoslavia was detested, while the Yugoslav idea has been almost completely removed from the textbooks and replaced with the idea of a Croatian state.

Tudjman, like Milosevic in Serbia, understood the importance of this.

As Pavlakovic(2014) emphasizes, these symbols have played a key role in Croatian political identity, especially because they were prohibited for many decades under Tito's Yugoslavia.

The most important of these symbols was "*sahovnica*", a historical Croatian heraldic symbol that resembles a chess board. Under the HDZ government, it was revived as one of the most dominant national symbols.

The use of the once controversial "sahovnica", due to its association with "Ustase" regiments, has indeed proven to be a smart decision in galvanising the Croats during the 1990s.

Indeed, formerly contentious, this symbol now holds a central position on the Croatian flag, which is disliked by merely 4% of IPSOS survey respondents.

In more recent times, the strength of the then-anti-Yugoslavia narrative (which also incorporated an anti-Serbia stance) in unifying Croats and building a national identity is evident in the backlash that ensued when the Croatian government tried to implement the Law on Minorities in Vukovar in 2013. (Pavlakovic,2014) This law required municipalities with a Serb population of over 30% to also employ the Cyrillic script on official signs. The proposed change triggered vehement reactions. Protests ensued, which numbered some 20 000 people, as Cyrillic script was viewed as a symbol of Serbian aggression and was not to be present in modern-day Croatia.

In regards to focusing on Croatian long nationhood and severing ties with Yugoslavia (2 goals), Croatian Constitution Article 141 explicitly forbids Croatia from entering into any kind of association that would end in the renewal of Yugoslavia.

This departure from Yugoslavia was caused by the victimisation of Croats during the 1990s and, to a lesser extent, during WW2.

Indeed, perhaps a phrase that shows how Croats saw Yugoslavia is frequently invoked "*Tamnica Hrvatskog Naroda*" which stands for the "*Jail cell of Croatian People*". (Goldstein, 2006)

Albeit a different scenario than in Serbia, especially due to the fact that Croatia wasn't the aggressor in the war, certain similarities can be seen: the usage of common ethnic narrative, symbols, and religion have all contributed to increasing trust in the Croatian state in the turbulent 1990s.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

Bosnia & Herzegovina, often-times called Yugoslavia "*en miniature*," is the home of three national groups: Bosnians (Bosniaks), Serbs, and Croats.

Before the war in the 1990s, no one of them was in an absolute majority position. (Devic, 2014)

According to the latest population census in 2013, there were approx. 50% Bosnians, 30% Serbs, and 15% Croats, with the remaining 5% consisting mostly of undeclared or other nationalities. (*Popis 2013 BiH*, n.d.)

This makes Bosnia and Herzegovina an extremely important piece of this research, as alongside the tactics used for nation-building, we will also be able to see how factors from the Positive Pole affect minorities and their loyalty to the Bosnian state.

As Sokol (2014) points out, during and after the Yugoslav War in Bosnia, there were three separate nation-building processes, one for the state and the other two for the "Outside Motherlands": Serbia and Croatia.

Following the end of the War and the Dayton Agreements, BiH was separated into the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska. These territories, in which before the War nations intermingled with not a single one having an absolute majority, have now been ethnically cleansed, with Bosnians situated in the Eastern part of the Federation, Croats in southern areas bordering Dalmatian hinterlands, and Serbs in Republika Srpska.

The Bosnian nation-building process holds almost all the elements and tactics seen in previous cases.

Some differences are, however, still noticeable. In contrast to the ancient Serbian ethnonational myths, which provided a multitude of symbols and narratives to be used as claims of legitimacy, most of the narratives and symbols for Bosniaks were formed primarily during the 1990s.

A notable role was played by Mustafa Imamovic and Enver Imamovic in depicting Bosnian Muslims as the country's earliest indigenous inhabitants.

Part of this strategy was the introduction of the golden lily, or fleur-de-lis, which is associated with the endemic "*lilium bosniacum*" flower, found only in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In an attempt to establish ethnic and religious distinction among Bosniaks as well as strengthen the claim of historical continuity, focus was briefly put on the aberrant Bosnian Church from mediaeval times, which was Christian in its nature but seen as heretical by both Catholicism and Orthodoxy, but this provided little success at the time. (Sokol, 2014)

Much more progress was seen with the revival of Islam among Bosniaks, which was heavily suppressed during the Communist era.

Indeed, as Mulaosmanovic (2022) puts it, Islam became one of the pillars of the "new Bosniakhood". The most prominent role in this matter was played by the first Bosnian President, Alija Izetbegovic, who pioneered

the thought of returning to the Qur'an as a way not only of preserving and reviving the identity but also to avoid issues that he saw in the "deviant" ways of the advanced West.

An important milestone in the revival of Islam in BiH was the opening of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in Sarajevo, which has been officially admitted as a full member of the University of Sarajevo since 2013. An attempt to advance the argument of continuity can also be seen in the fact that the Faculty is seen as "the main successor" of the earliest Islamic educational establishment, originating from the 15th to the 19th centuries. (fin.unsa.ba, 2023)

With experience of discrimination and genocide and the overall perception that Europe failed to protect them during the Yugoslav War, Muslims in Bosnia formed a firm stand for their ethical superiority.

I would therefore argue that in the context of forming national identity in the 1990s, Muslim Bosniaks were found in a peculiar situation where the dream of brotherhood and unity in Yugoslavia was shattered to pieces and they were now surrounded by hostile ethnic and religious groups that did not wish to include them or legitimise their existence.

Therefore, it was only logical for Bosniaks to search deeper and re-establish Islam as a way to enhance their identity and legitimacy. And indeed, In the chaos of the War, many Bosniaks sought tranquilly in Islam, a religion they had not practised for many decades. It is important to note that foreign influence played a key role in this process, most notably from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. Mostly accepted was Turkish thought, primarily due to the shared culture and traditions of two ethnic groups. The Bosnian Grand Mufti stated on numerous occasions that Turkey is the "*mother of all Bosnian Muslims*". (Karcic, 2010)

Numbers further appear to prove the revival of Islam in BiH, with the latest census showing they now constitute a majority (50.7%) for the first time since the modern Bosnian state. This is up from 43.47%, recorded in the 1991 census. (Statistika.ba, 2013)

The influence of ethnic and religious distinctions between the groups of nations residing in BiH is best shown by van Willigen (2010), who argues that pan-Bosnian civic nation-building failed. Instead, politics is still dominated by ethnic nationalist policies.

I.e., each group sees the other one as a threat to its existence.

This is tightly connected to the territory aspect. The Yugoslav War was characterised by a wide practise of "ethnic cleansing," which meant quite literally "*cleaning*" the territory of others who didn't belong to the same group (Storey, 2002). As noted already, especially in times of conflict, territories can be seen as a safe place where the group should be properly democratically represented. (Devic, 2014)

So, it is not difficult to conclude that territory played an important part in why citizens kept giving their trust to politicians who argued the importance of preserving space, in line with conclusions from van Willigen (2010).

The territory preservation narrative was seen not only from Bosnians but also from Serbians and Croats, who similarly argued that without securing space for their groups, their sole existence will be threatened.

From a symbolic perspective, Bosnian political elites were also adopting a number of nationalistic strategies. (Dragicevic Sesic, 2011). One of the first aims was to destroy all symbolic remainders of the common Yugoslav past in order to make room for ethno-nationalist narratives. Numerous religious and non-religious sites that served as a reminder of the diverse communities that lived all over Bosnia were destroyed.

The symbolic "*warfare*" continued during and after the war, with monuments being raised near places of atrocities, schools, squares, and public squares. They serve to instill pride and ensure that common strife is not forgotten. (Sokol, 2014)

In analysing history and culture in post-war Bosnia, Torsti (2004) contended that it is nothing more than banal nationalism, referring to the manner in which nation is symbolically marked in the every-day lives of citizens. This can include a wide array of public presentations such as flags, songs, banknotes, etc.

For example, Serbs in Republika Srpska refuse to give legitimacy to the Bosnian state; therefore, it is very rare to find the new Bosnian flag anywhere in that entity. Similarly, the passport stamp bore no mention of BiH.

In areas primarily populated by Croats, "*sahovnica*" can be seen widely.

As for Bosnians, it wasn't an easy task to produce and legitimise the symbols, as they had fewer sources to draw from, unlike Serbs and Croats. The new flag took 32 months to be agreed upon, and the anthem has no lyrics and was in fact imposed by the international community.

A lack of nationalism symbolism is also seen in the currency's name; it was simply named the convertible mark, referencing the 1:1 conversation rate with the German mark at the time.

However, as Torsti (2004) points out, even these "banal" symbols are still seen widely across the Bosnian-populated area, thus signifying their importance in instilling pride and gathering legitimacy for the state. Further symbolic nation-building followed, including language differentiation, tourist guide brochures, and street names being changed, again with the purpose of removing signs of multi-culturalism and focusing on the ethnic aspect. (Torsti, 2004)

Given the similarities in nation-building tactics for Bosnians but also for Serbs and Croats, which we discussed in previous chapters, this makes Bosnia and Hercegovina an extremely important piece of this research, as using the data from the IPSOS survey in 2011, we are able to produce a comparative analysis on how factors from the Positive Pole affected Bosnian ethnic groups and their loyalty to the Bosnian state.

In the survey, on the question "*Do you like the official flag of Bosnia and Herzegovina?*", 90% of Bosnians answered positively. Conversely, only 52% of Croats and 19% of Serbians shared this opinion.

On the question of whether one is proud to be a citizen of BIH, 65% of Bosnians said they were very proud, whereas this was the case for only 19% of Croats and 8% of Serbs.

In similar fashion, 74% of Bosnians thought the state symbol introduced in 1991–1992 had a positive meaning. Significantly fewer Croats (20%) were of the same opinion, and the number of Serbs who shared that was miniscule—only 3%!

Finally, only 2% and 6% of Serbs identified with the Bosnian Statehood Day and the Independence Day, respectively, while in the case of Croats, the results were 35% and 16%, and for Bosnians, 71% and 61%.

Concluding Remarks on the Positive Pole – Chapter 3

The data provided above allows for a seamless transition into a couple of concluding remarks in regards to our case studies, viewed through the lenses of the Positive Pole.

Based on the data presented, which indicates a strong affinity among the three ethnic groups in BIH towards their own symbols, whether flags or national holidays, and the fact that only Bosnians demonstrated pride in being citizens of BIH, it is reasonable to conclude that our hypothesis of the existence and importance of these elements is correct.

In the Bosnian-specific context, we can in fact assert that Positive Pole factors are not only prevalent and important for Bosnians' loyalty towards their state, but in fact appear to work in the opposite direction for Croats and Serbs, albeit significantly more in the case of the former.

Finally, our analysis also confirmed one of the initial expectations, which was that even though we were examining four different countries, all with somewhat different scenarios that played out, crucial similarities were seen in terms of Positive Pole factors:

Political elites in each country leveraged both natural and artificially created ethnic differences to increase their political legitimacy and citizens' trust in the institutions they were governing.

Territory was seen almost exclusively as the *sine qua non*, which ensured the very survival of the ethnic groups. This holds true even though some groups (especially Montenegrins and Bosnians) were primarily in "defensive" mode and Serbs were the primary aggressors. The reason why this argument holds is that the Serbian narrative was in fact the preservation of the ethnic Serbs who resided on the territories they wanted to claim.

Religion was used in a multitude of ways, including increasing the feeling of belonging to a political community, distinguishing a group from others, and also as a tool for political legitimacy and trust.

Finally, the importance of symbols during the turbulent times of the 1990s can't be overstated; they were and are still used to remind citizens of their belonging to a particular group and mobilise them for various

activities, but they are also frequently manipulated by the political elites to bend public opinion and galvanise support for themselves.

Therefore, it can be reasonably concluded that the first part of our second hypothesis has been confirmed, i.e., the Positive Pole factors were present and in fact used in an extensive manner to increase citizens' loyalty towards their respective states.

Positive Pole

Montenegro

Looking at Montenegro in order to showcase the presence of corruption is not an easy task—not because there is hardly any corruption to be examined, but because there is so much of it. Indeed, when assessing the corruption level and conducting research, one cannot overlook the term "*captured state*"

As pointed out by various research and reports, Montenegro was a classic example of a state capture developing over multiple decades. (Uzelac, 2003; Dragicevic, 2020; MANS, 2021)) Albeit it can be argued that Montenegro is no longer a captured state with DPS being ousted from power, the legacy and challenges connected to it still remain, partly due to a lack of support from international partners (Heckert, 2022)

And so, examples of corruption are numerous. A report by MANS (2021) examines several cases of high-end corruption and the laws tailored to benefit the political elites.

At the moment of writing this thesis, Montenegro is grappling with a monumental scandal. Messages from the encrypted messaging application Skyy were intercepted and provided to the Montenegrin authorities by Europol. This has initiated a cascade of arrests, which include numerous people who were at the very top of Montenegrin politics for decades. (Jovanovic, 2023) Lower corruption is also present, primarily in the form of bribery. As a survey by UNODC (2011) shows, a substantial percentage of Montenegrins (11.8%, or more than 1 in 10), aged 18–64, had direct or indirect exposure to bribery by public officials.

The same survey also showcased that a significant number of bribes happen in sectors of public services that directly impact the lives of citizens, such as the police, health care systems, real estate directorates, etc.

Therefore, in connection with the element of public services outlined in the Negative Pole, I will assert that perceptions of corruption within these services must also translate into lower trust and a more negative perception of the services and institutions themselves. And in fact, a survey of public opinion on the government institution primarily responsible for the provisioning of public services shows poor results on Montenegrin perceptions of efficiency and satisfaction with all of them, with the highest sum of very good and good answers being 25.9% and the average sitting around 22%. (CEDEM, 2022)

In 2021, even with some moderate improvement in accountability, Montenegro was still performing below the regional average in terms of public financial management and service delivery. (OECD,2023)

In regards to socio-economic factors, a significant problem that remains in Montenegro is long-term unemployment, where the rate is 14.4%, which constitutes 74.3% of the total unemployed.

Worse yet, the first quarter of 2022 saw the youth (aged 15–29) unemployment rate stand at 38.4% of all unemployment. (Mirkovic, 2022) The average salary in Montenegro has risen recently, primarily because of the set of economic measures introduced in 2020, which saw the minimum wage rise from 222 to 450 euros and the average from 530 to 670 euros (Durovic, 2022). According to the official governmental statistics in Montenegro, the average salary in 2023 will stand at 757 euros after taxes, with a real wage growth of 3.7% in comparison to the last year. (MONSTAT, 2023) Montenegro's GDP also experienced a strong bounce back post-pandemic, with 2021 real GDP growth recorded at 13.0%. (MONSTAT, 2022) Somewhat slow but steady real GDP growth was recorded in the last quarter of 2022, standing at 3.3%, with further consistency for the next couple of years. (MONSTAT, 2023)

According to the BTI Montenegro Country Report 2022, Montenegro ranked fairly in the 2020 UNDP Human Development Report, taking 48th place, with only Croatia ranking higher among its neighbouring countries. However, its Gini Index stood at 32.9 in 2020 (Eurostat, 2023), making it one of the highest in the region and therefore showing a considerable high level of income inequality. (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022)

Indeed, further data from Eurostat (2020) shows that 20% of the richest Montenegrins have an income that is 6.0 times higher than that of the poorest 20%, which is notably higher than the EU average of 5.0. The proportion of the population at risk of poverty after transfers in 2021 was 22.4%.

Serbia

In a similar fashion to Montenegro, Serbia's public corruption is to be seen through the concept of a captured state. However, unlike in Montenegro, which saw a dissolution of the state capture to a significant degree as outlined by Heckert (2022), Serbia remains firmly in the grasp of one authoritarian leader, Aleksandar Vucic and his Serbian Progressive Party ("Srpska Napredna Stranka" - SNS). As Djokic et al. (2020) point out, all metrics from the report by Freedom House in 2020, as well as from various other international organisations, indicate firmly that Serbia remains a captured state.

Furthermore, since 2020, Serbia has been consistently ranked as a *hybrid regime* by Freedom House, indicating an incomplete transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one. Noteworthy is that Serbia was "*downgraded*" in 2020, as previously it was regarded as a "*semi-consolidated democracy*". This categorization indicates a high level of corruption in most of the state's public sector. (Burazer, 2023)

State capture in Serbia began in 2012, much later than in Montenegro. Nevertheless, it has evolved into a phenomenon of massive scale. Public administration has been completely politicised, with employment being offered to citizens in exchange for political loyalty. A prime illustration of this process can be seen in the fact that SNS has 730 000 members. Comparison-wise, Germany's CDU has 470 000, even though Germany's population is significantly higher than Serbia's. (Lemstra, 2020)

In further analysis of corruption, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for the year 2022 marks Serbia's score at 36 out of 100 (with 0 being highly corrupt). This is in line with the state capture findings, as it continues the downward trend for almost a decade now. (Trading Economics, 2023; Transparency Serbia, 2023)

The average salary after taxes in Serbia stands at around 730 euros per month (RZS, 2023); however, the real GDP growth in the first quarter of 2023 is -0.2% (RZS, 2023). Unemployment remains relatively high at 10.1% in 2023 (Trading Economics, 2023), with the youth unemployment rate at 24.9%. The most recent measure of income inequality puts the Gini coefficient at 33.3% in 2019 and the S80/S20 ratio at 6.46. (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022) Poverty remains a huge issue, with 7.1% living in absolute poverty and 31.7% at risk of it. (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022)

The survey of public opinion in 2023 shows a grim picture. Astonishingly, 41% of participants claimed they were "missing a lot financially in order to live a decent life", with another 29% saying they were missing a little bit, which puts the negative sum at 70%. Further, 26% said they have enough, whereas only 4% said they have more than enough. The same survey indicates a low level of trust and satisfaction with the current Serbian government, with 48% saying the results are bad in terms of their work in increasing socio-economic standards.

Similarly, 46% are very dissatisfied with the work done to combat corruption and crime. Somewhat logically, the results on satisfaction with public services follow, with 56% of respondents stating they are dissatisfied with health care, the judiciary having a negative sum of 54%, and education having a negative sum of 44%. (Demostat, 2023)

Croatia

Analysing Croatia's state of corruption, we observe a somewhat better picture as opposed to Montenegro or Serbia. The Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (2023) however still ranks it at 50/100, which shows a relatively high presence of corruption.

One notable case of public corruption in Croatia is that of former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, accused of accepting a bribe in the amount of 2.2 million euros. He was sentenced to four and a half years of imprisonment and ordered to reimburse the 2 million euros towards the State's budget. (Naskovska & Gjorshoski, 2023)

As Naskovska & Gjorshoski (2023) further point out, corruption remains prevalent in Croatia even after the country's ascension to the EU, although it was shown that the EU pressure has helped Croatia tremendously in this effort, especially after adopting the Corruption Prevention Strategy for the years 2021–2030. (Voci, 2022) The data on widespread public corruption in Croatia appears to be corroborated by the opinions of Croatia's citizens. According to the latest survey conducted in 2019 on the EU level, an overwhelming majority of 97% of Croatians stated that they believe corruption to be massively prevalent in their society. (Transparency International Hrvatska, 2020)

Croatia's Gini coefficient stood at 28.5% in 2022, somewhat lower than in Montenegro and Serbia. (Trading Economics, 2023) with its inequality of income distribution being 4.58, lower than the EU average of 5.0, and with a significant downtrend from the record high of 5.58 in 2011, before the EU ascension (Trading Economics, 2023). Average income in March 2023 was 1 130 euros after taxes (DZS, 2023), significantly higher than in Montenegro and Serbia. For the past two years, unemployment in Croatia has been on the decline, with the percentage of unemployed Croatians at 6.5% in March 2023. (DZS, 2023) Apart from 2020, which was the year severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Croatia has been measuring significant GDP growth since 2015 and has resumed this upward trajectory in 2021. (DZS, 2023) The risk of poverty rate is 16%, also in decline over the years (Trading Economics, 2023), with absolute poverty being in insignificant percentages.

Croatia has a massive state apparatus. With three levels of government: national, mezzo-local, and local. The mezzo-second-tier governments are 20 counties, and local governments number 428 municipalities and 128 towns, 17 of which have special status. In addition, the capital, Zagreb, has a unique status, acting both as a town and a county, with even greater autonomy to conduct administrative tasks on its territory.

This puts the number of local governments at 576, which is a remarkably high number for a country of merely 3.9 million inhabitants, especially given the fact that almost 51% of these local governments have fewer than 3 000 people, with an additional 20% having fewer than 5 000. (Kopric, 2018)

As Kopric (2019) subsequently shows, the public administration in Croatia is truly monumental, employing 293 000 people, equivalent to about 17% of the total work force. And yet it is inefficient. The prime reason for this is the overpolitization of institutions.

Here, certain parallels can be drawn with political hiring, as seen in the case of Serbia, and tie all that to the corruption aspect. Improvement in efficiency has been shown since Croatia's entry into the EU, but it still has a long way to go. In the same report by Kopric (2019) analysis of the public sector is shown and it finds Croatia in 24th place out of 27 EU member states.

Citizens' trust in the administration is also among the lowest in the EU, with merely 29% having a high level of trust in the public sector, as opposed to 49% on the EU level.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

An examination of the current situation regarding public corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows a dire picture. Transparency International's (2023) score for the country in 2022 was only 36/100. Corruption remains a significant problem in BiH, despite numerous efforts by the EU to assist in making things better.

It remains one of the worst-performing countries in both Europe and Central Asia. (Lee-Jones, 2018)

An illustrative example of high public corruption is the appointment of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) president in 2014, despite media widely reporting on his obstructions of investigations and ties to prominent political actors in Republika Srpska.

According to Transparency International, this appointment led to HJPC operating again under heavy political influence. In fact, it was so detrimental that it reversed a decade's worth of integrity and professionalism reforms. (Lee-Jones, 2018)

Transparency International's survey on citizens' perceptions of corruption in BiH aligns with the situation in real life. The vast majority of citizens don't believe they can do anything to combat corruption, and more than half believe that reporting it is not socially acceptable. 54% of citizens believe "most" or "all" members of parliament are corrupt, and an astonishing 27% stated they had to pay a bribe to access basic services. (Lee-Jones, 2018)

The 2020 report from the European Commission documented that no progress was made on combating corruption and produced a long list of topics that need to be tackled as soon as possible if BiH is ever to stand a chance at EU ascension. (USAID, 2023)

As with the other countries that were looked at, Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced stable GDP growth over the past few years, with the exception of a -3.02% dip in 2020. In 2021, the GDP bounced back by 7.39% and continued the growth in 2022 with a 3.9% increase. (Trading Economics, 2023) The average salary after taxes in BiH for January 2023 stood at 1 209 km, or 618 euros. (Fineks, 2023) The Gini coefficient was 30.5 in January 2022 (Trading Economics, 2023). Unemployment remains relatively high at 15% in 2022, with youth unemployment at 35%. The employment rate is very low at 40%, and, unlike other countries, BiH is specific for having one of the lowest female employment percentages in the Balkans, merely 37%. (ILO, 2023)

Obradovic & Filic (2019) make the link between poverty, economic inequality, and inequality in accessing basic public services. Political clientelism is rampant, with elites in power using the state's resources and services to enable them to stay in their positions. It is not uncommon for politicians to offer access to social services, money, paved roads, and jobs in exchange for votes.

As Obradovic & Filic (2019) further argue, it is in fact in the best interest of Bosnian politicians to maintain the status quo in terms of income inequality so they can continue to do well-tested operations and retain their power.

Indeed, in the 2019 survey, only 28.85% of Bosnians believed the government was efficient. As pointed out, this is directly correlated with the poor performance of providing public services. Some of the reasons for that are corruption and clientelism already mentioned above, but also extensive bureaucracy, large taxes due to its size, and the limited number of public services being provided. (Sasic et. all., 2021)

Given the complexity of governance in BiH, the highest score of corruption, and weaker economic indicators, it is safe to conclude that this country bears the highest severity of factors from the negative pole out of all the countries researched.

Concluding Remarks on the Negative Pole – Chapter 3

In concluding remarks on the Negative Pole analysis, we can make several deductions.

Corruption remains an issue in each of the countries examined, with only Croatia demonstrating somewhat noticeable progress, although it was shown that this is largely attributable to the positive influence of EU membership.

Moreover, corruption in all states is recognised by the citizens as one of their primary concerns.

Similar patterns can be observed for Montenegro, Serbia, and BiH in terms of socio-economic status. High income inequality remains ever-present; income levels are still far below the EU average (even more so if compared with wealthier Western European countries).

Poverty rates are somewhat manageable; unemployment remains an issue, especially among the youth, where it is present in high percentiles. Croatia paints a somewhat more optimistic picture, but it continues to be at the bottom of the EU member list, with a notable exception in its low unemployment level. GDP growth is observable in all these states.

The public services in each of the countries continue to receive criticism for their poor performance. An argument can be made that this is closely associated with the previously mentioned omnipresent corruption, clientelism, and massive bureaucracy.

Nonetheless, the picture can't be seen as entirely bleak. Salaries are on an upward trajectory, as is the GDP. Observable is also the palpable commitment by most governments towards enhancing the quality of public services and combating corruption.

Albeit many challenges remain, improvements can be seen amidst the upward trajectory in minimising the negative elements from the Negative Pole.

This means, however, that the second part of our second hypothesis receives only partial confirmation. The most predominant and significant factor found in all these states is corruption.

A smaller part of SES, especially economic inequality, is also quite noticeable. However, due to the positive developments mentioned above, it is shown that the severity of the Negative Pole factors is not as dire as the initial hypothesis predisposed.

Chapter 4: Alignment of emigration with the Negative Pole

Now that we have all the factors presented and shown that they are present in each of the countries, albeit to a different extent, the research will address the third and final hypothesis, which postulates that elements from the Negative Pole have a greater impact on citizens' decisions to leave their state as opposed to elements from the Positive Pole.

Research will look again into each country separately, providing findings in the following order: how many people wish to emigrate, what are their reasons, how many emigrated, and what are their reasons.

"Brain drain" is an important concept to keep in mind when analysing the emigration from the Western Balkans. It *"refers to the permanent or at least long-term international transfer of people and their incorporated human capital."* And is usually seen as migration from less developed countries to more developed countries. (Ette & Witte, 2021). Generally, when speaking about emigration, this concept is put at the forefront. However, for this analysis, emigration will be discussed in terms of not only the emigration of highly skilled workers with tertiary education but also for low and medium education, i.e., emigration in general will be looked at.

Montenegro

Although there is no official data on how many citizens exactly left Montenegro and migrated abroad, due to the government not having an institution that would be specifically tasked with monitoring the issue (Rajovic, 2013), an estimate is put at about 150 000 in the past 4 decades. Given the fact that the current Montenegrin population stands at around 612 000, this means that effectively almost every fourth citizen has left.

The main destinations are wealthier Western countries, primarily the US and Germany (European Pulse, 2019). Moreover, if we take the assumption that Montenegro will be admitted to the EU in the next couple of years and put that in the perspective of demographic trends seen in Croatia, Romania, and Bulgaria, we can only expect the net emigration to be higher, provided the new free labour market access; hence, it can be said that demographics will be a huge issue in Montenegro in the following decades. (WFD, 2019)

In extensive research on skill composition in the Western Balkans, Leitner (2021) finds that emigration from Montenegro is primarily of those with low and medium education levels, with certain returning rates of students upon finishing their tertiary education abroad. In a survey conducted by Djukanovic (2019) under the patronage of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, it was shown that the desire to emigrate from Montenegro is very prevalent among young people. Out of respondents, 14.5% have a "very strong" desire, another 11.2% have a strong desire, and 25% are "moderate".

Decisively answering no was only 36.8%. Moreover, 32% of respondents from the same survey who said they had some intention to leave said they would want to stay abroad for more than 20 years.

Another survey by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy has shown that 70% of young people are considering leaving the country, with 14% undergoing serious preparation, 20.1% thinking about it without taking any concrete steps, and 36.2% thinking about it occasionally. (Golubovic, 2019)

When asked about the reasons, we observe that an astonishing 87.5% have a direct correlation with factors listed in the Negative Pole, with the exception only being in the following elements: *Different cultural experiences; closeness of people I care about; and greater cultural difference*

The link can also be substantiated by the Westminster survey, where 62.2% said they believed that membership in a political party was the main factor in one's career advancement.

Added to that is the fact that 31% of respondents said they would vote for a party with whose programme they disagree, as long as this provides employment for themselves or one of their family members. We can directly connect this to the aforementioned corruption and clientelism, which have penetrated into each aspect of society. (WFD, 2019)

Interestingly, a survey by Matica Crnogorska in 2014 showed, among others, that 77% of Montenegrins are proud to be citizens of Montenegro, a high level of positive feelings towards the symbols, and perhaps most interestingly, that 66.3% of respondents agreed to the statement that a primary task of each individual should be to ensure state continuity. (CEDEM, 2014)

Therefore, it can be asserted that, albeit Positive Pole factors are present and significant, a large proportion of (especially) young people want to emigrate nonetheless and primarily due to the reasons stemming from factors listed in the Negative Pole.

Serbia

Serbia's population has decreased from 7.55 million in 2004 to 6.9 million in 2020, which represents a total decrease of around 8.6%. Of course, this decrease is not led solely by emigration but by failing birth rates as well. Similar to Montenegro, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly the number of people who have left Serbia. In 2018, however, there were an estimated 491 199 permits for Serbians on the EU level. Significant numbers are also observed in the highly educated professions, especially in the case of medical doctors. (Koyama, 2022)

Indeed, as Vladimir Nikitovic, a demographer at Belgrade's Institute for Social Sciences, puts it, "*It's too late; it's not that it's too late now. It was too late 20 years ago.*" While 40 to 50 thousand people leave every year, some 30 000 come back, which puts the net emigration at 15-20 thousand a year. With this in mind and the falling birth rates, Serbia's population is set to decline by 23.81% by 2050. (Judah, 2023)

A survey in 2019 showed that 42.3% of respondents were often or very often considering leaving the country. Plans and preparations for emigration have been undertaken and are certain for 26.3% of the population, with it being 50.4% for the younger population. (Santic, 2020)

Koyama (2022) identifies the following push factors for emigration: low wages, impossibility of employment, discontent with jobs, non-existence of future prospects, and bad working conditions. Rasevic (2016) further pointed out the importance of income inequality in regards to Serbia's emigration.

As Santic (2020) points out, the biggest factor when deciding to remain in the country for Serbians is attachment to family and friends. The housing issue is a high priority, whereas the third one is patriotism. (Positive Pole)

Conversely, the negative factors are of a primary economic nature: an unfavourable economic situation, a lack of jobs that pay well, and an inability to find a job in general. Even the factor of housing in the reasons to stay can be seen as the economic element at play; people don't want to leave since they can't afford to buy or lease abroad, thus giving more merit to our understanding of two poles working against one another. Finally, a significant number of respondents also listed corruption and a lack of the rule of law as reasons for wanting to emigrate. (Santic, 2020)

As was the case with Montenegro, the main drivers for emigration are of an economic nature and the perception of corruption.

Croatia

In the recent 2021 population census, a record decrease in population was recorded in Croatia, numbering 413,056 inhabitants, or 9.6% in terms of percentages (DZS, 2023). Although official statistics put the figure of emigration at "only" 47 352 from 2013 to 2017, a study from the National Bank published in 2019 estimates that this figure is in fact considerably higher: the estimation is that around 230 000 emigrated to 11 "core" EU countries between 2013 and 2016, with the trend continuing. (Vladisavljevic, 2019)

The reason for that is probably that official estimates take into account only those who have signed off on their place of residence in Croatia. By law, the citizens are obligated to do so, but most of them do not. Croatians have mostly migrated to Germany and Austria, with a more recent wave after the 2013 EU accession also including Ireland. (Mesaric Zabcic, 2021)

A comparison can be drawn with Serbia and Montenegro in the fact that, just as is the case in these countries, a large percentage of young people are considering leaving Croatia. The estimate is put at two-thirds of those who are thinking of emigrating for a long time or forever. (Potocnik & Adamovic, 2018)

A more recent survey from the World Youth Alliance Croatia (WYAC) conducted in 2021 puts this number at almost 50%. (N1,2022)

According Ministry of Economy of Republic of Croatia (2019), back in the 1999 the most prominent push factors for Croats were better employment possibilities, a lack of advancement prospects, housing issues, general dissatisfaction with political parties, and high levels of corruption.

Moreover, , Juric (2022) conducted a survey on Croatian immigrants in Germany and found compelling evidence that various forms of corruption and poor public services have a direct correlation with emigration.

Hence, even in the case of Croatia, which had significantly better Negative Pole indicators than the remaining three countries, in terms of emigration, there is little difference noticeable.

Emigration is high, the percentage of young people wanting to leave is high, and the factors are the same. EU membership only seems to have exacerbated the emigration.

Bosnia & Herzegovina

A comprehensive IPSOS (2021) study and survey of youth emigration provides valuable insights into the topic. The number of citizens of all ethnic and religious groups who have left BiH is estimated to be 200 000 since 2011, following the introduction of biometric passports.

Around 1/4 of respondents stated that they are seriously considering leaving BiH for good. Another 23% are thinking of leaving temporarily.

The interesting thing is that this high level of desire to leave is still present, even though 87% of people surveyed had no previous migration experience. But it could be explained by the fact that 78% of them did have family or close friends living abroad, and 58% knew more than five people from their surrounding area who had already left.

In line with our findings thus far, factors that contributed to people wanting to leave are shown to be primarily the desire to increase their socio-economic status: the search for a higher income, a better job, and the prospect of advancement and stability, closely followed by the desire to live in a less corrupt society.

Trust in public institutions is extremely low.

Unlike other countries, however, in Bosnia, a small percentage of respondents also stated that they wished to leave a society filled with inter-ethnic tension.

The main reason they would want to stay in Bosnia is the presence of their family and friends.

Finally, we observe that Bosnians tend to immigrate to richer Western countries such as Germany, Austria, and the US, but also to relatively better-off neighbouring countries such as Croatia and Serbia. (KNOMAD, 2023)

The first part is the same development as for the previous 3 countries, where the search for a better life pushes them to these countries.

The fact that Bosnians migrate towards Croatia and Serbia could be explained both by their ethnic and religious ties (Positive Pole) and by the fact that the standard of living is higher in these countries (Negative Pole).

Concluding Remarks – Chapter 4

From our case studies, we can observe that emigration is present on a significant scale in each of the countries. Moreover, the destinations tend to be wealthier Western countries, particularly Germany and the US.

Multiple surveys have shown that large percentages of young people, ranging from 30–60% depending on the survey and the interpretation of the results, are considering emigrating.

Aiming at answering our key research question: "Which Pole affects citizens more in their decision to leave?" A clear answer emerges.

It is observed that push factors for emigration are almost completely in alignment with the elements listed under the negative pole.

In addition to that, Positive Pole factors such as attachment to family, friends, place, and a feeling of patriotism have shown to work in the opposite way, prompting people to stay, thus showcasing how Positive and Negative Pole factors exist in tension.

Conclusion & Recommendations

In an attempt to offer a unique perspective on the relationship between citizens and the State in countries of the former Yugoslavia (Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina), a unique Bipolar Theory Framework was presented.

This model proposed a dynamic tension between elements, which were grouped under two poles, the Positive and the Negative.

Elements from the Positive Pole were primarily derived from a sense of political community and attachment to their groups, whereas the Negative Pole consisted of those concerning the socio-economic and political environment.

Three hypotheses were tested in this thesis:

The first stated that elements from both poles influence citizens' level of political loyalty towards the state in an opposite way, i.e., Positive Pole increased it whereas Negative Pole decreased it. For a better understanding and easier analysis, three tenants of political loyalty were identified and used in the research.

Provided this hypothesis was broad and comprehensive, it was addressed through a holistic approach that simultaneously served as a literature review for the entirety of the thesis since it engaged each factor individually.

Upon reviewing a significant number of academic works, the hypothesis was considered validated.

Evaluation of a second hypothesis yielded somewhat mixed results.

It was expected that elements from each pole would be present in every country subject to an analysis with a high level of intensity. This has proven to be true for the Positive pole, but on the other hand, the Negative Pole did not have the anticipated severity.

Indeed, they were still worse than in wealthier Western countries but were also significantly better than in many parts of the world and showed an upward improvement trajectory.

Nevertheless, upon examining the data and reasons for emigration, a decisive answer to our research question emerged. Elements of the Negative Pole had a significantly higher impact on citizens' decisions to engage in the ultimate act of disloyalty and leave the country, thus confirming our third and final hypothesis.

An interesting observation surfaced: despite Positive Pole elements being so prevalent and of high intensity within the communities analysed, these were not sufficient to counteract relatively less severe elements of the Negative Pole when talking about citizens' decisions to emigrate.

This brings us to the policy recommendation of the thesis: if the aim of policymakers is to halt and reverse emigration, they ought to shift their focus significantly more towards ameliorating factors from the Negative pole, which are corruption, low socio-economic status (SES), and the poor quality of public services.

It is observable that targeting the Positive Pole alone is not enough to deter citizens from leaving; thus, incremental improvements to the Negative Pole are required.

Certain progress has been made, but it would appear that citizens tend to always leave for comparatively better states when given the chance; hence, socio-economic and political development must start to pick up pace and catch up with wealthier Western states.

It appears to be the only way to address issues that will arise amid growing emigration.

The thesis will finish by posing the argument that the ultimate challenge in these countries is thus to create an environment where two Poles work together instead of against one another.

The citizens will then enjoy a habitat in which there is a positive sense of belonging and socio-economic progress, which will in turn engender an enduring loyalty to the state.

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Master Thesis Proposal
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Proposed Topic:

"Relationship Between Citizen and State in the Countries of Former Yugoslavia: Interdisciplinary Investigations"

Registered in SIS: No

Date of registration:

Topic Characteristics / Research Question(s):

Generally, citizenship has been viewed and understood primarily through two different models: Republican and Liberal. Republican theories can be found in writing of older authors such as Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli and others. Key principle was the self-rule – citizen being able to rule and be ruled in turn. (Leydet, 2017) Liberal viewpoints on the other hand, whilst traceable from early Roman law, really started developing from 17th century onwards.

It has emphasized presenting citizenship as a legal status and not the political office that needs to participate in formulation and the execution of the law. (Ball et al., 1989)

(Stahl, 2020) builds on these two traditional models and includes a third one, ethno-nationalist model, that views the citizenship as a tool to connect people under a shared banner, be it cultural, ethnical or territorial.

In addition, he also presents synthesizes of these models.

In my initial phase of this Thesis, I would like to use these models to describe and prove the first hypothesis – that the citizenship in the countries of the former Yugoslavia is best explained through synthesis of Ethno-Nationalist/Republic model, as opposed to Liberal/Nationalist model that prevails in Western Europe.

In this section I would also use typology models such as that of Hitman & Crowther-Dowey (2020) to look at these interactions between citizen and the state and connect it to the initial hypothesis.

Secondly, I would like to use empirical data such as that of Boda (2020) and present them in order to affirm the hypotheses about corruption, level of political participation and level of political trust in the ex-Yugoslavian countries. Finally, essential research question would be as follows: If the first four hypotheses are true, how is it possible that from societies that place such a high emphasis on its nationalism and collective identity, can there be such low trust in the institutions and such a high level of corruption, if those societies are led by the people stemming from that same mindset? Similarly, how those same citizens, have such a lack of will to engage politically and make impact on how their countries are led?

While researching the above question, I will be looking at multiple works researching and also pointing out to the failures of the so called “Third Wave Democracies”.

I would like to pursue interdisciplinary investigations looking at the question from historical perspective and perception of the governance looking at the theories such as one of Ditchhev (2005), but also then more recent events after the fall of the Communism, and finally current state of apathy and limited engagement of the civil sector.

Working hypotheses:

Citizenship in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia is based on Ethno-Nationalist/Republican synthesis model as opposed to the Western Europe where the Liberal/Nationalist model is more applicable.
The political trust in the newer democracies in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia is lower than in the older Western European democracies.
The corruption in the newer democracies in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia is higher than in the older Western European democracies.
The political participation of the citizens via the civic sector in the countries of ex-Yugoslavia is lower than in the older Western European democracies.
The reasons for this stem from three sources: a) Historical perception of the state governance b) Privatization and institution-building developments after introduction of democracy c) Apathy and limited engagement from the civil sector.

Methodology

In the first chapter I would like to use the qualitative descriptive analysis of the literature on the models and understanding of the citizenship and its relation to the state.
More narrowly, I will combine it with literature pertain data specifically about ex-Yugoslavia countries but also personal observations.

Second chapter will be primarily focused on combination of meta-analysis and content analysis when speaking about the measurement of the political trust, corruption and participation of the citizens in the politics.
For third and chapter assessing the research question, I would base my findings and conclusion primarily on the extensive literature review, which will include historical events and developments, but also contemporary situation and affairs.

Outline:

Introduction
Subject matter & Research Flow
Methodology

Chapter 1: Citizenship in ex-Yugoslavia
Models to describe citizenship & its connections to the state

Chapter 2: Corruption, political trust and civic sector political engagement
Showcasing the Empirical Data

Chapter 3: Research Question Analysis
Combining findings from first 2 chapters and literature review to answer the question.

Conclusions
References / Bibliography

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