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**IN THE ABSENCE OF ANTAGONISM?  
RETHINKING EASTERN EUROPEAN  
POPULISM IN THE EARLY 2000s**

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**Abstract**

This article argues that a close analysis of the early 2000s allegedly populist parties in post-communist Europe allows us to better understand their novelty at the time, what they brought to party politics, and to better explain the dynamic of politics in the region. The central argument is that there were pivotal parties that held a universalist and community-seeking orientation. The article analyzes three electorally successful parties in Eastern Europe, the National Movement Simeon II (NDSV) in Bulgaria, Jaunais Laiks (JL) in Latvia, and Res Publica (ResP), and uses interviews with party representatives, secondary literature, additional documents and published interviews. The findings indicate that these parties share the common vision of a restored community after a decade of social, economic, and political turmoil. Their message of social harmony was rooted in a decade of partisan politics and multi-party system that enhanced competitive views.

**Keywords:** populism, restored community, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia

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### Introduction

When the post-communist democracies entered their second decade as multi-party polities in the early 2000s, a new type of political parties emerged. Parties with a message targeting governmental corruption and political practices were created in Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Estonia. On the surface, they could appear to be populist in the sense of addressing a flawed political system while promising a better future to the public. Stepping forward as a reaction to mainstream parties that were found wanting, they managed to gain a large following at the time, which spurred some of them immediately into governmental power. Ucen (2007) identified this new party trend as “centrist populist”, while Millard (2004) coined the term “liberal populist” (to pinpoint the National Movement Simeon II in Bulgaria). Picking up the concept of centrist-populism, Pop-Eleches (2010) referred to these parties under the broader umbrella of unorthodox parties in the region, claiming them to be “non-ideological, anti-political formations” carried by prominent leaders not bound by ideological constraints. Their novelty implied a substantial shift from the earlier extremist parties of the first- and second-generation elections of the 1990s, parties that had embraced various forms of xenophobia, nationalism, and authoritarianism.

Whereas admittedly infused with certain elements of anti-establishment rhetoric and vague promises of a better world, the populist label that has been used to describe them has, in an unfortunate way, contributed to obscuring rather than illuminating the pivotal role that these parties played in actually reducing rather than increasing polarization and the less sound political practices that marked the 1990s. Bridging the gap between the often antagonistic 1990s and the growingly cooperative 2000s in many of the countries where they appeared, these parties helped to reconstruct a political culture based more on community and less on polarization and particularism. In this way, they contributed to mitigating some of the societal wounds that the turbulent transformations had brought about, and steered their countries into less of polarization (Koroleva & Rangule 2006). In countries that did not have parties that acted as political bridge-builders, most notably Hungary and Poland, political life has instead developed in continually polarizing directions. The neglect of properly understanding the nature of these third-generation parties and the significant roles they played is, as a whole, the result of the stereotypical categorization of East European politics as immature. Manifested in the simplistic classifications of populist and unorthodox, this has come at a high price. It has affected the scholarly ability to make sense of their great appeal at the time, as well as to make sense of the evolution of post-communist party politics in which they played an essential role.

This article argues that to correctly understand the evolution of party politics in post-communist Europe, there is a need to revisit the important period of the early 2000s in an effort to rethink the alleged populism of these parties so as to more adequately address their novelty at the time and what they brought to post-communist party politics. The central argument here is that these pivotal parties held a universalist and community-seeking orientation in contrast to the conflict-oriented worldview that is the *sine qua non* of populism. In order to substantiate this empirical argument, the article analyzes the three most successful parties in Eastern Europe from an electoral point of view of the time, the National Movement Simeon II (NDSV) in Bulgaria, Jaunais Laiks (New Era or JL) in Latvia, and Res Publica (ResP) in Estonia. Hence, these parties, appearing on the political scene in and around the early 2000s, constitute the best representatives of the significantly new tendency of universalism argued for on these pages. Interviews with party representatives, secondary literature, additional documents and published interviews are combined in an effort to assess the messages of these parties.

The article is organized as follows. First, the literature on populism is discussed by emphasizing its conceptual aspects, ending in an analytical framework developed for the purpose of application to the empirical section. Next, the methods and materials are presented and the case studies and the selection of parties are discussed in more detail. The empirical section, in which the NDSV, JL, and ResP and their major messages and primary ideas are analyzed, is followed by the concluding section, where the broader implications of the study are established.

### **The Antagonistic World of Populism**

In the presence of a rapidly changing political landscape in Europe and the United States, populism has become one of the most used concepts in political analysis both in academia and general discourse. Populism in the literature is a volatile, emotional, and even shifting term, which has taken on many meanings over the years, and its elusive character is pointed out by Gherghina et al. (2013) who recently devoted an entire book to the concept. Even if it is clear that populism thus has been used in ways that are vague or contradictory, that is not satisfactory from an analytical perspective. We cannot be content with what, for example, Sandru (2013, p. 57) calls its “anexactitude”, and especially since to label a party (or a leader or movement) as populist is not similar to categorizing it analytically as liberal, conservative, or socialist. Populism comes with negative connotations.

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Therefore, it is promising that recent years have seen a development in the direction of a definitional consensus (Rooduijn & Akkerman, 2015). According to a growing number of authors, the degree to which a politician is considered populist can be determined by how much he or she builds a narrative of ‘the good people and the evil elites’. Populism is thus not to be understood as a dichotomous classification, but one of scale (Rooduijn & Akkerman 2015; Rooduijn et al. 2014). Albertazzi and McDonell (2007) likewise emphasize that populism can be found both at the far-right and the far-left. It is the element of radicalism in the messages and their style that merits the populist label. Radicalism can also be understood as fundamentalism, and Mudde (2004) distinguishes between populism, elitism, and pluralism, where both elitism (explicitly articulating the need for the people to be led) and pluralism, where heterogeneity and diverse interests are considered as the backbone of society, constitute the opposite of populism.

Although acknowledging that populism is a less refined and comprehensive ideology than, for example, socialism and liberalism, Mudde as well as Rooduijn and Akkerman call it a “thin-centered ideology,” it is still one that clearly builds on a predetermined worldview of antagonism as the essence of political relations, in contrast to a pragmatic view of harmony (Hawkins et al. 2012). Mudde puts the antagonistic character of populism into focus, defining it as an ideology. In his classic definition populism is: “a [thin-centered] ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite,’ and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (Mudde 2004, p. 543, italics in original). The opposition between the pure people and the elite is likewise emphasized by Gherghina and Soare (2013) as generally a major feature of many parties and movements classified as populists. They however also note the notoriously evasive nature of the concept of populism as such.

The label of populism also appeared early on in research on parties emerging in post-communist Europe, since an unspoken point of departure has often been that these new democratic polities showed traits of being immature, even primitive. With its negative connotations of oversimplification, populism thus lay close at hand. Ucen, Pop-Eleches, and Millard’s research on unorthodox parties, ‘liberal populists,’ and the particular ‘centrist-populists’ that appeared around 2000 in a number of post-communist states, are prominent examples of this tendency. In their formulation, populism is used to characterize parties that aim at targeting corruption and misconduct in the government and public institutions (Ucen, 2007, p. 54).



What makes them populists in the eyes of these authors is their moralistic, anti-establishment focus, their appeals to ‘common sense’ that indirectly allude to a perception of the ‘good’ people. Jones (2007) in a similar manner defines European populism, in which he includes Berlusconi, the Kaczynski twins in Poland, and Simeon II, as a “rejection of the cartel-like power of entrenched political elites” (p. 38). Rupnik (2007), another prominent scholar on Eastern Europe, defines contemporary populist movements as anti-liberal and as rejecting constitutionalism but nevertheless embracing popular legitimacy. Bugarcic (2008), in a similar vein, finds the emerging Central and East European populism as being opposed to liberalism and the rule of law, hostile to elites, favoring direct democracy as an outflow of the people’s voice: “Malinov (2007), however claims that populism is not an ideology, it is neither left nor right, and it is not a sign of political immaturity (p. 71). It is instead a way of political thinking. For Gherghina and Soare (2013), populism in post-communist Eastern Europe, has often been associated with the loss of social equality, and lost solidarity, and they exemplify with the *League of Polish Families*, *Ataka* in Bulgaria, and *Jobbik* in Hungary (2013).

From this brief description of the research on post-communist populism, it becomes clear that Ucen, Pop-Eleches, Millard, and Jones tend to define populism in a way that makes it appear to be disturbingly similar to its counterpart, which is what Carothers calls “consensus-oriented liberal centrism” (2007, p. 113). In doing so, the concept of populism becomes more or less superfluous. Rupnik (2007), Bugarcic (2008), and Malinov(2007) instead point to populism as deviant from a broadly understood liberalism, and a typical trait of populism is that direct democracy is embraced as opposed to representative democracy. Exactly what, in their understanding, anti-liberalism is supposed to represent is not clear, but it might refer to liberalism as cosmopolitan values that include gender equality and LGBT rights, openness to diversity, and friendliness to immigrants.

What should one draw out from the previous literature and attempts to define populism when it comes to furthering the understanding of third-generation parties and party politics in post-communist Europe? Following Hawkins, Riding, and Mudde (2012, p. 7), populism is here regarded as a way of seeing the world manifested in messages “through subtle cues of language and diffuse attributes of text, such as tone and metaphor, rather than any specific lexicon or an overt statement of where the speaker stands on an issue.” In other words, it is important to detect if, for example, an ‘anti-establishment’ statement is articulated in an aggressive context or in an attempt of

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constructive criticism, or whether references to ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ are formulated in an attempt to polarize and put the speaker in contradiction to the elite or as ‘neutral’ categories of a common ground. When the content criteria of populism are considered, we suggest that three elements, distilled from the discussion on previous literature above, are the founding elements that make populism an analytically distinctive concept that is of political relevance to the post-communist political landscape.

Firstly, the polarization of society articulated in antagonistic terms, most often between the people and the elites but also extended to the majority of the people and selected minorities, should be present. The main message of populist movements or parties is one of animosity, often articulated in aggressive language. Populists share a worldview of antagonism, without which a party could not rightfully be classified as populist even though it may share some other common features, such as a preoccupation with corruption or renouncement of party politics and interest articulation. These are perceptions that, in the wake of the distraught 1990s in the post-communist countries, were widespread, and therefore it is only in combination with antagonism that such perceptions should be considered as candidates to being populist. This is particularly important to acknowledge since the (in fact often warranted) critique of political elites for corruption or inefficiency could be part of party message, however without the underlying antagonist worldview that is distinctive of populism.

Secondly, in order to distinguish parties or political actors as populists, an anti-liberal outlook in terms of denouncing constitutionalism (embracing popular, majority rule) should be present, as has been pointed out in scholarly literature. A disregard for the rule of law rests on a view of the people as supreme and pure and whose voice should not be overruled by unnecessarily restrictive and counteracting institutions or constitutional practices. An anti-institutional orientation is thus added to the conflict-oriented worldview.

Finally, there is fundamentalist approach in populism that rules out ambivalence, contradiction, and uncertainty. Such fundamentalism often, in theory at least, rejects compromise, coalition, and gradualism as tools for political governing, instead opting for ‘grand’ and swift solutions as the answers to societal problems. Perceptions breathing fundamentalism, and unwillingness for compromise and coalition, should be present if parties are to be labelled populist.

The combination of antagonism, anti-institutionalism, and fundamentalism is the definition of full-scale populism advocated here. All three traits, rather than being associated with leadership style, organization, or strategy, focus on the basic outlooks and ideas of the party and the messages articulated as a consequence of these ideas. In the empirical part of the article it is therefore primarily the messages of the three parties singled out for analysis that are presented and analyzed, with particular attention to the three dimensions pointed out above.

### **Methods and Data**

The empirical section is based on a case study analysis of three of the new parties emerging in post-communist Europe before the third round of democratic elections at the beginning of the 2000s, namely the National Movement Simeon II (NDSV) in Bulgaria, New Era (JL) in Latvia, and Res Publica (ResP) in Estonia. These were selected following a “most similar case” design; they all appeared in proportional party and presidential rather than parliamentary systems, and in an unprecedented way managed to secure great electoral victories in their first elections, parachuting them directly into governmental power. That makes them among the most successful new parties ever, and they have—for that reason—gained scholarly attention as populists, which makes them fruitful subjects to revisit in light of newer research on the concept adopted here.

They are considered as part of a larger group of parties that also appeared in Lithuania and Slovakia around ten years after the breakup of the Soviet Union propelled by a second generation of politicians. They are furthermore parties that, through their presence and victory, contributed to the evolution of party politics and political culture in these post-communist countries in the beneficial directions of decreased bipolar antagonism (Bulgaria), a lessening of the official acceptance of private-interest government (Latvia), and a further strengthening of the rule of law (Estonia). During the 1990s, the Bulgarian UDF party and BSP combated each other bitterly over issues of economic system and regime (Huber & Inglehart 1995). Conflicts were based on different assessments of the communist regime and its decades of often repressive rule, as well as on diverging views regarding the direction of social and economic change. The level of antagonism between the combatants alarmed observers both internally and internationally. A third party, the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS), popularly labeled ‘the Turkish Party’ since it mostly caters to the large Turkish community, was also founded at the beginning of the transition, and made Bulgaria into a two-and-a-half party system during the 1990s.

The NDSV's entrance into Bulgarian politics brought an end to the bipolar antagonism. The previous political structure was further broken up by the entrance of other new parties to parliament in the following elections in 2005, including the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (which broke off from the 'liberal' UDF/ODS); the Bulgarian National Union (BNS), a party with agrarian tendencies; and the xenophobic Ataka Party (Christova, 2010; Genov, 2010).

Whereas political corruption has continued to plague Latvian politics up until today, the rise and subsequent influence of JL in 2002 paved the way for public criticism of this state of affairs that has since been part of Latvian political life. Parties and personalities emerging later on the scene, such as the then Latvian president Zatler's party and the 'technocratic' prime minister Valdis Dombrovskis, who successfully led Latvia through the devastating economic crisis that hit the country in 2009, have carried the example of JL further, thereby contributing to publicly exposing a light version of oligarchic rule with privately sponsored parties. This, in turn, has put much more pressure on the upholding of integrity among the Latvian political elites.

In Estonia, party politics started to become less polarized in the late 1990s as ethnic voting declined. The rise of ResP did, however, mark a shift in the political culture towards more of an emphasis on the public character of the state, which moved the country's politics further away from particularized interest government (Sikk, 2005).

The sources of this study are elite interviews conducted by the authors with leading persons of all three parties, combined with secondary literature, newspaper articles, and published interviews. We strove to include key actors as identified by the literature and by other actors in what could be called a snowball selection. All of the respondents were thus intimately familiar with the messages and general ideas behind the parties. In the case of the NDSV, several people in the team that founded the party, or who acted as its major faces to the outside world, were interviewed, complemented by published interviews with the founder and party leader, Simeon. In the case of JL, our respondents are the most prominent person and party leader, Einars Repse, and one of his closest associates and cofounder. For ResP, the party leader Juhan Parts is one of the respondents, together again with some of the cofounders and leading figures. There are naturally a number of caveats when relying on elite interviews, not least in terms of their trustworthiness.

The respondents may have rationalized the party messages and their background as the interviews have been made some years after the successful elections, or they may simply wish to hide narrowly egoistic interests behind noble self-sacrificing arguments. However, on most of the issues discussed, there is firstly quite limited reasons to withhold the truth and, secondly, even if the truth is sometimes somewhat twisted, it is still of interest to learn how they wanted to be perceived by voters. All the interviews were made in English, not using a translator. Since no one of the respondents was a native English-speaker, their answers – and the quotations – reflect that. There are grammatical errors, and sometimes use of incorrect terms or words. We have striven to keep the quotations verbatim, and only a few times has some grammatical corrections been done. These have, however, never changed the content in any way. At the center of attention are the messages and the content—the ideas—that the parties articulated when they appeared on the political scene in the early 2000s. Therefore, documented speeches and manifestos have also been used.

#### *The NDSV*

The NDSV was founded in April 2001 by Simeon of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Simeon, son of the former tsar Boris III, returned to Bulgaria from exile in Spain in 2001 with the outright ambition of winning the elections and becoming prime minister. Whereas Simeon himself had little political experience, he was generally respected as a vital part of Bulgaria's historical legacy and as a symbol of a new tendency, a break with the previous decade's political struggles between the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP, the former Communist Party) and the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF, the right-wing). Moreover, Simeon carried a traditional authority embodied in a speech on April 6 2001 and a monarchic legacy, but also the legitimacy of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Christova 2010). In a famous founding statement marking the commencement of the electoral campaign, Simeon delivered a promise to reshape Bulgaria in 800 days, making it into a more prosperous country for all to live in. This speech, which represents the major message by the movement of Simeon, certainly included a critique of how the economic and social realities had developed in Bulgaria, and as seen below, Simeon here pointed to how some politicians had enriched themselves simultaneously:

I do not ignore certain achievements in the foreign policy of Bulgaria, or some positive tendencies in economic development during 1999 and until the fall of 2000. However, above all is the grief and growing anger of many people. It is neither morally nor politically acceptable that, by European standards of living, the majority of Bulgarian people, including those residents in the countryside

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and small towns, are in misery, while some politicians live in inexplicable opulence; that thousands of our daughters and sons are leaving Bulgaria, forced away by the lack of opportunity; that near half of the voters see no reason or party for which to vote (Address of King Simeon to the Nation, 2001).

However, the tone is not aggressive but rather sorrowful, and even though there is a juxtaposition of a suffering people and politicians living in opulence, the people are not framed in an archaically ‘pure’ or essentialist manner. Simeon does not use the concept of an elite and it is explicitly stated in the speech that “political figures or parties are not the Movement’s target, because I confront no one.”

Three major goals are articulated: to enhance the standard of living for Bulgarians through economic reforms that will bring in foreign investment in line with European standards and to “[abandon] the political partisanship and [unify] the Bulgarian nation along historical ideals and values that have preserved its glory for all its 1300-year history.” (italics added). Thirdly, in this famous manifesto Simeon called for the return of integrity and morale which, if urgently introduced into political life, would aid in the fight against the corruption that was Bulgaria’s worst enemy. It should be noted, that there is an explicit reference to polarizing partisanship and how community and unification were needed.

Simeon’s team was put together so as to reflect both the party’s integrative ambitions, by including a number of women and younger persons, and the wish to distance itself from the antagonistic politics of the 90s. Thus, professionals of different specialties, often with experience from abroad but with no previous engagement in politics, were brought into the campaign and subsequent government (Peeva 2001). However, and in the general vision of looking for consolidation and unification, previous politicians were not in any way excluded from the movement. “Of course, I will also invite individuals who have been involved in politics for their skills and experience, fully realizing that the political storm has spared no one’s reputation,” as Simeon formulated it when addressing the public on April 6 (Address of King Simeon to the Nation, 2001).

Simeon’s team was “a team of young lawyers and economists, a popular singer, an actress as well as (what else) a magician” concluded Kate Connolly in *The Guardian* (Sept. 20, 2001, also see Ghodsee 2001), in a manner typical of reports of the unorthodox elements of Simeon’s team. Ognian Gerdijkov, a member of parliament who became head of the legal team in the early days of

the party, claims that Simeon “managed to attract new faces, new persons that were previously not tempted by politics, but at the same time professionally respected and recognized, people who had solid experience from abroad” (Interview Gerdijkov 2008).

The NDSV positioned itself as a center-liberal political force in the middle of the political spectrum, highly pragmatic and inclined to compromise. There is agreement that what the Bulgarian voters were looking for at the time of the 2001 elections was change, and particularly a change in political style: less confrontation and more pragmatism. “Bulgaria needed a change at that time (...). A change in public life, honesty in government and political parties, the situation before was really not yet market economy or democracy” (Interview Petkanov 2008).

In an interview made before the elections, Simeon (2005) reflects upon the challenges that faced the new government:

*What was the most serious obstacle you had to overcome and what presented the biggest difficulty? Simeon: Maybe breathing life back into the economy so things could move as normal and trust could be established. At the same time, we were maintaining the Currency Board, i.e. taking into account the IMF and the World Bank which were monitoring us and, in a good way, ‘restraining’ us in our desire to lead an even more active welfare policy. Finding the balance between the two, because both bring benefits—due to the IMF we currently have no inflation, our currency is stable and the general parameters are also very positive—but at the same time we had no option, within this term of office, to materialize all our ambitions in the social sphere.*

The NDSV wanted to appear as a modern party that did not dwell on antagonism but “offer[ed] instead the opportunity for broad compromise and cooperation” (Sygkelos 2010, p. 35); Simeon thus cultivated the image of a “unifier of the nation” (Christova 2010, p. 224). Indeed, the combination of a patriotic Bulgarian outlook and the emphasis on further European integration has been pointed out as a major vision in the messages articulated by the party and its leader. The NDSV was, claims Sygkelos, “identified with the national path” (Sygkelos 2010, p. 26). The NDSV was proud that, in contrast to, for example, the BSP (the successor of the Communist Party), it did not even have a core electorate: “our party was open, liberal and everyone could participate” (Interview Tonev, 2008).

Far and foremost, the party’s discourse focused on national unity and on overcoming the harsh polarization that characterized the country in the 1990s:

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“In this way, the Bulgarian nation was conceived of as a collectivity. It could be argued that the image of Bulgarian society conceived of as a broad kin group, made up of its own people regardless of political affiliation or ethnic origin, had been informed by Sakskoburggotski’s royalist paternalism” (Sygkelos 2010, p. 29).

What the NDSV aspired for was a new political culture in Bulgaria, which would render the country more respect in Europe and elsewhere (Harper 2003, p. 337). The ‘Europeanness’ of the new party was highlighted. Simeon was thus not just a populist Messiah promising change in 800 days, but more importantly he was perceived as a gateway for Bulgaria to transform itself into the ‘normal,’ modern European country that it aspired to be given the country’s EU candidacy (Interview Tonev, 2008; interview Petkanov, 2008).

#### *JL*

New Era (JL) was founded in February 2002 by the former director of the Bank of Latvia, Einars Repse, a person in his 40s who had an impeccable reputation as director. Repse himself was not trained as an economist but as a mathematician and physicist. According to most analysts, JL’s success is a result of Repse’s personal reputation and qualities (Davies & Ozolins 2004; Ikstens 2002, p. 1013; 2003, p. 1007). For him, much as in the case with the NDSV, prior political experience among his team was perceived as a liability rather than an asset, since the party was preoccupied primarily with the high-level corruption of the political elites. Therefore, mostly people without political party backgrounds were actively recruited as potential candidates (Interview Slakteris, 2003; interview Karins, 2008; also see Davies & Ozolins 2004, p. 836; Ozolins, 2002).

What particularly dominated JL’s campaign, at least in terms of the media, was the fight against political (and administrative) corruption. Ethics, honesty, openness/transparency, and professionalism/competence were its main slogans (Ikstens 2002, p. 1013). This is not surprising, given the context of a rapidly deregulated economy, as Karins points out:

In the years 1991-2002, our economy went from the state controlled to the market system. In a lot of overtly corrupt deals, politicians gave themselves goodies. I remember there was a building in the center of town being privatized and a newspaper article showed that those who got the apartments were all well-known politicians and their families. They gave state assets to themselves and that made people very angry (Interview Karins, 2008).



Einars Repse, when still director of the Bank of Latvia, demonstrated severe apprehension about state capture practices. This was due to mistakes in the privatization processes, the fact that the privatization agency was not independent, and that political reforms were not carried out as swiftly as they were in Estonia (Interview Repse, 2000). Krisjanis Karins, one of the cofounders of the party, says that he himself: “joined because [Repse] said that he wanted to form a party that (1): was not based on business interests; and (2): would take into account that the rule of law needed to be strengthened and the playing field for businesses needed to be cleaned up” (Interview, 2008).

When reflecting on the founding of the party in 2004, Repse pointed out that a major reason to do so was the level of corruption. It is also clear that he regarded most other parties, which were sponsored by businesses and banks, as part of the problem:

*Is it specific parties that you are thinking of that contributed to this high-level corruption or what are the roots of it?* Repse: Well, yes. But unfortunately, I have to mention almost all parties that have been in power during the last years of post-Soviet times. I do not want to blame my country, and I do not want to say that the problems that Latvia are experiencing are more pronounced or heavy than in other post-communist countries. They most probably are the same or even better than in some cases (...). But corruption is a problem in most post-communist states and democracies and we have to tackle this problem. It should not have to be hidden, it should be spoken about and worked out (Interview Repse, 2004).

Whereas Repse does use phrases such as ‘the country,’ this is an analysis that is still phrased in a reflective rather than aggressive tone. The recurrent references to ‘corruption,’ which likewise could be part of a more antagonistic populist language, are here used in a much more matter-of-fact manner, simply pointing out that this is the major problem facing Latvia while situating it in the general context of post-communism. According to Kristian Karins, “corruption was the issue” for JL (Interview Karins, 2008). The party leader Einars Repse says, “I simply responded to the call which was also my internal call to try to stand up against the corrupt governmental system” (Interview Repse, 2004).

Reflecting upon the party’s inability to actually change the system, Repse, two years after the election victory of 2002, refers to the necessity of bringing into the government coalition representatives of the ‘old’ system due to the proportional form of government:

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So we had to make a coalition with some parties which had been present in previous governments and, quite honestly, did not have a good reputation. Not all of them, and to different degrees, but we were the only new party who put our goals and main aims as the fight against corruption. So we had to make a coalition. In words, of course, all my partners agreed that yes, we need an honest public administration, we need transparency. In words, in words, but in deeds they had a different schedule which manifested itself later (Interview Repse, 2004).

The JL's party program, at the time of its inception, is admittedly not very precise, filled as it is with rather vague statements of a generally positive nature. However, even so, there is an abundance of proclamations pointing to a desire to highlight harmony rather than populist animosity and to strive for the necessary state of community without a parallel process of exclusion. "We will promote pluralism, tolerance, solidarity and the strengthening of society. We will give support against all discrimination and inequality, and between women and men," as stated in the party's program from 2001.

In an article appearing at the time of the elections in 2002, the political analyst Ozolins noted that JL resembles the other center-right parties but enjoys more credibility in the economic sphere due to Einars Repse's reputation. However, that "is not what has gained most of the attention. The party has been trying to persuade voters that it is truly a party that will be responsible to the voters and that will work for the national interest." In order to substantiate that promise, JL's leaders in the pre-election campaign held a special church service where they solemnly promised that they would work in the interest of the nation (Ozolins, 2002). To use the church in such a way signals an aspiration to community-building and inclusion as well as the party leaders' sense for political drama. JL's electoral platform and party program were similar in substance, and major societal groups—farmers, pensioners, families with children, business people, doctors, teachers, but with the notable exception of the Russian minority—were promised improvements.

### *ResP*

Turning to ResP, the party founders also perceived the lack of party political experience as an asset when recruiting leading candidates as did the NDSV and JL. When being transformed into a party in December 2001, very few members—including top officials—had experience in party politics (Pettai 2004; Taagepera 2004). However, even if they represented a new force in Estonian party politics, ResP originated from a liberal-conservative political club that had already been established in 1989. The club had continued to operate throughout the 1990s when some of the leading figures decided that the time

had come to take the club into politics. “In the year 2000, some very good companions from the RP and I just raised the question, ‘what is going to happen next? Are we going to continue our activity as an intellectual, academic club for people interested in politics or are we going to do something bigger?’” recalls one of the founders, Ken-Marti Vaher (Interview Vaher, 2007).

ResP was a party that deliberately evoked a youthful image, building on its past as a youth discussion club and founded by a number of young men wanting to embody a new generation in political life and change politics into a more inclusive and participatory activity. Vaher, general secretary of the organization in 2001, describes the launch of the party as quite a risky project:

Other politicians and many authorities in society thought that this is a crazy idea. Politicians were saying to us, ‘come on, you are making some kind of a joke, young men and women, in the ages of 25 to 30, starting a new party, come on, our market is already set, the political market is already set, you have no room here’ (Interview Vaher, 2007).

The name itself is related to the concept of public spirit or public interest, presupposing that there exists a general public that has to be revived and served. “The very name of ‘Res Publica,’” writes Taagepera, “hints at public interest, the *intéret generale* neglected by the existing particularistic parties” (2006, p. 85). The ‘general interest’ referred to here could, on a superficial glance, be confused with the ‘*volonte generale*’ that Mudde (2004) refers to as essential to populism. However, ‘general interest’ should be interpreted as a focus on the necessary communal goals of public affairs and not only private or partisan interests. This is a classic vision of a government ethos and has nothing to do with opposing the people’s voice, the people’s will, to an allegedly hostile elite. ResP stressed its ambition to be a party for all people in Estonia. “There are no unimportant life spheres for us. The new party is open to anyone regardless of income, social position, or residence” (*The Baltic Times*, November 22, 2001).

The state auditor, a youngish-looking Juhan Parts, was recruited to be party leader. In a vein similar to Simeon and, in particular, Einars Repse, Juhan Parts’s persona and position were perceived as above and beyond partisanship and particular interests. This was decisive in making him the perfect embodiment of ResP’s messages, claims one of the founders. “We needed a strong person with the same image as our party: anti-corruption, transparency, against (...) money. It was a very rational choice that Parts was the best choice at that time” (Interview Veskimägi, 2007).

The ResP founders describe the party as right-of-center, a liberal party with a conservative social conscience, characterized by compassionate conservatism:

We used it (compassionate conservatism) as a slogan, the basic concept was that today all center parties have a social policy, but at that time right-of-center parties were denying social issues in the way that they dealt with economic issues and personal liberties and we believed in the concept of a peoples' party model. A modern party should also answer to all the diversity of social problems. This was our main line, so to speak (Interview Reinsalu, 2007).

Thus, ResP emphasized in its messages that liberal economy had to be combined with active social policies. Rein Taagepera, former presidential candidate and a prominent public person in Estonia, acted as advisor and 'grey eminence' (a sort of founder in the background) to the party founders. In his view, the growingly 'oligarchic' tendencies in Estonia repelled the young from going into politics or voting, and the party system had run into a dead end. The old parties had become, if not corrupt, then at least followers of the iron law of the oligarchs, so that there was no internal democracy prevailing (Interview Taagepera, 2007).

Worries ran high at the time that there was a growing intertwining of political parties and business in Estonia (a similar concern as in Latvia). "If politics represent the economic interests of concrete Estonian entrepreneurs and this kind of pushing for a better environment for business interest in the EU and with other countries then everything is OK. But if the political parties represent the concrete interests of two, three, four persons, it is very bad for the overall economic climate" (Interview Parts, 2007). Estonia was going through a political period of "big scandals in the air, privatization, railway, the Narva power plant, scandals related to the Prime Minister, Mart Laar's funding scandal, a turbulent political environment. People wanted something new, I think," explains the party's founder Veskimägi (Interview Veskimägi, 2007).

A driving force behind starting the party was thus clearly discontent with the existing system, embodied by the 'old politicians' and the linkages between politics and business. But the party was not a protest party, it was directing itself towards longer-term goals, for example changing society to a direction in which education and consequentially professional competence should become more pronounced in contrast to the empty promises of populism, as the party leader Parts emphasizes: "We had to be against social populism. What does that mean? To promise all kinds of social benefits for everybody, bigger salaries

for the teachers, nurses, employers, etc. That always happens” (Interview Parts, 2007). Vaher also emphasizes: “Our rivals were trying to say this is a protest project. But that was not our idea. As I said, we tried to fulfill a long-term vision” (Interview Vaher, 2007).

In the case of ResP, the party program speaks of a party engaged in a distinct attempt to reach out to society as a whole. The preparation of the party program was also carried out in a participatory manner, in a process of deliberation where “over 3 to 400 people were involved; we held several program seminars, discussion groups and we made them public, it was all done at the end of 2001 and at the beginning of 2002 and we publicly announced different subjects and tried to gather ideas and what were specialists' requirements and also different kinds of suggestions” (Interview Vaher, 2007). ResP was a party that accepted compromise as the lifeblood of politics. This becomes clear in the words of Party Leader Juhan Parts: “If you are going into government, you have to make compromises. You have to share responsibility with your opponents and the voters” (Interview Parts, 2007).

Summing up, the party's goals, fueled by new blood and a new ‘generation,’ were clearly highly prioritized, as was the perception that ethics in political life had to be strengthened and that politics had to be infused with higher levels of specialist competence (similar to the visions of the NDSV and JL). ResP embraced political compromise and never challenged democratic institutions in favor of the direct voice of the people.

## Discussion

The NDSV, JL, and ResP are part of a broader group of what has previously been labeled ‘center-populist,’ ‘liberal populist,’ and ‘unorthodox’ parties. This categorization is questioned in this article based on the ambitions of these parties to position themselves as makers, not breakers, of the states that they aspired to lead. Particularly the former central bank director Einars Repse and the former king Simeon were seen as being above and beyond partisan politics and appeared as credible in their roles as unifiers able to create a new, less polarized and corrupt community out of the nation. ResP, in contrast, was more of a collective political project, growing out of an association for political debate that had already been founded in 1989. The party leader, head of the State Audit Agency Juhan Parts, was recruited late in the process, a younger public official with a technocratic appearance. However, the choice of this technocratic image was deliberate, as it portrayed the two things ResP wanted to communicate: a nonpartisan and integrity-oriented profile. As with the other two party leaders, Juhan Parts's previous position as a longtime bystander

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rather than participant in the political game rendered him beneficial political capital at the time. Hence, all three party leaders could appear as principally untainted by the political life of the 1990s, which allowed them to instead bring to the fore nonpartisan expertise linked to economics and business.

Returning to the three analytical tools identified in the theoretical section by which to assess the degree of populism within a party – antagonism, anti-institutionalism, and fundamentalism – Table 1 summarizes how these parties fared in these areas. None of the parties bear any traces of approaching the electorate with antagonistically formulated slogans about ‘the pure people’ and ‘the evil elite(s)’ or by using uncivil language. All three parties, as we have seen, were united in their emphasis on social harmony, unity, and of being parties in service of the public spirit and an inclusive society. Their points of departure, remarkably similar to one another, come through in each case as a concern for the country and its future. This led them all to criticize the present political culture in a manner that could be interpreted as populist but which contains no actual traces of anti-institutionalism or antagonism. Such criticism was moreover never done in the populist manner of opposing ‘the people’ with ‘the elite,’ and furthermore was based on observations and analysis that pointed to severe problems involving the intertwining of business and politics at the time.

**Table 1: The Populist Traits of the NDSV, JL and ResP**

<b>Trait/Party</b>	<b>NDSV (Bulgaria)</b>	<b>JL (Latvia)</b>	<b>ResP Estonia)</b>
<b>Antagonism</b>	No, explicitly puts forward the need to work with “old” elites.	No, critical but points to the need for coalition.	No, inclusive approach even if critical towards older parties,
<b>Anti-institutionalism</b>	No, emphasizes constitutionalism.	No, aims at strengthening political institutions.	No, aims at strengthening political institutions.
<b>Fundamentalism</b>	No, emphasizes pragmatism.	To some extent, but underline nuances.	No, underlines compromise.

This universalist vision, e.g. not singling out certain groups but embracing society as a whole, bears interesting resemblance to parties that emerged during the troubled inter-war period in Europe, which was struggling with the

alienation that had come with industrialization and urbanization. Propagating for a politics of inclusive ‘people’s homes’ and the restoration of a lost community, parties such as the Social Democrats but also the National-Socialists and Fascists attracted many followers. “With economic collapse and social chaos threatening much of Europe, publics began to renew their demands for the stability, community, and social protection that modern capitalist societies seemed unable to provide,” writes Berman in an analysis of early 20th century Europe (2006, p. 5). In post-communist polities, the early 2000s was a period where a similar social uprooted-ness was manifest among populations, which brought forward parties that tried to promote community.

The NDSV, JL, and ResP did not expose anti-institutionalist attitudes in their outlooks in the populist manner of opposing failing state institutions, such as the parliament or the government, or promoting a the direct voice of the people. On the contrary, Simeon explicitly referred to the constitutionalism of Bulgaria, Mr. Repse explicitly declared that he wanted to reform the existing system, as did Mr. Parts, the latter two being manifestations of these same institutions as central bank director and state auditor. If anything, they wanted to strengthen the existing institutions and make them work more efficiently and in the interest of the public. ResP and JL were the parties that out of the three most prominently propagated the rule of law and the need of a more law-abiding but also rule-governed society. Their critique of corruption should be interpreted in those terms rather than as antagonistically opposing the people to the elites. While the NDSV in particular embraced a rhetoric in which Simeon was pictured almost as a savior of the suffering Bulgarian people— a rhetoric easily adaptable also to populist content—this was not tied to anti-systemic ambitions.

In terms of fundamentalism, all three parties positioned themselves as center-right and/or liberal-conservative, and, the NDSV, JL, and ResP all campaigned on an economically liberal agenda, stressing the need for tax cuts among other things, as well as EU and NATO membership. They appear as highly pragmatic rather than fundamentalist, with JL the most fundamentalist and with more practiced principles of integrity than the others (which also may have made JL more sustainably popular). The NDSV articulated its ambition as searching for compromise and cooperation in a modern European way, as did ResP, and all three governed in coalitions with other parties and regarded the process as part of representative democracy. Nowhere is it possible to find traces of an unwillingness to compromise, which would signal a populist worldview of ‘easy solutions’; on the contrary, Simeon openly articulated the party’s willingness to work with both new and old elites, and Einars Repse, even while wishing for a

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majority, clearly realized and endorsed the need for coalition work in a political system such as in Latvia.

Summing up, the analysis has shown that in terms of the three dimensions used to depict populism, none indicate that it is correct to define the NDSV, JL, or ResP as populists. These parties were fully non-populist. In Bulgaria, it was instead the 2005 elections that saw the first Bulgarian populist party, Ataka, led by Volen Siderov, gain parliamentary representation on a program based on anti-Semitism and anti-establishment ideas while attacking Turks and Roma, Bulgarian minorities, and also articulating an outright hostility to the EU (Ghodsee, 2008). Ataka exposed both a deeply entrenched conflict-oriented worldview and “was the first party to attack parliamentary democracy from within” (Christova, 2010, p. 225). The contrast to the pragmatic and unifying NDSV could not be starker.

Further supporting our interpretation of the Latvian JL as a thoroughly non-populist party is an article that appeared recently in which an evaluation of the degree of populism based on an analysis of Latvian party manifestos is carried out. Balcere (2014) finds that for JL the percentage is 0.00 in the 2002 elections. Based on a qualitative content analysis that captures the combined people-centeredness and anti-establishment elements that this article also regards as the core message of populism, she finds that populism in Latvia generally has been embraced by new but electorally unsuccessful parties. The nonstarter of populism in Latvia is supported by Jakobson et al. (2012, p. 58) who claim that “populism tends to be rather modestly represented in the party manifestos as well as in the media.” In Estonia, in a similar vein, populism has not taken root (Jakobson et al. 2012, p. 72).

### **Conclusions**

The successful breakthrough of new parties in some of the post-communist polities in the early 2000s was not propelled by populist messages of antagonism, anti-institutionalism, and simplified fundamentalism. Whereas previous literature on post-communist party politics, directly or indirectly, has led us to believe that the NDSV, JL, and ResP represented yet another type of East European populism, this article has shown that what they brought to the political table was a much desired and much needed vision of a restored community after a decade of social, economic, and political turmoil. At a time when partisan politics and a multi-party system had been in place for about ten years in post-communist Europe, fertile soil had been created for parties with a message of social harmony to appear on the scene. They thereby represented a



significant trend with substantial implications for future developments in the post-communist polities in case, a trend which has gone mainly unnoticed.

The thoughtless and routine use of the concept of populism, with its highly negative connotations similar to the use in other contexts of negatively imprinted concepts such as ‘failed state’ or ‘corruption,’ has thus helped to obscure a reality that is actually much more complex and nuanced than these labels lead us to believe. In the case of post-communist democracies, the use of the concepts of populism have to a large extent been born out of prejudice that these newly enfranchised voters were much more immature than their counterparts in the old democracies, easily falling prey to simplification and strong-armed leaders, whereas the parties were cynically acting manipulators. In advanced western democracies, where populism today is being used all the more frequently in classifying a variance of parties of a “non-established” character, populism definitely runs the risk of being emptied of the analytical strength that is particularly needed when parties that actually do combine the dangerous cocktail of antagonism, anti-institutionalism, and fundamentalism, are threatening civilized political life.

The parties revisited in this article did not strive to further polarize their societies, to challenge democratic institutions, or to promote outlooks colored in black and white. Instead, they contributed to strengthening the state and probably halted growing polarization by insisting on the legitimacy of *public* and not only particular interests, however shying away from the populist concept of the people’s will. While causally difficult to prove since we are discussing contra-factual developments, party politics in the countries where these early bridge-builders appeared has developed in a manner which is, relatively speaking, more benevolent than in Hungary, Poland, or even Slovenia. The latter countries did not experience similarly troublesome political party struggles in the 1990s, and consequentially did not bring forward bridge-builders of the type portrayed here in the early 2000s. However, the conflicts buried under a seemingly growing consensus have instead burst later and with severe consequences for constitutional and liberal democratic practices.

In Latvia and in Estonia populism has not gained much ground over the 25 years that have passed since democratic elections were first held in 1992 and 1993. This makes these small Baltic countries unique in a European-wide landscape of far-right and far-left populists holding parliamentary and even governmental representation in almost every country. In Bulgaria, populism entered the parliamentary scene with Ataka in 2005, as discussed above, but the

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universalist tradition introduced by the NDSV continued in the form of, for example, GERB, who entered parliament in 2009.

What these developments generally could tell us, is that highly polarized party politics, however dangerous, can give rise also to influential political counter-responses. Embracing inclusion and community, such counter-responses, as we saw in Eastern Europe, could well contribute to reinforce civilized political culture, providing a vaccine against the majority of voters being led on by real populists. In the times experienced in the west right now, this should come as an insight that should make for some inspiration.

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## **Interviews**

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Urmas Reinsalu, founder Res Publica, Tallinn, 2007-06-13

Rein Taagepera, r advisor, Res Publica, Tartu, 2007-06-12

Ken-Marti Vaher, founder Res Publica, Tallinn, 2007-06-13

Taavi Veskimägi, founder Res Publica, Tallinn, 2007-06-14

### **Latvia**

Einars Repse, Party Leader Jaunais Laiks, Riga, 2004-09-29

Krisjanis Karins, Co-party Leader, Riga, 2008-02-11

Atis Slakteris, Chairman Tautas Partei, Riga, 2003-10-21

### **Bulgaria**

Ognian Gerdjikov, member of the NDSV's founding team, lawyer, Sofia, 2008-11-07

Lyubov Panayotova, leading politician UDF, Sofia, 2008-11-05

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## **MAKING EDUCATION WORK: SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND PERFORMANCE**

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### **Abstract**

The autonomy of schools is often considered to be improving school performance. However, there is some evidence that there could be conditional factors for such a relationship. This article analyzes the effect of social capital on the relationship between school autonomy and its performance. The study is based upon a new public management approach and uses PISA test data across more than 1,500 schools and multi-level modelling to answer the question. The results suggest that performance of schools is dependent on the level of social capital in the country. Autonomy of schools in countries with more social capital has a positive effect on performance, while autonomy of schools in countries with less social capital brings a negative effect for school performance. The results invite policy-makers for a more customized approach to educational reforms.

**Keywords:** education, school autonomy, performance, social capital

### **Introduction**

As part of a global phenomenon, many countries have enacted policies to increase autonomy in schools with the overall goal of higher performance. Such a shift towards more autonomy has become mainstream and has even been pushed forward by various international institutions, including the World Bank (SABER 2015; Bonal 2002). However, despite the direction that the educational policies across the world are shifting to, academia points out the ambiguity of the influence of autonomy on school performance and the uncertainty of its outcomes when combined with moderating factors. On the one hand, school autonomy can increase performance by allowing tailoring school policies to the needs of the constituencies the schools are serving and

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increasing efficiency (Fuchs and Woessmann 2004; Galiani et al. 2005), easing decision-making procedures (Patrinos et al. 2009) and facilitating monitoring of the implementation of the decisions within schools (Ahmad et al. 2005). On the other hand, school performance can be brought down in the presence of particular conditions, including increasing transaction costs, opening opportunities for corruption and making accountability difficult (see Galiani et al. [2005] for an example on Argentina). Among such conditions are income inequality (Fertig 2003), low economic development in a country (Hanushek et al. 2013), lack of accountability mechanisms in a school (see OECD [2011] on standardized tests), and a low social capital (Gamarnikow & Green 1999; Pil & Leanna 2006).

Granted, low levels of social capital, taken as interpersonal trust in this article, is largely considered as a factor which undermines performance of any organization (see, for example, Dirks [1999], Colquitt et al. [2007]). Nevertheless, there is to-date no scholarship on the influence of social capital on the relationship between school autonomy and performance. This article fills in this gap and is contributing to the body of literature on the topic by exploring the moderating effect of social capital on school autonomy and performance. While the policy design that gives schools more autonomy is aimed at increasing its performance, human factors, such as level of social capital, may distort the relationship.

The article addresses the research question by using a multi-level modelling technique for the analysis of the data from PISA test (OECD 2015). The analysis uses two levels of analysis – school- and country- levels. The model includes variables on test scores, social capital levels, degree of autonomy and school accountability, average social-economic background of students and controls for ownership type and school area. The results of the study have a direct practical relevance and serve as reference point for educational policy makers. It is especially important in light of the World Bank and alike institutions' policies on education in their beneficiary countries. By initiating a discussion on the role of social capital, this article helps decision-makers create more tailored policies which take into account specificities of the countries they work in. Additionally, the article makes a contribution to a theoretical body of research on school autonomy, extending the empirical scope of the existing studies and including social capital dimension in the discussion.

The notion of autonomy of schools can refer to several concepts; thus, it is important to clarify the matter in a framework of this article. As World Bank reports (SABER 2013), autonomy of schools is a form of management of



schools in which they are provided with the authority to do decision-making in relation to their activities, including, but not limited to, hiring and firing of personnel, management budget, evaluation of teachers and teaching practice. This article considers autonomy in formation of school curriculum and hiring and firing teachers. The choice is dictated by the fact that these two indicators vary in terms of the type of autonomy they capture: one is dedicated to school management and the other – to teaching activities. The variation will allow broader conclusions on the effects of autonomy on performance.

The sample used in the study consists of eight countries from the post-Soviet region<sup>1</sup>. Their similarities make it possible to control for many other factors which can affect the performance in schools. The countries in the post-Soviet region have common historical developments and are similar in political, economic and social dimensions. In addition, many countries in the region underwent similar educational reforms to meet the conditions of loans provided by international institutions after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Silova 2009). Educational systems in the countries in the sample are, in fact, rather similar. All countries have at least nine compulsory grades. Generally, after the ninth grade, pupils can choose to continue with upper secondary education or to go for a vocational education track. Most of countries also have a large proportion of schools operating in minority languages, where the prevalent language is Russian, and in most cases education is provided free of charge. These similarities ensure comparability of schools across the sample.

The article will next outline theoretical basis of the study and the hypotheses, followed by a section on methodology, including justification for focusing on the post-Soviet region and the model used in the analysis. The empirical analysis section introduces the results of the multi-level modelling and leads to the conclusion of the article.

### **Theoretical underpinnings**

To understand the role of school autonomy for performance it is important to dig deeper into the New Public Management. The approach rests on several theoretical underpinnings. The New Public Management is closely related to three theories, considered to be the basis for the mechanisms of the effect of autonomy on performance: Public Choice, transaction costs economics and agency theories.

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<sup>1</sup> Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, and Russian Federation. Read more about their educational systems in appendix.

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### *New Public Management*

Looking through the lens of the Public Choice theory (Buchanan & Tollison 1984), one could argue that granting schools autonomy is based on the assumption that the principals and other decision-making bodies within a school are rational and will do everything in their power to increase efficiency of the school. Speaking in terms of the autonomy for decisions in curriculum and personnel management, it would imply that autonomy allows schools to choose the best fitting course choices for the student pool and most qualified personnel for attracting more and better students and, thus, receiving more funds. This, in turn, may improve performance. Decisions of the similar kind on the higher level of decision making would not provide the same efficiency, because school administration is on the grassroots level and more aware of the ways to make the curriculum and personnel fit more efficient. Thus, this mechanism is based on the ability of autonomous actors within schools to tailor the curriculum and to choose best fitting teachers for higher efficiency.

Transaction costs economics gives insights into how established relationships between actors can reduce transactions costs – costs related to search for trusted partners, establishing partnerships and for cooperation, as well as ex-post monitoring of the contract enforcement (Tolofari 2005). Following King and Ozler (1998), if one considers schools to be as any other business, then it is possible to see the system of costs which are involved into decision-making processes undergoing in schools. School autonomy decreases the amount of transaction costs involved into decision-making process: schools which have the autonomy can reach agreements internally and externally faster, as the actors on the lower level of administration are more familiar to each other and transaction costs for establishment of the partnerships and reaching agreements are lower. It, in turn, would increase efficiency and school performance by allocating resources to the areas which are most relevant for school performance. Thus, this mechanism is based on the premise of easier decision-making procedures in schools which possess autonomy.

Finally, as for the agency theory, Eisenhardt (1989) describes it as relevant for “employer-employee, lawyer-client, buyer-supplier, and other agency relationships” (p.60). He argues that the relationships are potentially under danger of asymmetry of information. As an implication for the educational sector, principals in schools with more autonomy (being it the principal, parental or teachers’ board or all of the above) would find it easier to monitor the agents and to track whether their decisions are being implemented, and whether the curriculum is being put in place as designed. In terms of personnel management, school autonomy allows choosing the teachers which fit in terms

of the vision of the school operation and development and that may ease the monitoring. Thus, this mechanism is based on the premise of monitoring the agents by the principals.

The literature also widely discusses the effects of autonomy. Generally speaking, New Public Management scholars consider an increase in a degree of autonomy as one of the measures for a more efficient public sector functioning (Tolofari 2005), as it brings public sector closer to the needs of the territory it is governing (Esceland & Filmer 2002). Schools which have obtained autonomy in school management policies demonstrate higher performance; for example, academy schools in the UK achieve higher scores in standardized tests due to different incentives structure to improve the performance comparing to other schools (Welsh & McGinn 1999; Machin & Vernoit 2011). Clark (2009) also suggests that schools which were able to use their funds to attract the best teachers managed to achieve the best test scores. Apart from the impact of teachers, there is also an emphasis on curriculum as playing a role in determining school performance. Hoxby and Rockoff (2004) show that US charter schools, which have autonomy in decisions over curriculum, perform better on average, since they are able to tailor it according to the students' needs. Another study on American schools (Hannaway & Carnoy 1993) also suggests that the schools which were more autonomous due to pressure for inclusion of minorities in decision-making perform better.

### *Social Capital*

Despite the evidence for the positive effect of school autonomy on school performance, there can be other factors that interfere with this relationship. Literature widely points out that social capital, operationalized as interpersonal trust, is an important factor decisive for performance in organizations (see, for example, Gamarnikow and Green [1999]). Putnam et al. (1993), in their classical work on governance in Italy, argue that cooperation and lack of enforced coercion make institutions more efficient. They refer to the transaction costs theory (mentioned above) and argue that bigger social capital - thus, stronger informal institutions - lead to lower transaction costs and, similarly, higher efficiency of the public sector (see also Welzel et al. [2005]).

Social capital may then have an impact on the relationship between school autonomy and performance and on all three mechanisms through which the above mentioned relationship can work. Social capital enhances linkages between people and makes interaction smoother, increasing positive effect of autonomy on performance. It increases information flow and eases communication and solidarity, enhancing the mechanisms outlined earlier. On

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the other hand, societies with low social capital make it difficult for autonomy to work in the predicted direction. Decision-makers of schools in such societies may encounter difficulties with finding reliable information before taking efficiency-motivated decisions. They may also find it harder to come to an agreement with other actors involved in decision-making process and may also experience difficulties with monitoring agents. These conditions require additional efforts and resources spent by the decision-making actors, which, in turn, distract from dedicating those to students. This is expected to decrease the performance and make school autonomy an ineffective measure in societies with low social capital.

The literature provides support for the argument of the importance of social capital for school performance. Pil and Leanna (2006) find that higher levels of social capital bring higher performance of the students because of the frequency and quality of interactions and understanding in the learning process, as well as, particularly, in class discussions. In their study, Pil and Leanna also argue that linkages with external to school actors provide access to key providers of resources. Carbonaro (1998) suggests that social capital, manifested as frequent interaction between students' parents increases the information flow and makes it easier to monitor children.

Also, parents get the ability to judge upon the values which could be transferred from their child's friend' parents to their own child, and "filter" the unwanted people. Similarly, better information flow between parents and school administration provides better fitting school policies when the school is given autonomy, thus increasing school achievements in standardized tests (Sun 1998). Social capital also increases trustworthiness and solidarity (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns 1998), which, in turn, make decision-making process easier and increase levels of compliance, leading to higher efficiency of school and better performance. Higher level of social capital also improves climate in school, which Ho (2005) argues contributes to school performance. Although the literature is rich in discussing effects of school autonomy and social capital on school performance, however, no study was dedicated to investigating the interplay of the social capital, operationalized here as interpersonal trust, and the relationship between the school autonomy and its performance. This study is aimed at covering the gap and investigating this matter.

These theoretical underpinnings help us derive and further test the hypotheses. The hypotheses are that (H1) social capital levels have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between school autonomy and performance; (H2) schools in countries with higher social capitals which enjoy

higher autonomy perform better and (H3) schools in countries with lower social capital which enjoy higher autonomy perform worse.

## Methodology

Below is the model which is going to be used for the analysis, where (I) is school level and (II) is state level variables.

$$\text{school performance(I)} = \beta_1 * \text{school autonomy (I)} + \beta_2 * \text{social capital (II)} + \beta_3 * \text{school autonomy} * \text{social capital} + \beta_3 * \text{school external accountability (I)} + \beta_4 * \text{average socio-economic status of families in school (I)} + \beta_5 * \text{average education of parents in school (I)} + \beta_6 * \text{rural/urban location (I)} + \beta_7 * \text{school ownership (I)} + \beta_8 * \text{country economic development (II)}$$

The dependent variable is school performance. It is a school-level variable, which is operationalized as an average student test scores for schools for math classes. The choice of using math scores was made because it, along with reading, is a major subject in all of the school curricula. However, math scores provide more advantages over reading scores due to the linguistic issue present in the schools in the region. As was mentioned in the introduction, there are a lot of minority schools in the region, which operate in a language different from the national language, which could result in inconsistent results across and within the countries. This variable originally exists only on the individual student level in the dataset, thus individual values were combined into averages per school for the analysis.

The main independent variable is autonomy of a school. The variable is operationalized in two ways: as autonomy in decisions related to forming curriculum and autonomy in decisions on hiring teachers, because these indicators provide highest variance in the type of decisions delegated to the school. Such choice covers both what students are taught and what kind of personnel teaches them. The indicators are based on the answers to the questionnaires given out to the principals of schools participating in PISA. Each of the variables is recoded as a dummy (“0”- responsibility solely lies on the shoulders of municipal, regional or national authorities, “1” – responsibility solely belongs to an actor within a school, be it principal, teachers or board of parents).

Another important independent variable is the level of social capital in a country. There is a lot of controversy in the literature on how to operationalize the concept of social capital. Bjornskov (2006) criticizes the use of indices which combine all three elements proposed by Putnam (1993), being trust,

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norms and networks, as he argues that those describe distinct features of societies and combination of those do not lead to meaningful indices. He comes to a conclusion that social trust alone serves as a driver for good governance in societies. Newton (2001) also argues that social trust is the most important element in the definition of social capital. Van Deth (2003), in turn, through meta-analysis reports that social trust is among the most common ways to measure social capital (see also Knack [2002] and de Mello [2004]). Thus, for the purpose of this article, social trust is used to narrow down the concept of social capital. It is operationalized using variable from World Value, wave 6 (2015) and European Value Surveys, wave 4 (2015): “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?”. The answers were recoded as “1”- most people can be trusted, “0” - need to be very careful.

There is also a number of control variables. First, as was pointed out by the literature mentioned in the introduction, it is important to take into consideration how accountable the school is to external authorities. PISA dataset contains a question on presence of standardized tests as a measure of student assessment. It is coded as a dummy, where “0”- no standardized tests present in the school and “1”- school uses standardized tests for student assessment. Another control variable is an average socio-economic background of the students in the sample. One could argue that wealthier schools may perform better merely due to the fact that they have more resources both in school and at students’ homes, or that students from poorer families are forced to choose schools with lower quality (Currie & Thomas [1998]), instead of being affected by autonomous school policies. Controlling for this will allow teasing out the effect of autonomy. The variable is continuous and is operationalized by averaging student-level answers from student questionnaire (“How many computers do you have at home?”) per school as a proxy for socio-economic background. A variable on average educational level of parents in school is also included, because it may determine average student achievements in a school (discussed in Bauer & Riphahn [2006]). It is an ordinal variable and operationalized from 1 to 6, corresponding to the OECD recognized levels of education. Another socio-economic variable used is GDP per capita to account for a country-level wealth of schools, as it is viewed as a potential determinant for schools’ performance (Hanushek et al. 2013). Finally, variables on rural or urban location, which also reflect socio-economic and demographic variance (see a discussion by Cartwright & Allen (2002) (where “1”- the school is located in a city, “0”- in a rural area) and public or private ownership of the school, potential effect of which is discussed by Vandenberghe & Robin (2004) (where “1”- the school is

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private, “o”- public) are also accounted for.

To address the above mentioned research question it is possible to use the data from Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test (PISA 2015). This large dataset includes extensive information both on student and school levels of analysis, contents not only information on performance but also various socioeconomic indicators necessary for controlling the results. The test is conducted across more than 60 countries among the 15 year-olds. The test is conducted in three subjects: reading, math and science (PISA 2015). PISA is largely used in the literature on school performance; however, it has various limitations. The major one relevant for this study is that because PISA is held across eight countries, there may be a danger that the translations of the test questions do not mean the same across the languages of the test conducted everywhere, and measured concepts can be different across different contexts (Mazzio & van Davier 2008).

Multi-level modelling used for the analysis of hierarchical data in this study allows taking into account the variance among the different groups. Interaction effect has been included for accounting the interplay and conditioning of the effect of social capital in the country on relationship between school autonomy and performance. Multi-level modelling allows providing a test for such cross-level interaction effect (Western 1998; Steenbergen & Bradford 2002).

### **School autonomy across the world and in the Post-Soviet region**

Although this study focuses on a sample of Post-Soviet states, school autonomy is not a new idea from a Post-Soviet era and existed around the world for decades. For example, after Franco's death Spain granted more responsibilities to schools (Fiske 1996), while on the other side of the world, in Brazil, the shift towards more school autonomy took place during 90-s to increase education attainment rates (Derqui 2001). Attempting to reach more efficiency, Zimbabwe has also granted more autonomy to schools (Fiske 1996; Chikoko 2006). The shift towards more autonomy has also taken place in the post-Soviet countries which have experienced both political and economic transition in the 90s. It also got reflected into the transformation of the education systems in the region and mirrors the trends towards more school autonomy which could be observed in other parts of the world. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the governments went for a number of structural changes and shared authority in decision making with lower levels of administration (Eklof et al. 2004). The shift for granting more autonomy to schools was pursued for both political and economic reasons. Zajda (2003)

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argues that in order to decrease the pressure on national budgets, the governments have spread the responsibilities over education policies and budget formulation across the regional authorities and further down the administrative ladder. Zajda (2007, p.202) suggests autonomy in education can be seen as a shift towards “greater efficiency in cost saving, global competitiveness, technological supremacy, social change and accountability”.

Thus, one of the reasons for granting schools more autonomy is the idea that existing school structures are not flexible enough for fitting the needs of students and their parents. He argues that in Eastern Europe, as well as in other developing countries, there has been a trend towards decentralization in education sector due to more democratic and accountable practices, assumed by autonomy, more responsiveness to the local needs and boosting amount of funds available to a school by introducing competition in the sector (p.8). Thus, autonomy in schools is spread all over the world where the measures were undertaken for various reasons, but, however, were generally considered as increasing transparency, accountability and participation of important stakeholders in school management. The process has come to the post-Soviet region considerably later, however, followed the same path as in other parts of the globe.

### **Empirical Analysis**

Below descriptive statistics is presented in Table 1. It shows that the average level of education of the students’ parents in schools is equal to a value of 5,1, which corresponds to ISCED 5B educational program<sup>2</sup>. Also, countries in the sample demonstrate below OECD average performance in math (the mean is 421.14). Average number of computers belonging to students in schools in the sample own is below 1 and most of the schools in the sample are from small towns or villages and the vast majority is public schools. Descriptive statistics also show that the countries in the sample range significantly in terms of GDP per capita (the minimum is 570,30\$, the maximum is 8573,00\$). Most of the schools in the sample are autonomous in matters related to hiring of teachers (mean is equal to 0,82), and have considerable autonomy in relation to decisions on curriculum in school (mean is 0.58).

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<sup>2</sup> “[Such] programmes are typically shorter than those of tertiary-type A and focus on practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programmes. They have a minimum duration of two years full-time equivalent at the tertiary level” (OECD, 2015).



**Table 1: Descriptive statistics**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. dev	N
Math Score	203.58	669.41	421.14	68.16	1448
Hiring Autonomy	0.00	1.00	0.82	0.38	1448
Curriculum Autonomy	0.00	1.00	0.58	0.49	1448
Trust	29.10	41.70	0.3	0.09	1448
Standardized Tests	0.00	1.00	0.92	0.28	1448
Number Computers	1.00	4.00	1.67	0.6	1448
Parents' Education	2.91	6.00	5.1	0.49	1448
City School	0.00	1.00	0.43	0.5	1448
Private School	0.00	1.00	0.03	0.16	1448
GDP	570.30	8573.00	4162.64	2810.71	1448

Note: Values after removal of missing values. The indicated mean value for highest level of parents' education is a median as the variable is ordinal.

There is moderate correlation ( $r=-0.56$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) between GDP per capita and an average number of computers, as both are controls for social-economic factors. Such relationship between the variables will be taken into account at the stage of modelling the data by removing correlated variables and observing whether coefficients change.

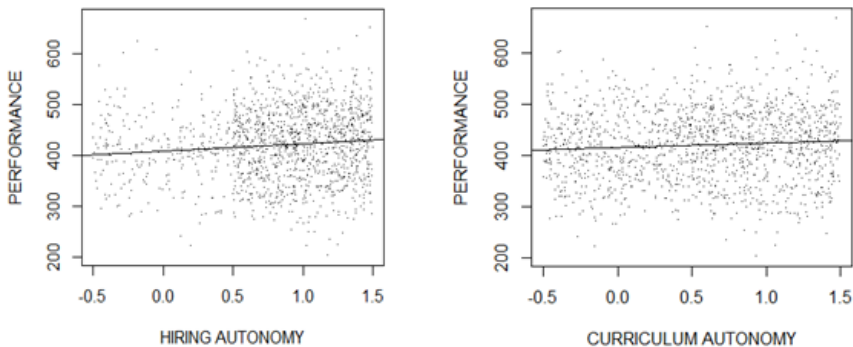
**Figure 1: School performance vs. school autonomy**

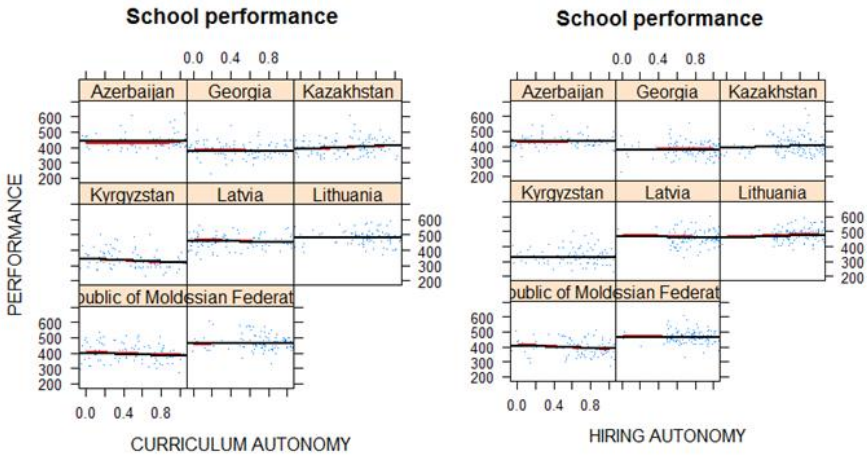
Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of cases along the dimensions of math test scores and school autonomy, operationalized as dummies for hiring and

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curriculum autonomy. It shows that when pooled, there is a sign of a positive relationship between the two variables. Thus, it is possible to suggest that autonomy on average may have a positive effect on school performance in schools in a post-Soviet region. However, when divided by country, the picture changes.

Figure 2 below indicates mixed evidence for the relationship between school autonomy and performance in post-Soviet countries. In particular, Figure 2 shows that the correlation between the two variables becomes less evident once separated by country and for some countries (Moldova, for example) the relationship may be negative. These plots, however, do not take into account control variables, and the variable on social capital, which is the focus of this study. Thus, further investigation is required for drawing conclusions.

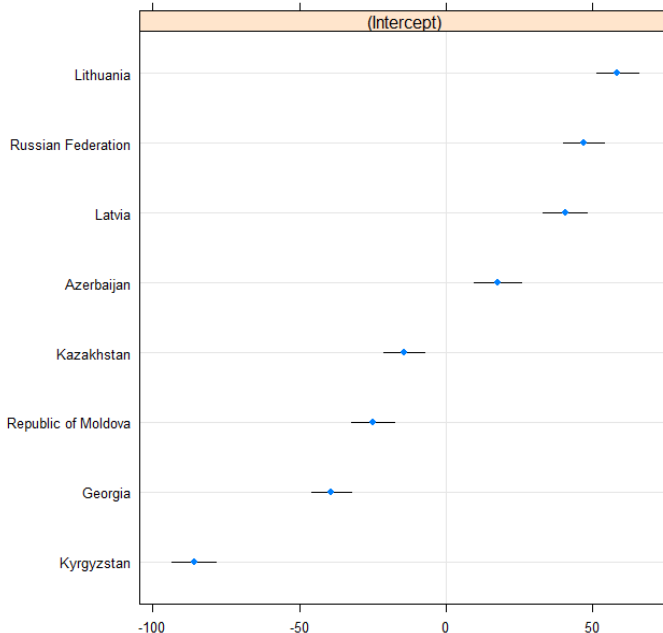
**Figure 2: School performance vs. school autonomy by country**



It is worth noting that there is a variation in autonomy in schools within countries. In general, this variation is unusual as national policy is expected to define the autonomy level in schools, making the sample of schools within each country more homogeneous. There are, however, several explanations for this variation. The first possible explanation is that principals who fill-in PISA questionnaires interpret the questions in different ways, and autonomy in decisions may refer to a school's discretion to make a choice among possible options set by a higher authority or to an actual right to make their own decision (Maslowski et al. 2007; Orazem et al. 2004). The variance can also be explained by informal institutions, which are a common phenomenon in the region (Welter & Smallbone 2011). The informal relations between school

principals and, for example, municipal authorities can define how much authority is given to the principal, despite the national policy. Finally, the variance can be explained by the fact that in some countries there are specific types of schools which have more autonomy than others. For example, in Russia, since 2006 a school can become autonomous if it wants to upon authorization by a municipality (Gosudarstvennaya Duma 2006). Unfortunately, the data set does not include indicators for controlling this, the analysis will be done using data which has such variation within countries.

**Figure 3. Intercepts per country**



The plots for bivariate relationships demonstrate that there is a small variance across the countries in the sample for several variables, such as average level of parents' education per school, for example. It suggested testing whether random slopes are needed for those variables. Inclusion of several of them and comparison of the change in Log-Likelihood showed that inclusion of random effects for pupils' socio-economic background and parents' education provide the best fitting model<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, random intercept was also included for several reasons. First, Figure 3 indicates a plot for random intercept model,

<sup>3</sup> Log-Likelihood is -7484.188 comparing to fixed effect model -7530.714 for hiring autonomy, and -7481.352 comparing to -7527.6 for curriculum autonomy

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which shows that there are differences in intercepts across the countries in the sample, which gives a hint that there should be random intercept included into the model. Second, during the analysis ANOVA test was run to test whether inclusion of random intercept adds up to the explanatory power of the model, and it was significant both statistically and substantially. Finally, and most importantly, intraclass correlation coefficient is equal to 0.49, which suggests that 49% of variance in school performance can be explained by belonging to a particular country.<sup>4</sup> This is a very high number, which shows that the schools in the same countries are very much similar to each other in terms of the test scores. It can be explained by the fact that schools are strongly embedded within the same educational systems, and could be influenced by country-specific economic realities. This also provides support for the choice of the statistical method<sup>5</sup>.

The comparison between tables 2 and 3 demonstrates that there is no significant difference between results for multi-level models with school autonomy in personnel management and curriculum. For both tables, models V which include random slopes provide the best fit, Log-Likelihoods are the lowest for those models. Analysing the results one can conclude that on average higher parents' education in school predicts higher average test score in math subject per school. This result is both statistically and substantially significant. Also schools in which student pool has a better socio-economic background perform on average worse ( $\beta \approx -35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Inclusion of variable on presence of standardized tests did not show the results which were identified in the academic literature, the indicator was neither substantially nor statistically significant, and school autonomy indicators did not change their coefficients after the inclusion of the variable. Finally, the results also show that schools which are located in cities or towns perform better on math test, as well as do private schools. As for the country-level variables, the analysis shows that the countries with a higher GDP per capita have their schools performing on average slightly better ( $\beta = 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Having in mind the results of the correlation analysis between independent variables, it was decided to remove correlated variables one after another from the model. Nevertheless, after removal of a variable GDP, other estimators and their

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<sup>4</sup> The random effects show that there is significant variation between countries. Overall, social-economic background of students per school and average parents' education vary from positive to negative across the sample which also provide support for the choice of inclusion of random slopes into the model.

<sup>5</sup> More about intra-class correlation and multi-level modelling is available in Steenbergen and Bradford (2002).

statistical significance remained the same. Thus, since the variable is necessary theoretically, it was left in the model.

For almost all models, school autonomy has a small negative effect on school performance. Nevertheless, once the model on hiring autonomy includes random slopes, the coefficient for school autonomy becomes positive (see Table 2). It was decided to do a robustness check to clarify this ambiguity, and school autonomy was also operationalized as a sum of dummies for all dimensions in PISA questionnaire: “responsibility of student admission”, “responsibility of hiring teachers”, “responsibility of textbook use”, “responsibility of course content” and “responsibility of courses offered”. The scale was used as another way of operationalization of the school autonomy variable. The results of the analysis show that all coefficients keep approximately the same values and school autonomy remains its negative sign, though it is still statistically insignificant ( $p=0.22$ ). Thus, it is possible to conclude that there may be an evidence that school autonomy may have a slight negative effect on school performance in post-Soviet region, however, since the result is not statistically significant, for making stronger conclusions more research needs to be done. Possible negative effect can be referred to underdeveloped institutes in the country and lack of strong culture of accountability and transparency, as suggested by Galiani et al. (2008). As was mentioned previously, they argued that giving more autonomy to schools may be harmful in countries where there are big chances and possibilities for opportunistic behaviour, cronyism and corruption.

The tables also differ in coefficients for the interaction between school autonomy and social capital. Both coefficients are positive, however, only interaction term for curriculum autonomy is statistically significant ( $\beta=53.03$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). For a robust check, a scale of dummies on different dimensions of autonomy mentioned above was again used for running the model. The results demonstrate that, interaction effect is both statistically and substantially significant in predicting math scores ( $\beta=19.15$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) when using the scale variable on school autonomy. Thus, the interaction effect between social capital and school autonomy may be important not only in the case of responsibilities for curriculum design, but for other forms of autonomy as well. This provides support for hypothesis H1.

The coefficient of the interaction term shows the difference in coefficients for curriculum autonomy between two countries which differ by one point in social

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capital. Having in mind that the variables were grand-mean centred, the interpretation goes as following (Hayes 2006). For the schools in countries which are one point of social capital higher than the average, the coefficient for curriculum autonomy is equal to  $-0.06 + (53.03) = 52,97$ . On the other hand, for the schools in countries which are one point of social capital below the average, the coefficient for curriculum autonomy is equal to  $-0.06 - (53.03) = -53.09$ . Thus, substantially, the effect of school autonomy on performance is positive in countries with more social capital, while in countries with lower social capital autonomous schools may be disadvantaged, as school autonomy has a negative effect on performance in those countries. This provides support for the hypotheses H2 and H3 of this study and underlines importance of social capital for specific type of school autonomy.

Tables 2 and 3 also present results for a pooled OLS regression model. As was previously observed with plots, when the observations are pooled together, the relationship between curriculum autonomy and performance appears to be positive and statistically significant, while hiring autonomy is negatively correlated with school performance. Presence of standardized test for a model on curriculum autonomy also turns to be positive, although remains statistically insignificant. Interaction effect turns out to be negative for pooled regression model for hiring autonomy. Nevertheless, using OLS model violates the assumption of errors independence, and as intra-class correlation coefficient demonstrated, observations within groups are inter-related, thus, OLS is not an appropriate measure.

Table 2: Regression analysis results for math scores, hiring school autonomy

Variable	MLM					OLS
	I (hiring)	II (hiring)	III (hiring)	IV (hiring)	V (hiring)	VI (hiring)
<i>Fixed effects</i>						
Intercept	360.47*** (16.61)	468.65*** (16.37)	422.04*** (21.1)	422.47*** (21.06)	407.52*** (17.55)	416.61*** (7.77)
School autonomy	-1.68 (3.84)	-0.44 (3.39)	-0.78 (3.4)	-0.93 (4.01)	0.02 (3.3)	-18.58*** (3.6)
Parents' education		26.18*** (2.96)	26.31*** (2.97)	26.25*** (2.97)	29.93*** (9.16)	19.27*** (3.13)
Computers		-30.48*** (2.97)	-30.04*** (2.94)	-30.03*** (2.93)	-34.56*** (6.86)	-24.03*** (3.10)
GDP	0.01*** (0.00)		0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Social capital	-36.92 (97.34)		-8.12 (118.2)	-22.72 (121.03)	-15.23 (60.81)	26.05 (26.05)
Standardized test	6.26 (4.81)		-0.54 (4.25)	-0.53 (4.25)	-0.50 (4.13)	-1.1 (4.67)
City school		7.46*** (2.68)	7.52*** (2.68)	7.39*** (2.69)	7.39*** (2.65)	14.17*** (2.95)

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Private school		23.27*** (7.34)	23.48*** (7.34)	23.34*** (7.34)	28.73*** (7.12)	22.21** (8.07)
School autonomy: Social capital				22.50 (28.52)	8.82 (27.8)	-108.28*** (29.95)
<i>Random effects</i>						
Intercept	26.04 (2931)	43.14 (1861)	31.73 (1007)	31.66 (1003)	38.38 (1473.2)	
Residual	50.14 (2514)	44.14 (1948)	44.15 (1950)	44.16 (1950)	42.43 (1800.3)	
Computers					17.14 (293.7)	
Parents' education					24.32 (591.6)	
Log-Likelihood	-7727.91	-7541.89	-7535.295	-7530.714	-7484.188	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.48
N groups	8					
N observations	1448					

Note: the values are parameter estimates and standard errors in parentheses for fixed effects. The values for random effects are standard deviations and variance in parentheses. \*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01.



Table 3: Regression analysis results for math scores, curriculum school autonomy

Variable	MLM					OLS
	I (curriculum)	II (curriculum)	III (curriculum)	IV (curriculum)	V (curriculum)	VI (curriculum)
<i>Fixed effects</i>						
Intercept	361.34*** (16.75)	468.9*** (16.27)	422.10*** (21.14)	421.49*** (21.06)	408.35*** (17)	403.77*** (7.68)
School autonomy	-3.93 (2.8)	-1.12 (2.47)	-1.16 (2.47)	-1.11 (2.47)	-0.06 (2.38)	1.71 (2.68)
Parents' education		26.15*** (2.97)	26.27*** (2.97)	26.56*** (2.97)	30.25*** (9.09)	17.3*** (3.15)
Computers		-30.46*** (2.92)	-30.03*** (2.97)	-29.9*** (2.93)	-34.39*** (6.68)	-23.87*** (3.12)
GDP	0.01*** (0.00)		0.01** (0.00)	0.01** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)	0.01*** (0.00)
Social capital	-33.76 (98.93)		-6.91 (118.73)	-45.57 (119.06)	-43.71 (60.67)	-75.69*** (22.44)
Standardized test	6.4 (4.8)		-0.47 (4.25)	-0.22 (4.24)	-0.28 (4.12)	0.77 (4.73)
City school		7.43*** (2.68)	7.48*** (2.69)	7.19*** (2.68)	7.18*** (2.65)	13.66*** (2.99)

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Private school		23.34*** (7.33)	23.51*** (7.33)	23.96*** (7.32)	29.06*** (7.1)	19.82** (8.15)
School autonomy: Social capital				69.02*** (25.04)	53.03** (24.27)	81.29*** (28.16)
<i>Random effects</i>						
Intercept	26.49 (701.6)	43.21 (1867)	31.89 (1017)	31.75 (1008)	36.41 (1326)	
Residual	50.11 (2511)	44.14 (1948)	44.15 (1949)	44.05 (1940)	42.36 (1794.7)	
Computers					16.56 (274.4)	
Parents' education					24.11 (581.3)	
Log-Likelihood	-7727.332	-7542.114	-7535.529	-7527.6	-7481.352	R <sup>2</sup> =0.47
N groups	8					
N observations	1448					

Note: the values are parameter estimates and standard errors in parentheses for fixed effects. The values for random effects are standard deviations and variance in parentheses. \*p<0.1, \*\*p<0.05, \*\*\*p<0.01

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## Conclusions

The New Public Management approach, which had become popular in XX century all over the world, pushed governments towards granting more autonomy to institutions in the educational sector. It was and is widely believed that giving more autonomy to schools increases their performance. However, literature also gives pointers for conditional factors which can change the relationship between school autonomy and performance.

The study showed that social capital is an important conditional factor for the relationship between autonomy and school performance. The mechanisms of how social capital moderates the effect of school autonomy on performance shall further be tested; however, academic literature suggests that, generally speaking, social capital is advantageous for the school performance in several ways. Social capital assists the information flow, intensifies linkages between actors and smooths the interaction between individuals for effective tailoring of curriculum and choice of fitting personnel in schools, enhances the decision-making process and eases monitoring of agents by principal.

The study has several limitations, and the results must therefore be taken with caution. The main limitation is that the analysis was based on the data on school autonomy received from the principals, who may have different interpretations of both wording of the questions asked and of their own power for decision-making. Thus, the indicators that were obtained this way may be biased. Also, as was described in the methodology chapter, the social capital concept is operationalized through an indicator on social trust, which, although a common way to operationalize the concept, nevertheless captures it only partially. The results, finally, may be difficult to infer to other countries as the sample used in the study includes similar countries which have a lot of common historic, social and political features.

The results of this study have several theoretical implications. First, the study demonstrated that the post-Soviet region countries do not fit into the New Public Management approach. The analysis suggested that educational institutions in the region may not benefit from greater autonomy, thus signifying that the theory is not applicable everywhere. In this way, the study gives a hint that there may be a contradiction with a majority of studies in the field (for example, discussed in Chapter 2 Hoxby and Rockoff [2004]; Zajda [2006]). Second, and conversely, the analysis provides support to a body of literature which states that there are moderating factors for the relationship between school autonomy and school performance (for example, Hanushek et al. [2013]; Galiani et al. [2005]). As mentioned in the introduction, Galiani et al.

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(2005) argue school autonomy may play a negative role in the educational performance in countries with weak institutions and underdeveloped cultures of accountability. The results of this study may be evidence for such conclusions. Additionally, the article contradicts the results of the role of standardized tests for school performance. Despite the common evidence for its positive role, schools in the post-Soviet region do not experience either a positive or negative effect of the presence of such tests on math test scores. Most importantly, this study brings New Public Management and Social Capital theories together, which has not been done before. It brings another dimension of human interactions into the school autonomy-performance relationship, and shows that the level of trust between people matters and can affect the outcome of the designed policies.

This study may also be useful for the policy-makers in the countries included in the analysis. The main conclusion which can be drawn from the results of this study is that granting autonomy may not be the best idea for the educational systems in the countries in post-Soviet region which are characterized by low social capital. Policy-wise, the shift towards granting greater autonomy in the region may need to be delayed until the point when social capital grows in the country and more policy efforts need to be put for generating social capital. Also, the results of the study suggest that school autonomy policies are beneficial in the countries with more social capital. In fact, more social capital brings a large positive effect for school performance.

The study had added both to the theoretical body of research and provided insights for policy-action. However, there remains further research to be conducted in this subject. Particularly, it must be noted that the study can and should be further expanded to a larger sample of countries for more definitive conclusions on the role of social capital for school autonomy and performance. Also, further research could focus more on the accountability and the institutional development, as another possible driver of autonomy and performance in schools, as well as on the mechanisms of the effect of social capital on the relationship between school autonomy and performance.

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**Appendix 1: Educational systems in selected post-Soviet countries**

**1. Latvia**

The country was faced with a rapid change in the economy after the Fall of the Soviet Union. In Latvian educational system there are 11 compulsory years: two are on pre-school level and 9 years are in secondary school. The 15 years-olds which were tested for PISA score are in the part of educational system which is compulsory. Another important feature of Latvian educational system is the presence of minority schools. Russian language is a language of instruction in most of such schools (there are also other minority languages: Polish, Hebrew, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Estonian, and Lithuanian (Eurydice 2015) and for a long time they have had an equal footing among other schools. However, as the Council of Europe reports, “Latvian is currently being introduced as the main teaching language in secondary schools“(Council of Europe 2008: 42), thus, several subjects have to be taught in Latvian, regardless whether this is a minority school or not.

**2. Lithuania**

The educational system is similar to the one in Latvia. Compulsory education in Lithuania is until the pupils reach the age of 16 years old. The education on this level is free of charge (Eurydice 2015). Although educational policy development and implementation are under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education in Lithuania, “Lithuanian education system is decentralized. The state’s and municipalities’ institutions participate in the education process, the schools and other education institutions have a possibility to take decisions on its management, education content and means.” (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania 2004). Second prevalent language of instruction is Russian (in 2003, 30 465 of learners chose Russian as a language of instruction as opposed to Lithuanian - 505 086).

**3. Moldova**

In Moldova compulsory education is until 15 years old. At this age, the students are expected to write a Baccalaureate exam, after which they can choose to either continue education in lyceum, “which provides students with the basic theoretical knowledge and a broad general cultural background needed to continue their studies at the higher educational level or in technical and vocational education institutions or in an institution of general secondary education (UNESCO 2010).

#### 4. Russian Federation

Only 9 years of education are compulsory in Russia: primary and lower secondary education. The 15 year-olds completing the PISA score fall into this category. “By 2003 85% of all public and private establishments of secondary education had received a state license allowing them to charge fees for their activities” (Nordic Recognition Network 2005). There is a recently introduced nation-wide state exam at the end of lower secondary education level.

#### 5. Georgia

According to the 1997 Law on Education, primary education (grades 1-6) is compulsory, while other levels of secondary education are provided free of charge (UNESCO 2010). According to UNESCO, additionally, since 2005 any citizen of Georgia whose native language is not Georgian is entitled to receive education in their language. The most prevalent minority languages are Russian, Armenian and Azerbaijani. According to the statistics of UNESCO, “in 2007 there were 2284 public and 257 private general education schools in the country” (UNESCO 2010). Since only six grades are compulsory, the pupils who participated in the PISA test are those who have chosen to continue education by choice.

#### 6. Azerbaijan

Secondary education (grades 1-11) is provided for free and is obligatory. Ministry of Education is responsible for development of education policies. There is also nation-level commission responsible for the admission of students to specialized secondary schools. Students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade (15 years old) sit an examination, according to UNESCO: “At the end of grade 9, students had to sit three examinations, two set up by Ministry of Education and one by the class teacher” (UNESCO 2010).

#### 7. Kazakhstan

According to the new reform on education, compulsory education has been increased up to 12 years. “While compulsory education is free by law, in practice parents and communities often bare a portion of the cost of schooling, through textbooks, supplies, school fees, school meals and, in some cases, school maintenance” (UNICEF 2009). On the local level there are departments of education which are responsible for the execution of the national strategy. After completion of basic secondary education, after the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, pupils receive an examination certificate. After completion of that, they can choose to continue their education in vocational education institution. According to the UNESCO statistics, in 2004 74% of schools were located in rural areas. There are

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several languages of instruction in Kazakhstan: Kazakh, Russian, Uighur, Uzbek and Tajik.

### **8. Kyrgyzstan**

The compulsory education in Kyrgyzstan is 9 grades. It is provided free of charge, as well as the following two years of studies. After completion of compulsory part of secondary education pupils can choose to follow a vocational track. Vast majority of the schools are rural, for example, in 2004 rural schools counted to 1694 schools against 351 urban ones. The most prevalent minority languages which the schools taught in 2004 were Russian, Uzbek and Tajik (UNESCO 2010).

## **PANETHNICITY AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the social cohesion of Bosnia-Herzegovina's inhabitants through the concept of panethnicity. Panethnicity is exemplified through an array of shared marriage practices and kinship patterns. The marriage customs analyzed are prenuptial parties, elopements, affinal visitations, fictive kinships, and homogamy. A statistical analysis with a loglinear model using data collected in 2014 on marriage customs from a clustered, stratified, random survey of the population is conducted ( $n = 2,900$ ). Despite the political structures of the Dayton Peace Accords that reify ethnic identities, there remains a shared cultural identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina reflected in the marriage customs and kinship relations of its inhabitants. Panethnicity structures a social cohesion that blends the contrasting Durkheimian concepts of organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity.

**Keywords:** Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dayton Peace Accords, panethnicity, marriage customs

## **Introduction**

This study considers whether the concept of panethnicity can answer the question of how one keeps a complicated, complex country like Bosnia-Herzegovina together. The question is important not only to Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also to other socially conflicted and war torn regions in the world such as Iraq, Syria, and Ukraine. The study examines the degree to which an array of shared marriage customs and kinship patterns (prenuptial parties, elopements, affinal visitations, fictive kinships, and homogamy) exemplify panethnicity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Marriage practices and kinship patterns are meaningful in the decisive ways they draw upon culture, making marriage and kinship a vibrant setting to study identity and ethnicity.

The heuristic frame that the study provides to explain the collective identity of Bosnians is panethnicity, a concept that before now has been primarily used to study ethnicity in the United States. Although distinguished otherwise by religion, language, nationality, or history, ethnic groups may share a panethnic identity. The ethnic identity option for Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Mexican Americans is their national origin; at the same time, they share the panethnic identity of Latino. The ethnic identity option for Korean, Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino Americans is their language and national heritage; at the same time, they share the panethnic identity of Asian Americans. This study extends the concept to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The ethnic identity option for Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs is their ethno-religious identities or *nacija*; at the same time, they share a panethnic cultural heritage. While ethnic groups emphasize cultural distinctiveness and resist categorizations that compromise their particularity, panethnic identities are available and used in social and even political discourse (Lopez and Espiritu 1990; Okamoto 2003).

In 2014, a survey question about how people married and what type of kinship relations were maintained after marriage was included in an omnibus survey conducted by Mareco Index Bosnia in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mareco Index Bosnia conducts survey research for universities, embassies, and governmental agencies and is a member of Gallup International. A clustered, stratified, random sample of 2,900 subjects was drawn from the country's population, including the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The survey contained categorical questions with yes or no answers: Did you marry with a prenuptial party, arranged marriage, elopement, traditional wedding, civil ceremony, dowry, or religious ceremony? These marriage rituals are not mutually exclusive. The data was then analyzed using a loglinear model to determine if there is a relationship between ethnicity and the outcome variables listed below, after adjusting for the sociodemographic variables age,

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income, and religiosity (Khamis 2011; Agresti 2013).

The study examines how five of the marriage customs and kinship structures measured in the survey (prenuptial parties, elopements, fictive kinship, affinal visitations, and homogamy) exemplify ethnic particularism or panethnicity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Marriage customs and kinship patterns have not only an expressive but also an instrumental function in terms of identity. The five outcomes are selected because of their distinctive relation to the concept of panethnicity. Some marriage customs are native to Bosnia-Herzegovina; some are shared with countries such as Serbia or Turkey. After providing background on Bosnia-Herzegovina, a theory overview, and a methodology section, the study describes in detail the background of a marriage custom and then reports the variation by ethnic group analyzing the structural association using a loglinear model to conduct inference tests.

### **Background**

One over-looked casualty of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995 is its collective commitment to a pluralistic and integrated society. Unconscionable violence and vicious propaganda were brought to bear against Bosnia-Herzegovina's heritage, cultural convictions, and social practices. The result is Bosnia-Herzegovina's trans-ethnic traditions, cultures, and histories are damaged. The tragedy is that, although Bosnia-Herzegovina has a trans-ethnic history, there are few trans-ethnic institutions to support, respect, and sustain these traditions.

The three major ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina are named in various ways for political and historical reasons: One is Muslim, Bosnian Muslim, or, after the war, Bosniak (spelled *Bosnjak* in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language, the academic way of referring to the language widely used throughout ex-Yugoslavia, previously called Serbo-Croatian); a second is Croat, Bosnian Catholic, or Bosnian Croat; and a third is Serb, Serbian Orthodox, Bosnian Orthodox, or Bosnian Serb. These ethnic groups are described within Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as Yugoslavia with the term *nacija*. The term *nacija* does not identify a national, racial or geographical identity but a religious or ethnoreligious identity, encompassing social and cultural attributes as well (Bringa 1995, pp. 22-23). No longer is the term Yugoslav used as an ethnic or a national identity as it was a few decades ago (Sekulic et al. 1994). Bosnian Jews and Bosnian Romani are small minority groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in Dayton, Ohio in 1995 established a constitution and state structure that reifies ethnic particularism at the political

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level and denies the poly-ethnic realities of the country, its inhabitants, and its civil society. To note one issue, since a Bosnian Jew or Bosnian Romani is neither a Bosniak, Croat, or Serb, someone from these minority groups is prohibited from becoming president of Bosnia-Herzegovina or holding a position in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton Peace Accords violates the democratic rights of the Bosnians who do not fall into the three dominant ethnic categories (Mujkic 2008; Bardutzky 2010).

A common political view of Bosnia-Herzegovina is that it was a mini-Yugoslavia. Since Yugoslavia did not remain a united country after the death of Tito, neither could Bosnia-Herzegovina. Banac (1993, p. 139) critiques this view of the social identity of Bosnia-Herzegovina vis-à-vis the Yugoslav social identity:

If Bosnia were a collectivity of separate entities, then it would have been a mini-Yugoslavia. But it is not that. Bosnia is a historical entity which has its own identity and its own history ... I view Bosnia as primarily a functioning society which Yugoslavia never was. My question is how does one keep a complicated, complex identity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together?

There are scholars who disagree with Banac arguing that Bosnia-Herzegovina was never a functional society and could not be kept together (Hayden 2007). In a sociological study, Hodson et al. (1994) find that in comparison to other republics and autonomous regions in Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina was the most tolerant. Not only Bosniaks as the majority group but also Serbs as the principal minority group were more tolerant than any other ethnic groups in comparison with all other republics and autonomous regions throughout Yugoslavia. Hodson et al. (1994, p. 1555), though, conclude their study with this paradox: "Bosnia enjoyed the highest level of tolerance of any Yugoslav republic, but this increased tolerance proved insufficient to outweigh the political forces emanating from its extremely diverse social fabric".

Like any country, Bosnia-Herzegovina has a collective personality reflective of its history (Malcolm 1995). Bosnia's enigmatic mixture of historical epochs (a distinctive medieval period from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ottoman Empire starting in the 15th century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the 19th century, and communist Yugoslavia during the 20th century) structures this collective personality. Bosnia-Herzegovina is not a mini-Yugoslavia with a supra-ethnic identity reflecting Yugoslavism (Djokic 2003). Nor is it a mixed bag of mono-ethnic entities.

Ethnic personality is the exemplification of socially meaningful behavior



(Devereux 1975). Since religion (Catholicism, Islam, Orthodoxy) rather than observable racial differences distinguishes Bosnia's ethnic groups, ethnic personalities are associated with religious traditions. Bosniaks are Muslims and follow a certain set of religious observances; Croats are Catholic and follow another set of religious observances; and Serbs are Orthodox and follow another set of religious observances. While religious traditions inform the ethnic differences in Bosnia-Herzegovina, their ethnic personalities result overlapping and common cultures in everyday life. While studies of ethnicity typically focus on identities as a nominal variable, Brubaker (2002, pp. 185-186) argues that it is more fruitful to focus on the social practices that inform ethnic personalities:

What are we studying when we study ethnicity and ethnic conflict? ... it may be more productive to focus on practical categories, cultural idioms, schema, commonsense knowledge, organizational routines and resources, discursive frames, institutionalized forms, political projects, contingent events and variable groupness. It may be that 'ethnicity' is simply a convenient—though in certain respects misleading—rubric under which to group phenomena that, on the one hand, are highly disparate and, on the other, have a great deal in common with phenomena that are not ordinarily subsumed under the rubric of ethnicity.

After the succession wars in former-Yugoslavia, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide were widely studied (Banac 1993; Hodson et al. 1994; Silber and Little 1996; Malcolm 1996; Popov 1996; Udovicki & Ridgeway 1997; Campbell 1998; Mahmutcehajic 2000a; Doubt 2000; Djokic 2003; Broz 2004; Doubt 2006; Gagnon 2010). Rather than revisit these subjects, this study is about something resilient within the society of Bosnia-Herzegovina, that is, the degree to which its inhabitants share a heritage and culture despite suffering immense social violence and a crushing destruction of their national institutions.

### *Panethnicity*

Bringa (2012, p. 35) puts forth the idea of a collective cultural identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Neither Bosniak, nor Croat, nor Serb identities can be fully understood with reference only to Islam or Christianity respectively but have to be considered in a specific Bosnian context that has resulted in a shared history and locality among Bosnians of Islamic as well as Christian backgrounds.

Bringa says there are not multiple cultures co-residing in the same vicinity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nor are there multiple cultures coexisting independently

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of each other. Bringa is not even saying that Bosnia-Herzegovina is a poly-ethnic society, although it is that. Bringa is instead saying there is a shared culture that encompasses each ethnicity and makes different faiths—Catholicism, Islam, Orthodoxy—culturally interdependent (Broz 2004; Tufekcic 2014; Mahmutcehajic 2000b). Multiculturalism thus is a misnomer. Although panethnicity has not been used to explain the collective identity of inhabitants in Bosnia-Herzegovina, this study applies the concept for recounting a collective personality in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

To theorize the concept, panethnicity mediates the tension between the two poles of assimilation and ethnic particularism. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the two possibilities are Yugoslavism (assimilation) and nationalism (ethnic particularism). Lockwood (1975) predicted in the seventies a movement toward assimilation. Given the influences of modernization, industrialization, and Yugoslav socialism, Lockwood predicted that ethnic identifications like Croat, Serb, and Muslim would gradually be replaced by “a feeling of Yugoslavness” (1979, p. 223). At the political level, his prediction proved false; at the social level, there is evidence still today to support his prediction.

Simic (1991) likewise conducted studies of ethnicity in Yugoslavia; he predicted in the eighties, in contrast to Lockwood, a movement toward nationalism, particularly in Serbia but spilling over to other Yugoslav republics. Simic said ethnic particularism would morph into a fervent nationalism, and the Yugoslav identity would be too weak to curtail this movement. Simic predicted that nationalism would erase the Yugoslav identity in everyday discourse and its significance in political practice (Silber & Little 1996; Sekulic et al. 1994; Sekulic et al. 2006). At the political level, Simic’s prediction proved true and at the social level proved to be tragic.

This study considers a liminal identity space. There is a third option, panethnicity. Panethnicity resists assimilation, on the one hand, and ethnic particularism, on the other hand, residing in the continuum. Panethnicity does not dilute itself into a broad category with universal import. Nor does panethnicity reify itself as a supra-ethnic identity. Panethnicity shares the same social ontology of other ethnic groups; it is not a meta-ethnicity, encompassing the whole of humanity, which Marx refers to as our “human species-being,” which falls outside the category of what an ethnic group is (Weber 1958).

It helps to cast the study’s question of how one keeps a complicated society like Bosnia-Herzegovina together in terms of Durkheim’s account of organic solidarity in modern times. “Not only, in a general way, does mechanical

solidarity link men less strongly than organic solidarity, but also, as we advance in the scale of social evolution, it grows ever slacker” (Durkheim 1964, p. 214). Durkheim’s point is counterintuitive. In societies structured through industrialization by a division of labor, organic solidarity (whose social cohesion is “centrifugal”) is stronger than mechanical solidarity (whose social cohesion is “centripetal”). Individuals unlike each other due to specialization and individualization, nevertheless, have greater social solidarity than individuals like each other due to shared traditional customs and faiths.

This study argues that panethnicity reconfigures Durkheim’s dichotomy, turning the concept of panethnicity from a descriptive one to an explanatory one. With panethnicity, social cohesion becomes a dialectic between organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity. Panethnicity resists assimilation, on the one hand, and ethnic particularism, on the other hand, residing in the continuum or in a liminal space. Given its connectedness to the mechanical solidarity of shared traditions, local customs, and common social and political practices, panethnicity does not dilute itself into a broad category with universal import. Nor does panethnicity reify itself as a supra-ethnic identity, which is what Yugoslavism did for some (Djokic 2003). Panethnicity disavows political arguments that stipulate that when there is organic solidarity there must not be mechanical solidarity or when there is mechanical solidarity there must not be organic solidarity. The result of the dialectic is that organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity stand together without sacrificing the virtue of one for the other and without demonizing the vice of either. By extending the concept of panethnicity to the sense of social cohesion among inhabitants in Bosnia-Herzegovina, we develop the concept of panethnicity as an explanatory one for understanding the problem of social order.

### **Methodology**

In fall 2014, a survey question about how people married and what type of kinship relations were maintained after marriage was included in an omnibus survey in Bosnia-Herzegovina conducted by Mareco Index Bosnia. Following prescribed guidelines regarding ethical inquiry, transparency, and protection of human subjects, a clustered, stratified, random sample of 2,900 subjects was drawn from the country’s population, including the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The survey contained categorical questions that were answered yes or no to generate binomial variables: Did you marry with a prenuptial party, arranged marriage, elopement, traditional wedding, civil ceremony, dowry, or religious ceremony? The questions are not mutually exclusive. For example, a bride could elope, have a traditional wedding at the groom’s home, go later to a civil ceremony, and, at a suitable time, have a

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religious ceremony. One question asked whether affinal visitations or in-law gatherings occurred four or more times a year after marriage. The question measures kinship by marriage, the affinity called *prijatelji* (Simic 1975; Lockwood 1975; Bringa 1995). The question was repeated regarding the frequency of visits with the best man (*kum*) after the marriage and whether the visits occurred four or more times a year. The question measures the strength of fictive kinship, kinship through neither blood nor marriage but ritual, called *kumstvo* (Filipovic 1962; Hammel 1968; Simic 1975; Filipovic 1982). Independent variables included in the omnibus survey were age, religiosity, and income. To test the concept of panethnicity vis-a-vis ethnic particularism, we selected five culturally distinctive outcomes: engagement parties, elopement, affinal visitations, fictive kinship, and homogamy.

The data from the survey was analyzed using a *loglinear model* (Agresti 2013; Khamis 2011). Specifically, a backward elimination model selection procedure was used with entry criterion  $P < 0.01$  and with model goodness of fit criterion  $P > 0.1$ . This model along with the *association graph* is used to determine if there is a relationship between ethnicity and each of the outcome variables, after adjusting for the sociodemographic variables age, income, and religiosity. Each of the outcome variables is listed, and for each one the loglinear model analysis determines if the proportion of respondents who answered “yes” differs significantly among the three ethnicities.

The three age groups used in these analyses are defined by the tertiles of age: (1) 18 – 43 (“young respondents”), (2) 44 – 55 (“middle age respondents”), and (3) over 55 (“old respondents”), taking the points that divide the sample into thirds. Religiosity is defined as “more religious” (attending religious service one or more times a month) and “less religious” (attending religious service less than once a month). Income is defined as “poor” (999 KM or less per month) and “wealthy” (more than 999 KM per month). In each case, the *loglinear model* analysis is based on a sample of 1867 (respondents married, widowed, or divorced). [Subtable sample sizes may not add to 1867 due to missing values for some variables.] The respondents who identified as Croat was 28.3% (n=820), Bosniak 42.6% (n=1,235), and Serb 29.1% (n=845). This distribution mirrors the population census. None of the respondents identified as Other, for instance, Yugoslav, Roma, or Jew. The technical report from Mareco Index on sampling design and interview protocols, data, and the question in English and Bosnian are available for at Open ICPSR (Doubt 2017).

### **Engagement Party**

We start the study with the engagement party (*vjeridba*) since marriages often

are initiated with this rite of passage. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, an engagement party is not a bachelor's party, nor a bridal shower. It instead is hosted by the groom and the bride's families together. In Turkey, engagement parties are common if not the rule, where the custom is for marriages to be family-initiated. Even if a marriage in Turkey is not formally arranged, it is generally family-initiated. Before the wedding ceremony, there is an engagement party as well as several additional rituals involving ring exchanges between the bride and groom with their families (Tekce 2004). The hypothesis is that, given the shared faith of Islam with the inhabitants of Turkey, Bosniaks will have engagement parties at higher rate than Croats or Serbs. The hypothesis is the custom exemplifies the ethnic particularity of Bosniaks and the social cohesion of mechanical solidarity. Table 1 below presents the proportion of Yes's to the statement "We had an engagement party" for each ethnic group.

**Table 1: Engagement party (*vjeridba*) in Bosnia-Herzegovina by ethnicity**

	Croat	Bosniak	Serb	Row Total	N
All respondents	69.7%	47.9%	44.6%	52.5%	1,867
Young respondents	81.8%	64.6%	50.8%	64.9%	643
Middle-age respondents	71.9%	43.6%	48.1%	53.2%	609
Poor older respondents	53.3%	32.0%	34.4%	37.9%	459
Wealthy older respondents	52.9%	29.7%	40.7%	40.8%	98

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2014.

The hypothesis is not supported. It is, in fact, Bosnian Catholics who have prenuptial parties before a wedding more frequently, and Bosniaks and Serbs less frequently. The custom reflects the ethnic particularism of Croats rather than Bosniaks. For example, in the Catholic faith, the engagement party is called *prstenovanje*. After a marriage proposal, *prosnja*, the couple with their partners go to the church and ask for *prstenovanje*. The man gives a ring to his fiancé in front of their parents and the priest so as to announce their intention to marry. After the news of the engagement is shared with the community, the marriage ceremony is held in the church. The loglinear model analysis reveals that the relationship between engagement party and ethnicity is different for the three age groups.

The proportion of Yes's who had engagement party is higher for Croats than Bosniaks and the proportion of Yes's higher for Bosniaks than Serbs among young respondents ( $P < 0.0001$ ). Engagement parties are occurring more frequently among young respondents, especially young Bosniaks in contrast to elder Bosniaks, reflecting changes over time in the marriage custom. "The location and meaning of particular ethnic boundaries are continuously

negotiated, revised, and revitalized” (Nagel 1994, p. 153).

Middle age Croats had engagement parties significantly more frequently than middle age Bosniaks and middle age Serbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ) proportionately. There is not a significant difference between middle age Bosniaks and middle age Serbs. For elderrespondents, the relationship between engagement party and ethnicity is different for the two income groups, reflecting a difference in terms of economic class. The proportion of Yes’s among poor elderly Croats who had engagement parties is significantly higher than among poor elderly Bosniaks and poor elderly Serbs ( $p = .001$ ); there is no significant difference in the proportion of Yes’s between poor elderly Bosniaks and poor elderly Serbs. While suggestive, the proportion of Yes’s among wealthy, elderly respondents, in fact, does not differ significantly for the three ethnicities ( $P = 0.139$ ).

Religion influences marriage customs, and different faiths influence corresponding ethnic groups or *nacija* in different ways. When a marriage custom is panethnic in character, the influence of religion is weaker. When a marriage custom reflects ethnic particularism, the influence of religion is stronger. Religiosity is increasing in Bosnia-Herzegovina within each *nacija* after the recent war, and so marriage customs today are more influenced by religion than during Yugoslav socialism. The social cohesion of ethnic groups becomes more mechanical (centripetal) than less organic (centrifugal).

### **Elopement**

Eloperments (*ukrala se*, meaning the young woman stole herself from her natal home into marriage) have been previously studied in Bosnia-Herzegovina. One of the earliest is Hangi's ([1906 & 1907] 2009) ethnography, while in the 1970s, Lockwood carried out an ethnography in a remote Muslim village in the mountains of central Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lockwood (1974, p. 260) reported that “by far the majority of marriages, easily ninety percent are formed by elopement.” In the eighties, Bringa conducted an ethnography in a Muslim/Croat village in a valley in central Bosnia-Herzegovina. She noted that “The most common form of marriage during my stay in the village and I believe over the last thirty years was marriage by elopement” (Bringa 1995, p. 76).

Elopement is different from a bride abduction, called *otmica*, although sometimes studies discuss the two different phenomena interchangeably. Coercion and violence are used. (One question in the survey was whether you were stolen against your will into marriage or did you steal your spouse into marriage. The percent of respondents who said yes was 1.3% [ $n=1,867$ ]).

Unlike bride theft (*otmica*), elopement (*ukrala se*) occurs with the complicity of the girl and without her parents' knowledge or, at least, their overt knowledge and sometimes with their tacit approval. Elopement in its ideal form exemplifies a choice, whether informed or not. The girl rather than her parents chooses to whom she will give herself in marriage. The choice, however, is not made in a vacuum but within a social context that both constrains and provides incentives giving meaning to the social behavior (Lockwood 1974; Bringa 1995; Doubt 2013; 2014).

In a study of marriage conducted before World War II in what at that time was called the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the sociologist Erlich observed something distinctive about marriage customs in Bosnia-Herzegovina in comparison to other regions in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Her study, which employs extensive survey data from throughout the region, is worth citing. "In patriarchal regions [referring to Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia] the bride was chosen almost exclusively and autonomously by the parents of the young man" (1966, p. 183). The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was different; Erlich (1966, p. 188) found "The most important point is that the two young people are fond of each other and that they have some means. Everything else is of secondary significance."

The anthropologists Lockwood (1975) and Bringa (1995, pp. 132-33) suggest that elopement is a marriage custom particular to Muslims and Croats and Serbs more commonly marry with traditional weddings. Given the findings from these ethnographies, the hypothesis is Bosniaks elope at a higher rate than do Croats and Serbs, reflecting ethnic particularism. Table 2 below presents the proportion of Yes's to the statement "We eloped" for each ethnicity.

**Table 2: Elopements (*ukrala se*) in Bosnia-Herzegovina by ethnicity**

	Croat	Bosniak	Serb	Row Total	N
All respondents	14.3%	25.0%	11.3%	17.7%	1,867
Young respondents	5.5%	14.0%	8.3%	10.1%	643
Middle-age respondents	16.3%	27.2%	6.6%	17.9%	609
Older respondents	21.6%	35.7%	17.5%	25.5%	615

The hypothesis is supported ( $p < .0001$ ). The loglinear model analysis reveals that the relationship between elopement and ethnicity is different for the three age groups. The proportion of Yes's for young Croats who eloped is significantly lower than for young Bosniaks ( $p = 0.009$ ); there is not a significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between young Croats and

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young Serbs nor between young Bosniaks and young Serbs. It is easier for Bosniaks to attain divorce if a marriage does not work out (Bringa 1995; Lockwood 1975). It is harder for Croats who are Catholic. There are some changes in this custom over time.

The proportion of Yes's who eloped to marry is significantly higher for middle age Bosniaks than for middle age Croats, and it is significantly higher for middle age Croats than for middle age Serbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ). For Croats, the influence of the Catholic Church was less during Yugoslav socialism. Table 2 shows how this pattern changes among elder inhabitants. The proportion of Yes's who eloped to marry for elder Bosniaks is significantly higher than for elder Croats and elder Serbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ); there is no significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between elder Croats and elder Serbs. Elopement was relatively common fifty or more years ago, particularly in rural areas. The notably higher proportion of elder inhabitants in each ethnic group who eloped indicates the custom is a traditional and a panethnic one in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Elopements strengthened the organic solidarity of the community (Doubt 2014).

### **Affinal Visitations**

Bringa (1995) describes the social importance of affinal relations (*prijateljji*) among Bosniaks. She says the marriage process is not complete until certain prescribed rituals occur after marriage. It is not that a married couple visits either the wife or the husband's parents; it is that the wife and the husband's parents come together for a gathering with the married couple. The rituals create affinity, an important kinship between the bride and groom's families. Marriage strengthens not the agnatic group vis-à-vis another agnatic group, but the affinal group, creating the opportunity if not the imperative to establish bonds between nonagnates for their own sake (Lockwood 1975; Donia & Lockwood 1978).

Two questions were asked. First, do affinal visitations occur four or more times a year and, second, do affinal visitations occur twelve or more times a year. The hypothesis is that this kinship structure is particular to Bosniaks and not shared with other ethnic groups. Table 3 reports the variation of Yes's to parents visiting four or more times a year by ethnicity.

There is no significant difference in the proportion of Yes's among the three ethnicities ( $P = 0.383$ ). The survey results do not support the hypothesis. The custom reflects a panethnic practice rather than a particular ethnic identity. Among Croats, after the wedding party, the new bride goes to visit her parents, and the first visit often occurs on a religious holiday. The first time the



new wife goes to visit her parents she does not go alone; she goes to her parents with her husband, her husband's father and mother, and sometimes cousins and neighbors. This visit initiates the formation of *prijateljji*. Among Serbs, when the young married woman goes to visit her parents the first time; the visit is called *prvine* (*isla u prvine*). *Prvine* is the first visit to her parents after getting married. The new wife goes with either just married women, her husband's parents, her sister-in-law, her husband's uncle or some other relatives. She does not go with her husband, who stays at their home.

**Table 3: Affinal visitations (*prijateljji*) in Bosnia-Herzegovina by ethnicity**

	Croat	Bosniak	Serb	Row Total	N
Parents visiting four or more times a year	73.1%	71.2%	74.5%	72.7%	1,867

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2014

Everyone who goes *prvine* spends the night in the home of the recently married woman's parents. The next day, the relatives of the married woman gather together in her parent's home and meet with the husband's parents and his other relatives who are going in *prvine*. After that, the parents and relatives of the married women will go to visit the husband's parents' home. It is believed the number of wife's relatives who go in the first visit to the husband's parents' home must be greater than the number of husband's relatives who go on their first visit to the wife's parents' home because this brings a good omen to the newly married couple. After these visits, the young couple can visit their parents on their own. Among Bosniaks, the first visits between in-laws is called *pohode*. The visit is obligatory. The parents of the newly married woman first invite the husband's parents and their relatives in *pohode*; after that the wife's parents and relatives go in *pohode* to husband's parents' home. *Pohode* could be *velike pohode* (big) or *male pohode* (small). When it is *male pohode*, only the parents, the bride, and bridegroom go in *pohode*. When it is *velike pohode*, the parents' numerous relatives go in *pohode*. The number of persons who go in *pohode* from the bride's side is usually somewhat bigger because it is believed to increase good fortune (*nafaku*) for the young married couple.

The inference test shows that there is no significant variation by ethnicity. Affinal kinship reflects a strong panethnic identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This kinship structure, which does not appear to be as strong in Croatia and Serbia, is shared in parallel ways by the three major ethnic groups. The marriage custom is not changing through the generations. Age and income are

insignificant variables. While the social cohesion of affines is initially organic (centrifugal), through frequent visitations it also becomes mechanical (centripetal).

### **Fictive Kinship**

Marriage can serve two kinship functions in a society, which anthropologists refer to as the “vertical” function and “horizontal” function. The “vertical” function preserves continuity by sustaining a family’s blood line, the descent line, typically patriarchal (Simic 1975; 2000; Nagel 1998). There is the desire to preserve the memory of the family’s name and honor through succeeding generations of off-spring. One example that serves the “vertical” function is when the daughter marries the son of her father’s brother. Among folk Bosniaks, these marriages are traditionally scorned even though allowed in Islam. Only the wealthy among the Bosniaks (*begs*) married first cousins, in part to protect their inheritances (Filipovic 1982).

Marriages that serve the “horizontal” function tie society together across a single generation. Relations outside one’s bloodline are established through marriage or fictive kinship, creating a wider solidarity within the society, making society less clannish. In the Balkans, there is also the kinship called *kumstvo*, which is an important fictive kinship. “Ritual kinship of various forms was of great importance among South Slavs” (Filipovic 1962, p. 77). South Slavs include Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. Fictive kinship is neither agnatic nor affinal. *Kum* and *kuma* name a variety of fictive kinships: They refer to a best man at a wedding, a male or female witness at a wedding, a godparent at a baptism or witness at a circumcision, a witness at a child’s confirmation or first communion, a sponsor during a child’s first hair cutting, or a woman who nursed a child not her own.

Hammel’s (1968) study of Serbian kinship in former-Yugoslavia points out that “horizontalness” is achieved through fictive kinship or *kumstvo* within the traditional Serbian Orthodox community. He observes that one function of fictive kinship within the Orthodox community is to cut off the development of and dependence upon affinal kin. Among Serbs *kumstvo* carries more respect and social capital than *prijateljji*, although in the Serbian Orthodox community the term *prijateljji* is also used to name in-lawship. *Kumstvo* serves the function of horizontalness and, at the same time, preserves the hegemony of agnatic kin and agnatic solidarity. Filipovic (1962, p. 77) found that this fictive kinship is “considered as being much stronger than kinship by blood” in traditional rural communities. This pattern has, of course, changed with modernization, as Hammel points out.

One survey question was if visits with the best man or *kum* occur four or more times a year after the marriage. Given the importance of *kumovi* among Serbs, the hypothesis is Serbs will visit the best man at a higher rate reflecting ethnic particularism (Hammel 1968; Simic 1979). Table 4 reports the relative frequency of Yes's by ethnicity.

**Table 4: Visiting best man four or more times a year in Bosnia-Herzegovina by ethnicity**

	Croat	Bosniak	Serb	Row Total	N
All respondents	74.3%	63.5%	81.1%	72.0%	1,668
Young respondents	78.2%	74.0%	81.3%	77.3%	643
Middle-age respondents	78.7%	58.4%	85.1%	72.2%	609
Older respondents	64.9%	56.3%	77.7%	66.3%	615

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2014.

The hypothesis is generally supported. The relationship between “visiting best man four or more times a year” differs by the three ethnicities. The proportion of Yes's who visit the best man four or more times a year does not differ significantly among young respondents in the three ethnicities ( $P = 0.165$ ). This finding is in line with Filipovic's (1962, p. 77) ethnography which asserts that “Ritual kinship of various forms was of great importance among South Slavs in the past, because it widened the circle of relatives beyond the family, the clan, and the tribe.” Here, somewhat unexpectedly, panethnicity is exemplified in how young respondents collectively sustain this marriage custom. Table 4 reports the variation for middle age respondents.

The proportion of Yes's for Bosniaks who are middle aged who visit the best man four or more times a year is significantly lower than for Croats or Serbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ); there is not a significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between Croats and Serbs. Among Bosniaks *kum* may be simply the person who served as the witness to a marriage, making the relationship more formal and less long-term.

The proportion of Yes's for elder Serbs who visit the best man four or more times is significantly higher than for elder Croats and Bosniaks ( $P < 0.0001$ ); there is not a significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between elder Croats and Bosniaks. The results here are that a strong relation to the best man or *kum* exists among not only Serbs but also Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover, the importance of *kumstvo* is increasing among young Bosniak respondents where *kum* may mean the best friend who served as witness at a

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marriage. This finding supports Nagel's observation (1994, p. 164) that "One strategy used by polyethnic groups to overcome such differences and build a more unified pan-ethnic community is to blend together cultural material from many component group traditions".

### **Homogamy**

Previous studies of intermarriage among ethnic groups in ex-Yugoslavia use census data collected in 1990 or earlier in former Yugoslavia (Botev 1994; Sekulic et al. 1994; Sekulic et al. 2006; Smits 2009). This study uses data collected in 2014 in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Marrying someone in the same faith reflects ethnic particularism, and it may be called either endogamy or homogamy (Smits 2009). It may be misleading to say marrying outside of one's ethnic group in former Yugoslavia is exogamy. Yugoslavs were marrying Yugoslavs. From the viewpoint of the Yugoslavs marrying, their marriages were endogamous. This study thus uses the term homogamy for marrying someone in the same faith.

Previous studies examine whether intermarriages in ex-Yugoslavia correlate with social cohesion in the context of the violence in ex-Yugoslavia in the nineties (Botev 1994; Sekulic et al. 1994; Smits 2009). While heterogamous marriages seemed to be increasing during Yugoslav socialism (which was seen as a movement toward assimilation), Lockwood (1975), Bringa (1975, pp. 142-154) and Botev (1994) report that they were still mostly homogamous with respect to ethnoreligious identity, particularly in rural areas.

Homogamy reflects boundary maintenance, where the function of boundary maintenance is to provide stability in a poly-ethnic society (Bringa 1995, pp. 149-155). Maintaining differences is as functional to stability as maintaining similarities; in turn, maintaining similarities is as dysfunctional to stability as maintaining differences. The latter thrive vis-à-vis similarities just as similarities do vis-à-vis differences. Poly-ethnic societies thrive on this truism. Social stability resides in the social structure where there are criteria for mutual identification as well as "a structuring of interaction which allows the persistence of cultural differences" (Barth 1966, p. 16). This dialectic explains an implicit function of homogamy in a poly-ethnic society, where panethnicity and ethnic particularity stand tall side by side. Each is able to stand tall vis-a-vis the other because of the society's panethnic identity. The critical focus is not the cultural "stuff" that goes into and resides within the ethnic group per se, but the boundaries that define the group (Barth 1966; Barth 1969).

In socialist Yugoslavia, the public recognition by inhabitants of Yugoslavism

was positive. Exogamy thus reflected the presence of another, increasingly significant boundary, namely, Yugoslavism. Barth (1969, p. 16) writes, "The identification of another person as a fellow member of an ethnic group implies a strong of criteria for evaluation and judgment. It thus entails the assumption that the two are fundamentally 'playing the same game.'" Yugoslavism was becoming another game to play vis-a-vis ethnic particularism. "Identifying as a Yugoslav thus avoided either assimilating into the majority or labeling oneself as a minority" (Sekulic et al. 1994, p. 86).

The hypothesis is that homogamy is a custom equally shared by the ethnic groups or, to put it in the opposite way, exogamy, reflecting the emerging of a Yugoslav national identity, is equally practiced by ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Table 5 shows the frequency of Yes's to marrying someone in the same faith by ethnicity. The results support the hypothesis for certain subgroups; Serbs are more likely to be endogamous. The relationship between homogamy and ethnicity differs among the three age groups. For young respondents, the relationship between endogamy and nationality differs between those who are less religious and those who are more religious (as measured by the number of times the respondent attends religious service). The proportion of Yes's among young respondents who are more religious does not differ significantly among the three nationalities ( $P = 0.286$ ). Religion strengthens ethnic particularism; young respondents who are more religious are less likely to marry someone in another faith.

The proportion of Yes's among young respondents who are less religious is significantly lower for Croats than it is for young Bosniaks or Serbs ( $P < 0.0001$ ); there is not a significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between young Bosniaks and Serbs who are less religious. Ethnic particularism is not necessarily associated with religion for young Bosniaks and young Serbs who are less religious. The proportion of Yes's for middle age respondents is significantly higher for Serbs than for middle age Croats or Bosniaks ( $P < 0.0001$ ); there is not a significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between middle age Croats and Bosniaks. Middle age Serbs were less influenced by Yugoslavism than middle age Croats and Bosniaks. For elder respondents, the relationship between endogamy and ethnicity differs between those who are less religious and those who are more religious. The proportion of Yes's does not differ significantly among the three ethnicities who are elder and more religious ( $P = 0.101$ ).

The proportion of Yes's is significantly higher for elder Serbs who are less religious than for Croats who are less religious ( $P = 0.001$ ); there is not a

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significant difference in the proportion of Yes's between the elder Bosniaks and Croats who are less religious nor between the elder Bosniaks and Serbs who are less religious. Ethnic particularity of elder Serbs who are less religious is stronger than ethnic particularity of elder Croats and elder Bosniaks who are less religious.

**Table 5: Homogamy with spouse of the same faith by ethnicity**

	<b>Croat</b>	<b>Bosniak</b>	<b>Serb</b>	<b>Row Total</b>	<b>N</b>
All respondents	89.8%	88.2%	94.5%	90.7%	1,867
Young respondents who are more religious	98.4%	94.7%	96.8%	96.7%	302
Young respondents who are less religious	71.8%	94.0%	94.6%	91.7%	337
Middle-age respondents	89.9%	82.8%	97.2%	89.2%	609
Older respondents who are more religious	96.9%	89.2%	93.0%	93.0%	257
Older respondents who are less religious	69.4%	84.8%	91.3%	85.8%	353

Source: Mareco Index Bosnia, Sarajevo, September 2014.

Botev employs census data from Yugoslavia's Federal Statistical Office 1962-1989 and, like this study, uses a loglinear model; Botev (1994, p. 475) finds that "The difference between the endogamy parameters for the Moslems and the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not statistically significant at  $p < .05$ ; the Croats are significantly more endogamous than the other two groups." For this omnibus survey conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 2014, when broken down by age, economic level, and religiosity, the results show that Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina tend to be less endogamous than Serbs among (i) middle age respondents and (ii) elderly respondents who are less religious; and they tend to be less endogamous than both Serbs and Bosniaks among young respondents who are less religious. The level of endogamy does not differ significantly among the three ethnic groups for young as well as elderly respondents who are more religious. There was no instance in our study where Croats are more endogamous than other groups (Abelson 1995).

## Conclusion

This study examined the degree to which marriage customs and kinship exemplify panethnicity in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A non-nationalistic way of understanding a national personality is to recognize how a national personality is based in a panethnic rather than a monoethnic heritage. Nationalism reduces not only another but also one's self to one-dimensionality through the inflation

of a singular dimensionality. Other meaningful identities cease to signify anything after being encased by an X ethos. Nationalist politicians in former-Yugoslavia established independent states based on a nation-state model favoring the hegemony of one ethnic group and glorifying that ethnic group's mechanical solidarity. Bosnia-Herzegovina, based on a different and superior model of social order, then needed to be attacked and destroyed. We find that the concept of panethnicity supports the sociological findings of Hodson et al. (1994, p. 1555), "Bosnia enjoyed the highest level of tolerance of any Yugoslav republic, but this increased tolerance proved insufficient to outweigh the political forces emanating from its extremely diverse social fabric." The political forces that undermined Bosnia-Herzegovina emanated from outside rather than from inside Bosnia-Herzegovina, that is, from Croatia and Serbia (Silber & Little 1996; Campbell 1998; Mahmutcehajic 2000a).

The Dayton Peace Accords established a constitution and federal structure that reifies ethnic particularism at the political level and denies the panethnic realities of the country and its civil society. The longer the Dayton Peace Accords and the current political institutions continue to structure Bosnia-Herzegovina along nationalistic lines, the panethnic heritage and social norms that sustain the poly-ethnic society as a poly-ethnic society will wane (Bass 1998; Chandler 2000; Listlang & Ramet 2013). There is a panethnic identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina that carries historical and social significance, more so than the panethnic identities studied in the United States. This panethnic identity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, goes unrecognized in political and academic discussions.

Panethnicity protectively disavows political arguments which stipulate that when there is organic solidarity there must not be mechanical solidarity (which historically was the political problem of Yugoslavism). Panethnicity prudently shuns political arguments that when there is mechanical solidarity there must not be organic solidarity (which is the agenda of today's nationalist politicians). Panethnicity instead holds organic solidarity and mechanical solidarity together without sacrificing the virtue of one for the other and without demonizing the vice of either (Lovrenovic 1996; Mahmutcehajic, 2000b; Komsic 2016). This study frames the concept of panethnicity as an explanatory concept by developing its positive relation to social cohesion. Rather than ask how can one keep a complicated, complex society like Bosnia-Herzegovina together, this study asks how can one not keep (even after a genocidal war) a complicated, complex identity like Bosnia-Herzegovina together. The inability of international politicians and nationalist leaders of their *nacija* to acknowledge the shared cultural and social heritage of inhabitants prevents this question

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from being taken-up. The hope of this study is that its comprehensive statistical analysis demonstrates empirically the shared cultural heritage and history of this tragically maligned country and its importance to social stability.

Future research could replicate the study's questions on marriage and kinship along with its representative sampling in countries that were part of former Yugoslavia and surround Bosnia-Herzegovina, namely, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Kosovo, and Montenegro. The goal would be to measure the variation and non-variation among national identities and ethnic identities. For example, there are a half million Muslims in Serbia living in an area called Sandžak around the city of Novi Pazar. Are the marriage customs and kinship structures of Muslims in Serbia comparable to the marriage customs and kinship structures of Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina or Orthodox Serbs in Serbia instead?

The replication of the survey study could also occur throughout East Europe and in Turkey. In Bulgaria, for instance, affinal kinship (*prijatelji*) and ritual kinship (*kumovi*) are important relations, and similar words are used to identify the relations. How do these relations structure Bulgarian society and its different ethnic groups? A multinational study would address the interrelation of ethnic and national identities as they are reflected in the country's marriage customs and kinship patterns, which are not just symbolic but functional with respect to social solidarity. Finally, it would also be informative to study the marriage customs and kinship structures of Slavic and Baltic post-socialist countries in Eastern Europe. How are marriage customs and kinship structures in Slavic and Baltic countries both similar and different vis-a-vis Western Europe? Such a multinational study would provide a basis for understanding the complexity of social and cultural identities in East Europe; its framework would be objective and transcend nationalist politics.

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**Appendix 1: The Summary of Tables**

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Subgroup</b>	<b>Proportion of Yes's</b>
Engagement	Young	$C > B > S$
	Middle Age	$C > B = S$
	Older, Poor	$C > B = S$
	Older, Wealthy	$C = B = S$
Party Elopement	Young	$B > C$
	Middle Age	$B > C > S$
	Older	$B > C = S$
Parents Visit 4+		$C = B = S$
Best Man Visit 4+	Young	$C = B = S$
	Middle Age	$B < C = S$
	Older	$S > C = B$
Homogamy	Young, More Religious	$C = B = S$
	Young, Less Religious	$C < B = S$
	Middle Age	$S > B = C$
	Older, More Religious	$C = B = S$
	Older, Less Religious	$S > C = B$

Note: For each dependent variable and each subgroup (if appropriate), the comparison of the proportion of Yes's among the three nationalities (abbreviated C, B, and S for Croats, Bosniaks, and Serbs, respectively) is given symbolically; e.g., " $C > B$ " means that the proportion of Yes's for Croats is higher than for Bosniaks, " $B = S$ " means that the proportion of Yes's for Bosniaks does not differ significantly from that of Serbs, etc.



# **DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOTES**





## THE 2016 REFERENDUM IN HUNGARY

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### Outline

- The 2016 Quota Referendum concerned the EU's proposal for a resettlement scheme for asylum seekers.
- It was initiated by the Fidesz government to strengthen its domestic and European position but it also contributed to anti-immigration and Eurosceptic sentiments.
- The leftist opposition asked voters to abstain or to cast an invalid vote, with a satirical party becoming the central actor of the campaign.
- Despite an insufficient turnout Fidesz tried and failed to initiate legislation based on the widespread rejection of the quota system.
- The referendum may be a first crack in Viktor Orbán's power, with new impulses for the left and radical-right, but it also questioned the function of referenda in Hungary.

### Background

The October 2016 referendum on the EU migrant quota was the culmination of a long governmental campaign on migration. Its surface content was the European proposal for an emergency resettlement scheme from those member states receiving the most asylum seekers, to other (2015d). According to the proposal, refugees would be resettled depending on the countries' population sizes, GDPs, asylum applications and unemployment rates. Hungary had fiercely opposed the scheme with legal and political means, including the initial versions which planned to resettle asylum seekers from Hungary (Zalan 2015). However, behind this manifest content, the referendum contributed to a bigger discussion on anti-migrant sentiments and Euroscepticism in Hungary. This paper will examine this by outlining the background of the referendum and its legal framework, the campaign, the referendum results and the larger consequences of the referendum.

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## The 2016 referendum in Hungary

Refugees first became a larger topic with the government's reaction to the Charlie Hebdo attacks in early 2015. At this point, there was no significant immigration to Hungary, however, Prime Minister Orbán warned Hungary's borders were "besieged by waves of modern-day migration" and many immigrants "come here [to Europe] with the intent of destroying European culture"(Orbán 2015). Between May and July, the government held a 'National Consultation<sup>1</sup> on immigration and terrorism' (cf. 2015b). Since the government designed the questionnaire without consulting opposition parties or courts, the procedure and the formulations were criticized as partial.<sup>2</sup> When increasing numbers of refugees arrived to Hungary via the Balkan route during summer, the government used the consultation (in which many of the 1 million respondents shared the government's concerns: 2015c), to legitimize the construction of 'border control fences'. Without reconstructing all details of 'Hungary's long summer of migration' (as migration activists have called it: 2016i), immigration certainly dominated the political agenda in 2015 and early 2016 independent of actual arrival numbers. Though the core topic was refugees and asylum seekers, the Fidesz government mostly used terms like (economic) migrants or non-Hungarians, possibly to avoid a humanitarian framing of the debate.

Though the number of arriving refugees in Hungary decreased drastically after autumn, in February 2016 the government used the continuing debate about the implementation of the European quota decision to announce a referendum for autumn. The question, which like the date, was only announced months later, was „Do you want the European Union to be entitled to prescribe the mandatory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly?“ (2016p). Thus, its scope was ambiguous, as it did not explicitly mention immigrants or even the quota. Rather, Fidesz framed the issue as integral to defending national sovereignty against the EU. Hence, the referendum exemplifies a shift in the character of referenda from contentious action to a tool for enhancing government popularity and international standing. In the past, opposition parties and private citizens used

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<sup>1</sup> National consultations, an informal tool introduced by the Fidesz government in 2010, are non-binding questionnaire sent to all Hungarian households.

<sup>2</sup> Some questions simply asked voters if they knew certain facts, e.g. the rising number of immigrants, or proposed a trade-off between support for Hungarian families and their children or immigration. Other questions explicitly criticized EU policies as lenient or asked if respondents agree that 'Brussel's mismanagement' had increased terrorism or consciously mixed categories such as 'economic migrants' and asylum seekers.

referenda to contest government actions.<sup>3</sup> Governments had sometimes actively tried to pre-empt referenda through changing the law on the issue at question ((if the subject matter changes, the obligation to hold a referendum ceases: Pállinger 2012). and raising the turnout threshold (Fidesz itself had increased it to 50% in 2011). The quota referendum was not only proposed by the Fidesz government, it also strongly campaigned for a no-vote rather than presenting both sides. This goes along with referenda's increasing use as party political instrument since 2008 (Pállinger 2016). By campaigning on an issue associated with the radical right, Fidesz attempted to regain voters from Jobbik who had already proposed a referendum about the Quota proposal in 2015 (Szobbot 2015). Back then, however, Fidesz politicians had rejected the idea, arguing that the Hungarian constitution does not allow referenda on international treaties (2016)

### Campaign

This section will first outline the campaign for and against the referendum to show how tactical considerations determined strategies and then consider each campaign's impact and organization. The official campaign started on August 13, fifty days prior to the referendum. However, as mentioned, the government had already been campaigning on the issue since 2015 and even the referendum date was set since early July. Thus, parties' positions were fairly established by the time the debate started and by and large followed the general left-right division that shapes most political debates in Hungary. For reasons outlined below, both the opposition and the government de-emphasized the actual quota regulation in their campaign. Nevertheless, the various framings of the question were all clearly associated with a specific answer to the referendum question.

The 'No' camp was spearheaded by the initiator Fidesz and its coalition partner KDNP. From the beginning, they campaigned on national sovereignty in general, since the number of 1300 refugees to be possibly resettled to Hungary seemed insignificant to all sides. Thus, their leaders' discourses and the referendum information materials prominently featured the call to 'send a

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<sup>3</sup> The government or 200.000 voters can initiate a referendum. If only 100.000 citizens support a proposal, the issue is put on the parliamentary agenda and MPs may order a referendum. For validity, a minimum turnout of 50% is required. Rare cases of state-initiated referenda were the process of regime change (in which voters were allowed to participate on four points: Renwick 2002) and the referenda on EU and NATO membership.

## The 2016 referendum in Hungary

message to Brussels that they will understand' (2016s).<sup>4</sup> However, as the quota was slipping from the European agenda, Fidesz also continued its general anti-immigration campaign. The huge billboards which became the face of the campaign also asked voters if they knew certain 'facts' about immigration (2016g). Many questioned the appropriateness of these posters since they had disputable or non-pertinent claims (about rising sexual harassment numbers or the immigration status of the Paris attackers). Government officials and the state media became notorious for remarks about no-go zones in Western Europe or masses of migrants preparing to storm the border in case of a lost referendum (Rényi 2016; Horváth 2016; 2016c). Thus, rather than discussing the decision-making competences at the core of the referendum, much of the campaign spread hostility towards refugees. Shortly before the vote a third type of poster, this time in national colors, appeared calling voters to vote no in order 'not to risk Hungary's future'.

A further supporter of the No-vote was Jobbik. To Jobbik, the referendum and the campaign were an attempt to poach its voters as Fidesz had adopted Jobbik's rhetoric as well as its suggestion for a referendum and, after the referendum, for a constitutional amendment (Dániel 2016). Thus, Jobbik radicalized its rhetoric of rejecting immigration by criticizing Fidesz as migrant-friendly (given the government's controversial residency-bond scheme: 2016a), demanding laws rather than a lengthy referendum (2016b) and preemptively demanding the government's resignation in case of an invalid referendum (2016h). To Jobbik, holding a referendum was endangering the desired outcome given the risk of invalid turnout. With an immigrant population of only 0.5 percent including ethnic Hungarians from Romania (2016o), most Hungarians have few experiences with foreigners. Thus, for the right, the campaign was also a competition to first nourish citizens' fear of the unknown and subsequently propose often simplistic solutions to these fears.

Untypical for a referendum, there was no recognizable 'yes' camp. Only one small opposition party, the Hungarian Liberal Party, campaigned for the quota as a vote for European integration (2016d). Most left opposition parties campaigned for boycotting the referendum.<sup>5</sup> The decision not to participate

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<sup>4</sup> The booklet sent to all citizens about the referendum has been translated to English by the liberal news-webpage Budapest Beacon (2016v).

<sup>5</sup> The biggest left opposition party MSZP avoided the word 'boycott', arguing that it would neglect the importance of referenda for Hungary's democracy (Szabolcs 2016d). Another exception was the green Politics Can Be Different party that declared its neutrality. However, after being fiercely criticized for comments that supposedly sided

was driven by several considerations. Firstly, a victory for ‘yes’ seemed unrealistic, given the widespread anti-migrant sentiment in Hungary and its development during the previous months of the government campaign (Simonovits & Bernát 2016; 2016n). Secondly, many voters of the opposition were themselves skeptical of migration or, for various reasons, against the quota system. A poll by Republikon Intézet (2016u) at the beginning of the campaign period showed that 60% of left-liberal voters sided with the government on the quota. An invalidation of the referendum seemed the most promising strategy since the referendum needed a 50% turnout and the polls shed doubt on left voters’ willingness to participate. Nevertheless, a boycott also carried risks as the generally low turnout in referenda provides room for different interpretations of citizens’ decisions to abstain.

With their decision for a boycott, the referendum opponents aimed to shift the campaign away from migration toward a rejection of the referendum as such. Their posters criticized the ‘stupid question’ (2016e) or listed ‘real problems’ from which the referendum was supposed to distract (2016q). Some left politicians claimed a rejection of the quota would be a first step to leave the European Union, most succinctly summarized in the slogan of the Democratic Coalition, ‘Stay at Home, Stay in Europe’. Only the Democratic Coalition partially embraced the migration issue as party leader Gyurcsány had himself hosted refugees during the height of the migration crisis in 2015 (Lengyel 2015) and repeatedly spoke out against the government’s policies on the issue. This, and the different framing of the boycott call, may explain why the Coalition’s voters were far more convinced to abstain already at an early stage of the campaign (Ádám 2016).

The campaigns by both sides, but particularly by Fidesz, were prominent throughout the country. This is not surprising given Fidesz’ history of using state resources for partisan purposes (e.g. Innes 2014; 2013). Estimates of the campaign costs for the state budget range between 36 and 45 million Euro (2016t; Szabolcs 2016c). According to NGOs, this is three times what Fidesz spent in the 2014 general election campaign and more than the budget of the ‘Leave Campaign’ in Britain (2016m; 2015a). In combination with the previously mentioned billboard campaign (to which approximately every sixth billboard at the time belonged: Grabbe & Buldioski 2016), the government also made use of the public media. A study by the think-tank Democracy Reporting International (2016j; 2016k) with Mérték Media Monitoring found that M1, a state-owned TV

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with the government (Tamás 2016), its leaders announced they personally would boycott the referendum (Szabolcs 2016a).

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station dedicated 42% of their news airtime to refugee issues or the referendum, supporting the government's position in 95% of these items. Though these numbers seem very high, they are plausible given similar biases in the 2014 general election campaign (2014).

As the mainstream opposition lacked a positive message and was disunited in message and campaign design, a campaign to vote invalid by the so-called 'Two-Tailed Dog Party' became central in providing a common identity for voters wanting to actively express their disapproval. A hardly-known satirical party at its foundation in 2006, the two-tailed dog party turned to serious topics when collecting private donations to counter the government's anti-migration campaign in 2015. With donations reaching a hundred thousand Euros within a few days, they became perhaps the most visible civil actor countering the government's campaign and continued to do so up to the referendum. Their success derives partially from their call to actively invalidate ballots (which then do not count into turnout), a call that otherwise only some NGOs put forward (2016f). However, it was also the tone and (in Budapest) the sheer mass of their posters. Under the common motto 'Stupid answers to stupid questions', countless slogans ridiculed the government and appealed to a diverse group beyond party identities. The party's success is visible in its popularity on facebook where, despite its inexistence in the polls, it has surpassed both Fidesz and MSZP. In a mostly tactical campaign from the government and opposition, the strength and innovativeness of this initiative gives hope for genuine participation. And, in contrast to the national consultation (where various organizations called for the destruction of questionnaires), such citizen initiatives can gain visibility in referendum results.

### **Results**

According to the official results of the referendum, 44% of the citizens participated in the referendum (see Table 1). Of these 44%, a stunning six percent cast invalid ballots, pictures of which were widely shared in the media and social networks (Veronika 2016). As a result the referendum was invalid. However, of the valid votes cast, 98% rejected the quota, supporting the government's position. The opposition did not challenge the election result, rather its *interpretation* was subject to debate. Prime Minister Orbán's speech on the evening of the referendum, as well as his later declarations in parliament, emphasized the broad majority for his position without acknowledging the insufficient turnout and the many invalid ballots. Instead, he argued no previous referendum had been so unanimous and that turnout was higher than in the referendum to join the EU (Orbán 2016c).

**Table 1: Results of the 2016 Migrant Quota Referendum**

Date of the Referendum	2.10.2016
Electorate	8.272.625
Referendum Question	„Do you want the European Union to be entitled to prescribe the mandatory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary without the consent of the National Assembly?”
Total Votes Cast	3.643.055 (44.04%)
Total Valid votes	3.418.387 (41.32%)
Valid Votes in favor	56.163 (1.64%)
Valid Votes against	3.362.224 (98.36%)

Source: Nemzeti Választási Iroda (2016r)

The opposition proposed a competing interpretation as a defeat for the government and Orbán in particular. As Orbán’s party had won all previous elections on the national, local and European level, the referendum offered a first glimpse of hope that the government is beatable (Bojar 2016). The left saw the result as a new impulse to work together for a government change in the 2018 election (Szabolcs 2016b). Jobbik’s interpretation differed as they maintained the need for a constitutional amendment on the issue and blamed the referendum’s defeat primarily on the ‘arrogance’ of the government rather than the referendum’s substance (Mizsur 2016). Both Jobbik and some left politicians demanded that the government should step down and criticized that a lost referendum was little more than expensive public opinion research.

Though Fidesz had avoided linking the referendum to concrete policies during the campaign, it was up to them to draw consequences. Two days after the referendum, Orbán announced that the results showed that the ‘no’ vote transcended parties and created “a national interest” (Orbán 2016b). He proposed a constitutional amendment introducing the obligation to protect Hungary’s ‘constitutional identity’ into the first article, along with some nominal restrictions to EU decision-making capacities (Orbán 2016a). However, all changes were cosmetic without direct political consequences (Magyari 2016). The following negotiations exposed how vulnerable the government was since losing its two-thirds majority a few months before: Jobbik strategically tied its approval of the amendment to an abolishment of the residency bonds. As this was unacceptable to Fidesz, Jobbik forced Fidesz to accept the defeat of the amendment in parliament. During the vote, Jobbik re-invigorated its opposition to Fidesz by presenting a banner that called Fidesz

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politicians ‘traitors’ willing to let terrorists in for money (MNO 2016). As Jobbik still pursues an alternative proposal, the debate is all but finished. However, the government failed to provide the fast response it promised, as it was unwilling to extend its proposal. Instead, the ‘Civic Alliance Forum,’ a semi-independent association of conservative organizations that support the government’s politics, started a poster campaign depicting representatives of the left and right together, alleging they ‘found each other’ in their rejection of the amendment (Origo 2016).

### **Conclusions: Invalid but not inconsequential?**

Overall, the quota referendum was not only a hotly contested issue that dominated the news for considerable time; it will also have lasting consequences for policies and party strategies. The government’s reaction shows that it considers the referendum as a valid and unanimous policy vote – though one may of course doubt the same lenience would apply to an invalid referendum that would not fit the governmental agenda. Thus, the referendum has reinforced the Hungarian government’s migration policies with Orbán presenting several anti-migration proposals in the months after. However, the results have also sent important signals about the current support of the Fidesz government to both political camps. It not only sparked new hope among the left opposition, it also strengthened Jobbik’s self-consciousness as an alternative to Fidesz on the right. Thus, the government’s hopes to win back voters back from Jobbik have only been realized to a limited extent and pressure from the right may increase in the future.

The referendum and its results are more ambiguous for the function and development of direct democracy in Hungary. While it may seem positive if a government is responsive to large majorities, it is concerning that validity becomes a side note when results fit with government ideology. Hence, the referendum was an example how governments can attempt to use referenda to stack the policy agenda and strengthen its own standing. It is yet another example that Fidesz does not shy away from using state resources to convince citizens, also in the use of direct democratic tools. To some extent, the general atmosphere of the campaign also points out a well-known weakness of direct democracy, namely that debates often do not focus on the subject matter but are influenced by partisan considerations or emotional arguments. However, the turn of the campaign and the results also provide new prospects. They show that room for citizens’ participation exists and, even if the government fails to acknowledge dissenting voices, they are visible in the results. Specifically in the Hungarian context, it shows that there is a significant difference between ‘national consultations’, the pet project of the Fidesz



government, and genuine referenda. In the first, a non-representative participation of just above one million citizens can seem like a landslide victory. In the latter, an even larger majority of over 3 million citizens can still show the limits of government popularity.

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## **The 2016 REFERENDUM IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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### **Outline**

- The referendum, the first since the 1992-1995 war, was held on September 25, 2016 in the Republika Srpska (RS), one of the country's two entities.
- The referendum was called by RS President Milorad Dodik as a plebiscite on maintaining January 9 as Republika Srpska Day, which the BiH Constitutional Court ruled unconstitutional.
- The referendum unsurprisingly elicited a vote in favor of maintaining RS Day, although turnout, at just under 56%, was lower than Prime Minister Dodik desired.
- The RS opposition fared poorly in the municipal elections which followed a week later, on October 2.
- RS President Dodik stated immediately afterward that he would hold a referendum on RS independence in 2018.

### **Background**

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has a particularly complex governance structure, owing to the 1992-1995 war and the Dayton Peace Accords which ended it. The country is comprised of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter “the Federation”) and the Republika Srpska (hereafter RS), each comprising roughly half the territory, as well as the Brcko District, created by binding arbitration after the war, which was disputed in the Dayton negotiations. BiH’s state structure at Dayton was largely designed around the prerogatives of the entities (and in the Federation’s case, ten cantons), including many governing functions that would typically be held at the state level, such as justice, defense, and internal affairs. In addition to the entities,

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the country's three "constituent peoples" – Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs – were fundamental building blocks of the state, given equal representation in a tripartite state presidency. Dayton's Annex 4 is BiH's Constitution. An international High Representative was empowered in Dayton's Annex 10 as the "final authority in theatre" for the Peace Implementation Council, an international body established to ensure fulfillment of the Accords. The High Representative's powers included the ability to annul laws, impose laws, and remove officials if – in his discretion – they violated terms of the Dayton Peace Accords. These powers were applied strategically, particularly between 2000 and 2005, in the development of state institutions and prerogatives, though the overwhelming majority of these were not imposed. The final domestic authority, written into the Dayton constitution, was the Constitutional Court, comprised of nine judges – two from each constituent people, plus three international judges.<sup>1</sup>

Since coming to power in Republika Srpska as prime minister in March 2006, Milorad Dodik has railed against what he calls "legal violence" against the RS, (RT 2010) most notably what he characterizes as efforts at forced centralization from the international community on behalf of the state-level government in Sarajevo. Beginning in May 2006, following the failure of the US-sponsored "April package" of proposed constitutional reforms and the success of the Montenegrin independence referendum, he touted a referendum as a possible political tool to resist what he described as internationally-driven efforts to support Bosniak domination. (B92 2006). For some years, Dodik remained vague on the actual question; for the majority of his audience a "referendum" could only imply a vote on RS independence. In 2009, the threat took form with a call to hold a referendum on the legitimacy of state-level judicial institutions and a host of other state-level competences that allegedly had been wrested from the RS through an inter-entity agreement. (Katana 2009). While preparations to hold the referendum were made in May 2009, it ultimately was not held, as the High Representative Valentin Inzko annulled the legal act enabling it. When the same threat was resurrected in 2011, the then-EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, visited Dodik in Banja Luka and secured a retraction of the referendum "for now," in exchange for launching a "structured dialogue on the judiciary." (Hadzovic and Remikovic 2011). This was (correctly) portrayed as a victory by Dodik, who used the "structured dialogue" to pursue his goal of reducing the scope and power of the state legal

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<sup>1</sup> For a more complete description of BiH's postwar construction and trajectory, see Bassuener (2017).



infrastructure, which had been constructed in the decade after Dayton, as well as a humiliation for Inzko.

On November 26, 2015, the BiH Constitutional Court ruled 5-3 in a case initiated by Bosniak member of the BiH state Presidency, Bakir Izetbegovic, that Republika Srpska Day violated the Dayton Constitution, since it was held on a Serb Orthodox religious holiday and thus discriminates against non-Serbs in the entity. (klix.ba 2015). In the request Bakir Izetbegovic submitted to the Constitutional Court of BiH, he stated that January 9, 1992 was the date when the Assembly of Serb nation in BiH adopted the Declaration on the establishment of the Serb Peoples' Republic in BiH. According to him, there was a clear intention to form a state for one, dominantly Serb nation, with the absolute exclusion of – and discrimination against – all other peoples. Therefore, the petition argued, celebration of the holiday was inherently discriminatory and exclusionary. But the judges split along ethnic lines: the two Bosniak and three international judges formed the majority; the two Serb judges and one Croat judge dissented, while the other Croat judge wasn't present at the vote due to illness. (B92 2015).

The entire Serb political spectrum decried the ruling. With general elections approaching on October 2, RS President Dodik seized the opportunity to call a referendum on maintaining RS Day, defying the Court's ruling *and* the international community, while homogenizing the RS electorate just before the election. The RS People's Assembly voted to approve holding the referendum in mid-July, 2016 (klix.ba 2016); it was set for September 25 – just a week prior to long-scheduled municipal elections. The question would read: “Do you support the marking and celebration of January 9 as the Day of Republika Srpska”?

The RS passed its own Law on Referendum and Citizens' Initiative in 2010. (Blic 2010). It is the only such law in BiH, though the Federation's Law on Local Self-Governance does stipulate procedures for municipal-level referenda. The law empowers the RS President, the RS Government, at least 30 of the RS People's Assembly's (RSNA) 83 members, or 10,000 eligible citizens, to call for a republic referendum. The RSNA must affirm the referendum by simple majority vote (e.g., 42 members). The referendum is held to be valid if more than 50% of the registered electorate takes part. A simple majority is required for a referendum measure to pass. So, in theory, just over 25% of the registered electorate is required to pass an issue put to referendum. Interestingly, the referendum's results are not binding on the RS Government – there is no stipulation in the

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Law that requires this or directly enacts a “yes” vote as law. The referendum is of advisory character.

As the RS Day referendum planning went ahead in Banja Luka, Western ambassadors made several statements discouraging the referendum, including a joint statement on July 14, 2016 that stated that “the proposed referendum would represent an unconstitutional attempt not to reform but to undermine and weaken those authorities, and would thus pose a direct threat to the sovereignty and security of the country as a whole. This cannot be tolerated.” (European Western Balkans 2015). The RS National Assembly passed legislation the following day to enable the referendum to be held. In response to a statement by US Ambassador Maureen Cormack against the referendum, Dodik replied that she was “creating instability in BiH with her statements and working exclusively in the function of Bosniak policy.” (Sarajevo Times 2016). The PIC’s Steering Board,<sup>2</sup> with Russia’s absence noted, called on the RS to adhere to the judgment of the BiH Constitutional Court and “urge(d) the RS authorities not to hold the referendum.” (OHR 2016).

Despite the diplomatic flurry, there was no political will to actively prevent the referendum from going forward through a High Representative annulment of the RSNA enabling act, as had been the case with previously-threatened referenda. (Latal 2016). Russian Ambassador Petr Ivantsov openly supported the conduct of the referendum and just days before the vote stated, “the people of Republika Srpska have the right to declare themselves on vital issues.” (Pantovic, Kovcevic and Latal 2016). Interestingly, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic cautioned against holding the referendum, indicating a rift between him and Banja Luka – and Moscow. (Ibid). As the RS’ appeal of the initial ruling before the Constitutional Court and the date of the referendum approached, Western ambassadors continued to call for dialogue, but applied no leverage. (EU Delegation to BiH 2016).

On September 17, 2016, the Constitutional Court held its 99th plenary session and in a 7-2 vote (klix.ba 2016) denied the RSNA appeal of the Court’s decision on the constitutionality of RS Day, and imposed a measure to temporarily ban

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<sup>2</sup> The PIC Steering Board is a subset of the 55-member PIC, meeting regularly (now biweekly) in Sarajevo at the ambassadorial level, and semi-annually at a more senior level. The PIC Steering Board consists (alphabetically) of representatives of Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands (observer), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (represented by Turkey), the Russian Federation, Spain (observer), and the United States.

the RS referendum. (EBL News, 2016). In a press release, the US Embassy called on the RS to respect the BiH Constitution and ruling of the Court: “defiance of the Constitutional Court is a threat to the rule of law and thus a threat to the stability, security and prosperity of the country.” (US Embassy Sarajevo 2016). EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Neighborhood/Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn were less categorical in their statement, calling for respect for rule of law and “constructive dialogue.” (Mogherini and Hahn 2016). The referendum was held as scheduled.

### **Campaign**

While the formal campaign for a “yes” vote in the referendum began in the summer doldrums beginning in mid-July, in effect, it began with the BiH Constitutional Court ruling and the RS official and popular reaction to it. In another sense, the referendum was a delivery on a long-mooted threat (or commitment, depending on one’s vantage point) to hold a referendum, test domestic and international reaction. Given the wording of the ballot question, the result was a nearly foregone conclusion; only the level of voter interest was unknown. Holding the referendum so close to the scheduled municipal election, to be held the following week, had a clear political motive.

Days before the referendum took place, Radio Television Republika Srpska (RTRS) began broadcasting a promotional video for the referendum: *Srpska te treba* (Srpska needs you - <https://youtu.be/C4NaoOuKUcU>), which contains clips from the war and clearly played to people's emotions. The protagonist of the video is a young boy who "Did not have the chance to meet his father," but his father left him his homeland and his "celebration." The people should vote in the referendum, because Republika Srpska needed them now. RTRS also broadcast the "Kosovo Battle" movie on the night before the referendum, which was clearly another effort to play to popular emotion and motivate voters against would-be oppression.

The content and timing of the referendum were precisely calibrated to undercut the RS opposition, the Alliance for Changes, consisting of the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), Party for the Democratic Progress (PDP), and People’s Democratic Party (NDP). Already reeling from unforced errors and constant accusations from Dodik of effectively being sellouts to Bosniak parties and the state (ATV, 2016) for participating in the BiH ruling coalition, these RS-based parties, particularly the SDS, could hardly afford to be seen as “offside” on the RS Day issue. This left them to attempt to straddle the divide, decrying the Court ruling while questioning the referendum. (Slobodna Bosna 2016). Therefore, in the campaign for the October 2 municipal elections, in which the

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opposition had hoped to follow its 2014 general election gains by focusing on corruption and malgovernance by the RS authorities, dominated by Dodik since 2006, the Alliance found its ability to differentiate itself constrained.

Within the Federation, vocal resistance and calls for the High Representative to intervene to prevent the referendum being held were pronounced. The domestic legal and political remedies were indeed exhausted with the RS Government's rejection of the Constitutional Court's ruling. The international High Representative, Valentin Inzko, was called upon to intervene by a host of Sarajevo-based political parties and civil society. But the collective political will to confront the RS referendum simply did not coalesce in the Western diplomatic community, so the ritualistic condemnations of the referendum rang hollow even before it was held. The lack of response likely only encouraged the RS Government to pursue the referendum.

Tensions further increased after the wartime Army of the Republic of BiH Commander Sefer Halilovic, during an interview for the TV1 television, said that the correlation of forces in BiH was significantly different from the 1992-1995 war, and that attempts at secession "would not pass peacefully." (B92 2016).

The referendum was held on September 25 largely without incident. Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming majority of those who voted – a reported 677,722 (99.81%) – voted in favor of maintaining RS Day. Yet turnout – 55.7% – though well above the threshold for validity, was disappointing for President Dodik, who in his victory speech decried those who did not go to the polls. (Dnevno 2016). It is worthy of note that the election turnout was marginally higher – 59.5% - than the referendum turnout. But the turnout figures were comparable with prior general and municipal elections.

**Table 1: Voter turnout at the 2016 referendum compared to previous elections**

2016 referendum voter turnout	680,116 (55.67%)
2016 municipal elections (RS)	707,711 (59.49%)
2014 general elections (RS)	683,220 (56.49%)
2012 municipal elections	689,392 (59.18%)

Source: Radio Sarajevo 2016, Izbori.ba 2016, BHAS 2014, Izbori.ba 2013.

Immediately following the referendum, the US Embassy issued yet another statement calling for "competent institutions to address that violation in accordance with the laws of BiH, while we evaluate appropriate consequences." (US Embassy Sarajevo 2016).

In an interesting twist, official results remain unpublished, since the RS Constitutional Court decided the results were illegal because they were published in the RS official gazette prior to being validated by the RS Council of Peoples, in which Bosniak deputies can object. (Slobodna Bosna 2016) There has been almost total official silence on the referendum since it was concluded, despite the import with which it was promoted by RS authorities.

**Table 2: Results of the 2016 referendum**

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Date of Referendum	September 25, 2016.
Electorate	1,219,399
Total votes cast	680,116 (55.67%)
Invalid ballots	2,264
Referendum question	Do you support that 9 January be observed and celebrated as the Day of Republika Srpska?
Votes in favor	677,721 (99.81%)
Votes against	1,291 (0.19%)

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Source: [www.radiosarajevo.ba](http://www.radiosarajevo.ba)

### Epilogue

In the October 2, 2016 municipal elections, Milorad Dodik's ruling Union of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) won 33 mayoral positions; 11 positions more than in 2012. The SDS lost the same number of municipalities, holding only 17. (Radio Sarajevo, 2016). Party leader Mladen Bosic resigned following the defeat. (Klix.ba 2016). While pre-election polling is hardly definitive, the effect of the referendum and attendant campaign in braking the momentum of the united opposition to a party in government for a decade appears significant. (BN Televizija 2016; Istinito 2016).

The RS held a high-profile parade to commemorate RS Statehood Day on January 9, 2017, which included heavily armed militarized police. (Klix 2017). Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic attended, along with several other Serbian officials; Prime Minister Vucic did not. Dodik called on members of the overwhelmingly ethnic Serb 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade to march in the parade, making their participation a sort of loyalty test. The BiH Defense Ministry and NATO Headquarters Commander Brig. Gen. Giselle Wilz had specifically warned against BiH soldiers participating. (Kovacevic 2017). In the end, Serb members of the BiH Armed Forces participated as an honor guard for Mladen Ivanic, Serb member of the BiH Presidency, but did not march. (Rose, 2017). Expert opinion is that in the event of hostilities, the BiH Armed Forces would collapse into its

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ethnic components, concentrated heavily in nine infantry battalions. (Democratization Policy Council 2011).

RS President Milorad Dodik upped the ante before, during, and after the RS Day celebrations, threatening to hold an independence referendum the following year. On January 8, he stated that a referendum would not be against anyone, just defend RS rights. “We want to hold a referendum every year to bring us closer to strengthening our institutional and state rights.” (Klix.ba 2017). Dodik told the crowd at the RS Day parade that “the Serb Republic will not stay inside Bosnia” unless it gets enough autonomy to “live its life as a state.” (EU Observer 2017).

Immediately prior to US President Donald Trump’s inauguration, and pursuant to the consequences foreshadowed in the US Embassy’s statement, the US Treasury Department placed personal sanctions on Dodik for his actions against the Dayton Peace Agreement. (Reuters 2017) He has subsequently said that secession is not the primary goal of the Republika Srpska. (Sarajevo Times 2017).

The referendum – and the weak international reaction to the challenge – has accelerated discussion of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s further division. Croat member of the BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, who has called Dodik a “partner,” has amplified his calls for federalization of the country, backed by Croatia’s president and foreign minister. (N1 2016)

The impact of the referendum, despite the fact that the RS Government has effectively consigned its results to the archives, is likely to be far greater than what may seem an arcane issue surrounding holiday commemoration. It might well be seen as the event which demonstrated, were there any residual doubt, that there is no credible restraining international hand on the competing nationalist agendas in BiH or the Balkans more broadly. (Klix.ba 2016)

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## **BOOK REVIEWS**



Philipp Ther. 2016. *Europe since 1989: A History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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We all too often tend to think of 1989 as the year of Eastern European revolutions, without consideration of the changes the historic transformation brought to Western Europe. Perhaps the greatest merit of Philipp Ther's book, *Europe since 1989: A History*, is to break the long-standing tradition and ask a new question: what does 1989 mean for the historical evolution of Europe as a whole? That is, how did the revolutions in Eastern Europe 'co-transform' Western European advanced democracies? In his 400-page long analysis Ther develops a clear thesis: by the rise of the neoliberal order.

To explain the regime change and the direction post-communist societies took after 1989, Ther goes back to the socio-economic developments in the 1980s. While the Soviet Block was crumbling under the influence of nationalism and economic decline, in the West, a new ideology – neoliberalism – was gaining traction under the leadership of Reagan and Thatcher (chapter 2). After the Eastern European revolutions (chapter 3), the intellectual proponents of neoliberalism, headed by Milton Friedman, saw the perfect opportunity to experiment with these ideas. They allied with key domestic actors to implement neoliberal 'reforms' in the form of privatization, economic deregulation, and market liberalization (chapter 4). These reforms put Eastern European countries on a path where neoliberal transformations were considered key to succeed and defined politics in the decades to come (chapter 5). However, the success of neoliberalism undermined the societal basis of these reforms by creating structural inequalities, large-scale unemployment, and poverty. Ther's assessment of the gap between the boom economy of capital cities and other regions' underdevelopment serves as an example (chapter 6).

If *Europe since 1989* had been a history of the post-communist transitions, the reader might expect the book to conclude here. But, Ther goes on to discuss the effect of the Eastern European neoliberal development path on the politics of advanced democracies. Particularly, after the era of the Great Recession (chapter 7), European policy makers looked at the 1990s transition reforms as models to manage the consequences of the economic crisis. But while in the nineties the price of these reforms was supported by older generations, during the Great Recession, in Southern Europe the Troika-endorsed policies pushed the costs on the younger generations (chapter 8). In the long run, integrating the Eastern European countries in the common market affected Western European economies by incentivizing wage cuts to make them more competitive, which, in turn, led to growing economic and social inequalities. Ther exemplifies the co-transformation process by devoting a chapter to the post-unification German history (chapter 9), from the solidarity tax to the Hartz IV reforms.

*Europe since 1989* reviews and provides a valuable contribution to some of the decade long debates of the literature on the transition. The most important of these debates concern the speed of the reforms and their relationship to latter success. An analysis of the cross-national patterns shows two paths countries followed: ‘shock therapy’ or gradual transformation. Countries which implemented rapid reforms with high societal costs later became the most successful Eastern European economies. Ther acknowledges the correlation, but he argues that a third aspect confounds the relationship: human capital. The reason for the success of countries like Poland or Hungary lies in the resilience of their population endowed with entrepreneurial skills. Ther distinguishes between top-down and bottom-up transformations, and argues that the latter had a great impact on the different countries’ chance to succeed (chapter 6). He discusses the Polish market in Vienna and the extensive cross-border trade practices as examples of human capital which made the success of these countries possible.

Writing the history of recent events is not an easy task, and perhaps the most innovative aspect of Ther’s book is his ambition to analyze the post-1989 evolution of Europe as a distinct historical epoch (p. 32). In this regard, his contribution is path-breaking and requires broadening the traditional methodological toolkit. Therefore, apart from archival research, Ther reviews extensive social science secondary literature, uses descriptive statistics and relies on his personal memories to build a rich narrative of the era. As an excellent writer, he manages to bring together and use a variety of methods to convincingly argue for his thesis.



One of the over-arching methodological suggestion formulated in the book is to take Eastern Europe's heterogeneity serious. The sub-regions followed different paths, and one should not conflate the dynamic across the Baltics, the Southeast, the Visegrad countries and the former Yugoslavia. Although Ther reviews events from all the different regions, the Visegrad countries stand out as the source of most of his examples. Similar to other comparative works on Eastern Europe, the description of the Baltics and of Southeastern Europe are rather schematic and often reads as a footnote to a 'Visegrad perspective'.

Despite Ther's insistence on using 'neoliberalism' as a neutral, analytical term, the concept is not clearly delimited. His definition of 'a blind belief in the market as an adjudicator in almost all human affairs' (p. X.) is neither neutral, nor precise. Perhaps, this lack of conceptual precision is the reason why, for a social scientist used to hypothesis tests, some of his causal arguments could be more convincing. Arguably, it is not a historian's job to develop counterfactual scenarios, but Ther's argument that the supposedly unavoidable neoliberal reforms were in fact unnecessary for the success of a given country's transition and only resulted in considerable social costs lacks a tangible contrast. Without any counterfactuals or solid conceptual cues, the reader is left to his/her imagination of a post-communist transition 'with a human face'.

Overall, *Europe since 1989* seems like an instant classic of the field. Just as any classic, it asks the important questions and provides thought-provoking answers, which may not always be the final verdicts. Ther's in-depth analysis makes the book an interesting read for a wide audience coming from different disciplines or even outside of academia. I recommend the book for anyone interested in contemporary European affairs, narrated "from an Eastern angle" (p.8).



Michael R. Palairret. 2015. *Macedonia: A Voyage through History*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

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*Macedonia: A Voyage through History* from Michael Palairret offers a detailed, extensive overview of the history of Macedonia. In this rather ambitious project, Palairret attempts to discuss the historical developments on the territory of Macedonia covering the entire history starting from ancient times and the first organization of life on this territory to the Macedonian independence and the most contemporary developments. This makes the monograph a very important contribution to the state of art since it is one of the rare academic works in English which analyzes and discusses the historical developments on the territory of Macedonia.

The book covers a time period of 25 centuries of political organization on the territory of Macedonia. Palairret begins with the rise and growth of the Macedonian kingdom in ancient times until the Ottoman invasions, which are described in the first volume of the book. The second volume analyses the entire period under the Ottoman rule until the independence and the most recent developments. Despite the longitudinal structure and analysis of the historical developments, Palairret manages to emphasize the relevance of several important topics such as religion, nationalism and multi-ethnic relations. The book offers an overview of the growth and the role of Christianity, but also Islam on the territory of Macedonia. The focus on this topic is crucial since it reflects the cultural developments in a broader context, but it is particularly important to understand the contemporary multicultural and multiethnic division of Macedonia.

The second volume covers the widely discussed topics of nation building, nationalism and identity. The history of Macedonia, even nowadays, is a matter of political contention. Historical events are differently interpreted and used in

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creating national myths about the Balkan nations. In this sense, to analyze the history of Macedonia inevitably means to go deeper into the contested and predominantly political discussions about national identities. Palairet is not afraid of going through these important debates, thus making the book a valuable academic guide to the broader historical and political developments on the Balkans.

The contemporary aspects of nation formation as part of the Yugoslav federation and since gaining independence are covered in chapters 21 and 22 and to a certain extent also in chapter 19 which discusses the second world war and the civil war in Greece. This exceptionally relevant part of the Macedonian history is covered in rather limited space, though it includes several important aspects such as nation building, the communist regime, multiethnic relations, independence and the Macedonian-Greek dispute about the constitutional name of the country. Particularly the issue of multi-ethnic relations is not sufficiently discussed. Palairet's strong analytical skills enable him to identify these issues, but there is a lack of an in-depth analysis and discussion of these relevant aspects.

The book, indeed, is a voyage through history, offering a very important overview of the political, economic and social developments on this territory. For such a complex task, Palairet still provides the readers with a detailed and rich amount of historical data followed by provocative discussions and historical interpretations. Mapping the entire history of Macedonia is exactly one of the main strengths of the book, but also possibly one of its biggest limitations because of the lack of depth.

Two elements should be taken into account in order to evaluate the academic importance of such a book on Macedonian history. The first is of conceptual character. More concretely, of the question what one understands by Macedonia: The current territory of the independent Macedonia, or what Macedonian historians define as "the historical borders" of Macedonia? Palairet's approach is closer to the latter. He defines Macedonia based on a map of the Ottoman territory in the early 1900s which includes the territory of the independent Macedonia, the northern part of Greece or Aegean Macedonia, the western part of Bulgaria or Pirin Macedonia as well as small parts that remained in Serbia. This decision is very important because it reinforces the debate about national identity and the historical origin of the nation. It also follows the interpretation of the borders of Macedonia accepted by the Macedonian historians, (as well as competing Bulgarian historians who only question the origins of the Macedonian nation), contrary to the Greek and

Serbian historical interpretations. In this sense, Palairret's approach is not novel in the analysis and interpretation of the history of Macedonia and it does not contribute to solving, but it follows and/or even reinforces the debate between different national perspectives on contested political discourses.

The second important element is the analytical aspect. The very ambitious plan to review the entire history of Macedonia causes certain relevant research limitations. The analysis lacks depth and more detailed discussion and interpretation of the historical processes. Palairret does not hesitate to take strong stances and make bold claims about historical processes and the role of domestic or international actors, but in numerous cases these strong claims lack a deeper analysis or a stronger empirical support. This is particularly visible in the chapters that deal with the most contemporary developments in Macedonia. While Palairret's capacities to summarize a very eventful period in a limited space and to capture the most relevant historical events are the book's greatest asset, his explanations need stronger empirical support and deeper analysis. The way they are presented leaves great room for criticism.

In general, the history of Macedonia is never only an academic, but also political topic. Palairret does maybe not succeed in offering a new set of interpretations of the historical processes or uncovering new historical facts that will refute or reinforce certain existing academic paradigms (goals he might not even have set for this book). But with his intellectual courage, analytical boldness and encyclopedic knowledge, he manages to disturb and dissatisfy all competing nationalistic paradigms on the Balkans to a certain extent. No single side can be fully satisfied with Palairret's interpretation and, taking into account the Balkan context and the coexisting nationalist narratives, perhaps this is an important asset of the book. The book "Macedonia – a voyage through history" is an important summary of the history of Macedonia. Palairret's ambitious plan, supported with clear academic courage and passion, makes this book an interesting introduction to the Macedonian history. It has a significant contribution to the literature on Macedonia and its rather provocative and bold academic style opens a room for increasing interests in the topic and for the pursuit of further research in this area.