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The political psychology of extremism; “naturalness” of the phenomenon in the Western Balkans

Faruk Hadžić

Independent researcher, Bosnia and Herzegovina

faruk.hadzic01@gmail.com

Abstract. In a symbolic sense, this region may be burdened with a kind of negative ontology that is very difficult to change. Extremist ideologies are, in fact, just a continuation of the war by other means. They have entered education, and beginning to metastasize and affect the entire social tissue, becoming "naturalness", supported by different mythopoetic narratives of a particular nation. In an environment where politics is extreme, many avoid concerns the very nature of extremism and the process of radicalization within the discourse of „peacetime“ extremism. Extremism stems from finding two basic human needs: the need for cognitive closure and personal significance. Subordination of the individual to the national community, i.e., the leader, is a psychological form of political behavior marked by an obsessive preoccupation with the decline of the community; sacrificing the process of compensatory, the cult of unification while abandoning democratic freedoms with redemptive violence and, regardless of moral and legal constraints, seeks to achieve ethno-religious threatening collectivity (tribal identity). Extremism uses the properties of consciousness: ethnicity, religiousness, and thinking in absolute categories (in a destructive aspect to add naturalness to its ideas) to justify activities with a sacred or „patriotic“ will. Although the violent potential of nationalism in the Balkans should be overlooked by no means, the inflammatory rhetoric is just a method used by political elites to manipulate the public.

Keywords. political psychology, Balkans, political naturalness, extremism, ideologies, tribal identity

Introduction

Like many other socioeconomic crises in history, the crisis of globalization is a field of strengthening the right, nationalism, and isolationism. There is no doubt that in the turbulent history of the Balkans, the violence marked every turning point: the creation and disintegration of states, kingdoms, empires; emergence and disappearance of new ideologies and economies; cultural revival and decay; adoption and loss of religions, beliefs, and customs. We can recall the events of the last century, the attack in Sarajevo in 1914¹, as the detonator of an unprecedented world crisis. It was also far from an isolated gesture- despite how it was later exploited, idealized, or denied- because it was aided to some extent by external forces and in the context of politics. For many in the Western Balkans, change is not happening fast enough, and socioeconomic opportunities are scarce. As in other countries that have experienced and

¹ Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and the Archduke's wife, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenberg, in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, which led to the outbreak of World War I.

survived the implosion of communist regimes, in post-Yugoslav countries democracy has not been won by independent and robust social groups that can act as a counterweight to the state structure, with formed interests that act "transformatively"; not directing political change and form the basis of political pluralism expressed through different parties. The powers of states and entities created on the ruins of ex-Yugoslavia are often authoritarian and weak at the same time. With the frequent rise of authoritarians and arbitrary recourse to power, human rights violations, and relations can be described as multiple antagonisms with questionable cross-border cooperation. States cannot establish effective civilian control over security systems, much less to restore the economy's inappropriate flows and political decision-making, the distribution of power to legal, institutional flows.

The concept of political extremism is "still" difficult to define because it is not universal, and there is no neutral way of determining who an extremist is. Besides, the use of violence is far from enough to define what is extremism. On this account, we can suggest that "extremism" is a term of abuse rather than a serious political analysis tool. A lot of what is extreme is still within the limits of what is allowed. Extremism is more in the head than action. Extremism occurs when conditions are created that provoke action. Since it is neither democratic nor possible to control people's minds, it is not easy to assess who has an extremist attitude. These are just some of the difficulties in defining extremism. In linguistic terms, extreme is that which "extends to the extreme" and political feeling refers to society's values. One of the conditions for the emergence of extremism is a crisis in society (which causes a crisis of morality or a crisis of values) or inferiority within threats or a type of negative self-affirmation that often leads to xenophobia. In addition to the crisis of society, it is worth mentioning the structural circumstances in societies.

Political extremism is more prone to authoritarian, ethno-political regimes (or those that have been), with a climate of revanchism in society and areas of poor economic conditions associated with socioeconomic exclusion and mobilization of national-religious ideologies. During the self-identification of parties or "extreme" movements (right-wing), European experience shows that they never declare themselves publicly as "extremists" because of the negative connotations of the terms; in the ex-Yu, they are "defenders of vital national interests -Christianity-Orthodoxy-Islam -patriots." Extremism must meet two conditions: political motives and political consequences, and it appears in the field of politics. It is not motivation that matters, but grouping. Specifically, even if it is not evil, the enemy, as the essence of the political, is the exalted position according to K. Schmidt (1923). The notion of the enemy is at the very heart of politics. Friend-enemy is the ultimate degree of intensity of grouping and separation. The author argues that the highlights of the „big state“ hegemony Balkan politics are also the moments in which the enemy is seen in real clarity as to the enemy. From the example of the post-Yugoslav space, one could learn a lesson about internal discord and destruction ideologies as inconvenient historical facts in this area: fear of the other (minority/majority discourse) is the greatest enemy of all social human communities. (Hadžić, 2020: 812) The existence of a "minority and majority" or "friend and enemy" in the former Yugoslavia relationship (the enemy is always that of another ethno-religious group) is the foundation of the symbiosis of the political, religious, and ethnonational in the ex -Yugoslav communities, filling part of the personal space of human intimacy, becoming the dominant form of behavior that marked new generations. A specific (extremely negative) characteristic of the post-Yugoslav spaces is that religions are identified with nations (majority). Fear of losing identity within multinational communities, such as Yugoslavia, after disintegration led to the sudden "emergence" of antagonistic individual national identities, becoming indivisible, and exclusive. National

identities built and consolidated with the help of such confessional exclusivism (usually associated with ethnic) manifested themselves as extremely impermeable and inflexible, and the rivalry between their national umbrella projects as almost irreconcilable. Therefore, this form of nationalism maintained a firm position in these societies' political processes. By instrumentalizing the issue of ethnicity within the radicalization of political discourse, ethnic homogenization occurs, and the result is the fact that ethnopolitical parties remain in power. Ethnic mobilization encourages and spreads a sense of homogeneity and equality and a sense of security and power in the collective "We". At the same time, it is critical to suggest that the former Yugoslavia "big-state" hegemonist concepts emerge when the political elite tries to "overlap" the ethnic, religious, and political dimensions. The use of ethnic/national/confessional affiliation in discourse today in ex-Yugoslavia (especially election campaigns) produces further political radicalization and extremism.

Ideological extremism, despite its often at least declaratively lofty goals ("new man", "just society"), as a rule, it manifests itself in the form of intolerant and violent behavior (from discrimination, persecution, all the way to genocide). We have seen throughout history, and especially drastically in the last century, where exclusivity and intolerance lead in political life. Extremism begins with salinization, dehumanization of a political dissident, and ends with exclusion or extermination. Right-wing political extremism in the form of National Socialism, early psychological research has shown (From, Maslow, Adorno), is associated with an authoritarian personality type (repressed aggression, power worship, group narcissism, anti-contraceptives, rigid thinking, the propensity to project). Subsequent research (e.g., Rokeach) reveals that different types of political extremism, both left and right, have the same psychological basis, such as communism, fascism, or religious fundamentalism. They are characterized primarily by a special way of dogmatic thinking, and not by the specific content of opinion (e.g., conservatism, conventionality). However, extremists are intolerant, aggressive, and authoritarian people (in the sense of "general authoritarianism", not just "right").

Ethnopsychologist V. Dvorniković noticed the psychological tendency to extremism in the region of the former Yugoslavia (especially among the Serbian people). "The Yugoslav man, according to his mental dispositions, is a political extremist. The motto that will move him must be determined and extremely sharpened, above all similar to the battle cry, capable of reviving and raising an indignant fighter in it. Whatever rate, compromise, and rationalization cannot play on „his“ political temperament or stimulate his deeper interest at all." (Dvorniković, 1990) An empirical study of authoritarianism (Rot, Havelka, 1973) conducted in the region (on a sample of high school youth) confirms this assessment because it reveals extremely high authoritarianism (the highest score in the world on the Adorno scale of authoritarianism, even higher than that of American prisoners!). This result is worrying, even though it can be partially explained by methodological (F-scale was not standardized in Serbia) and cultural reasons (patriarchal consciousness and different cultural norms).

Unavoidable references to observing political extremism in this area are ethnonationalism, antagonism, and war violence. It is rightly considered that any political extremism is a negation of a democratic constitutional state. Regardless of how it manifests itself in practice (racism, xenophobia) (Nolek, 2001; 313). Ethnonationalism extremism, which is on the rise in the region, is of particular concern. Unresolved issues such as Bosnia's tripartite composition and tensions between Serbia and Kosovo remain a security issue. In 2017, legal changes declaring Albanian the official language in Macedonia highlighted this threat, as even lawmakers who supported the changes were themselves the target of violent nationalists.

In the Balkan environment, without a functional system of social and political balance, politicians and every aspect of politics are already radical at their core. There are many examples, all of which took place within the discourse of "normal" politics. What does that mean? In the political life of the former Yugoslavia, ethnocracy takes the place of democracy, special ethnopolitical totalitarianism takes the place of national (state) political orientation, and ethnopolitics, biopolitics, and populism grow unstoppably against democratic politics.

Thus, the most important feature of this approach is certainly the creation of a discourse of "naturalness", supported by different, mostly pseudo-scientific, or mythopoetic narratives² of a particular nation. We can problematize that extremism uses the properties of consciousness: ethnicity, religiousness, and thinking in absolute categories (in a destructive aspect to add naturalness to its ideas) to justify activities with a sacred or „patriotic“ will. The goal of the discourse of naturalness in the western Balkans is to devalue alternative discursive patterns as "utopian" or "abnormal." It is a kind of naturalistic delusion of the dominant ethnopolitical discourse. Is extremism in itself – „peacetime“ extremism - also a threat? Can peacetime extremism simply be tolerated, and is it just a natural display/demonstration of a free society? Within observing the emergence of religious extremism, it is becoming increasingly clear that local authorities, civil society organizations, and practitioners must have a wider scope than just Islamic radicalism (cases of individuals joined ISIS) to prevent and combat violent extremism effectively. It is not to say that they are not a problem of another type of violent religious extremism. Significantly, the Islamic symbolism that was politically mobilized in the Bosnian war was not traditional Bosnian Islamic symbolism but rather contemporary Islamic symbolism imported from some Arab countries. The facts tell us about a cyclical series of extremist mobilizations, such as the joining of members of the Orthodox Christian community to the conflict in Ukraine on the side of pro-Russian or pro-Ukrainian forces fighting there. Is it possible to be a peaceful member of the extremist movement if someone renounces violence? Does it mean anything if these more "extreme" communities are looking for new supporters through traditional and social media channels? „Political elites have kept their citizens in a constant state of national tension for decades. This is, in a way, already a „prepared“ mechanism when they have nothing else to offer.“ (Aleksic,2016) At the same time, the absence of a democratic tradition, the lack of a "critical public," and the dominance of an "ethnic public" in the region, artificially produced by ethnopolitical indoctrination, affect the survival of ethnic mobilizations and political extremism.

1. Naturalness politics and political extremism in the Balkans

Extremism in political parties can be manifested in their ideology (overt or covert), program, statements, and speech they use, actions, and deeds. Not all the above elements need to be met. One of them is enough. Parties are organizations, i.e., they have goals, means, structure, and methods of action. Old habits, values, and traditions are emerging in the new light of the new (globalized) world, especially in the fragile Balkans. The Balkans in geographical form through the ex-Yu, except Slovenia, has become a frozen entity in history due to the prevailing ethnonational differences and circumstances between and within borders (nationalism, sovereignty, and identities) opposing democratic peace. As in other countries that have experienced and survived the implosion of communist regimes, in post-Yugoslav countries democracy has not been won by independent and robust social groups that can act as a counterweight to the state structure, with formed interests that act "transformatively"; not

² For example: The Kosovo myth or Kosovo cult is one of the critical Serbian political myths, which forms the basis of Serbian national identity and the atomic core of Serbian nationalism. (Čolović,Slapšak,2009) Vučinović M. <http://www.nspm.rs/kulturna-politika/kosovski-mit-i-srpski-nacionalni-identitet.html>

directing political change and form the basis of political pluralism expressed through different parties. Etnationalism does not bring political scenes a socio-economic system that would already be independently formed, with appropriate bearers of transformative interests and competing "projects" of the new order. (Hadžić,2020)

Historically, the question/discourse of the "security dilemma" of the region is who will control the "land." In the ongoing struggle for territory, multiethnic dialogue does not encourage political-ethnic and religious leaders to create multiethnic coexistence and democratization without determining who will have the ultimate power to control the disputed "piece of land." Albanians in North Macedonia did not get territory, but rights (they changed the Constitution). Simultaneously, in Bosnia, the entities have increased the possibilities of monopoly and power over the territory. Furthermore, while for Croatia, the military action "Storm" in 1995 is a magnificent victory, for Serbia is ethnic cleansing. The attitudes of ordinary citizens, Serbs, and Croats, have not changed significantly. Many believe that the relations between the two states on the anniversary date of "Storm" are becoming tenser each year. In several cases of ex-Yu wars, the international community intervened, arguing that ethnic cleansing and such ideologies could not win, within the discourse of human rights. However, territorially (maps), the victory of those ideologies and ethnic cleansing is evident. Such strategies create a policy of fear and insecurity, and public debate often refers to "security." Security justifies authoritarian forms of social control, mass raids, arrests, intimidation of the public, collaborating with the underworld. Such campaigns in the Balkans had receded since the fall of communist regimes when it turned out that tycoons linked to "Europeanization" and "market liberalization" also had a criminal past on their own or cooperated with the international underworld. Moreover, the assessment of these countries by the Freedom House organization (2018), Serbia, BiH, Kosovo, and North Macedonia are transitional, hybrid regimes; regimes that have elements of democracy but also authoritarianism, speaks enough about the fact that these countries face important issues, which diminishes political, social, and economic opportunities in the modern world.³

The attempt to draw new borders in the ex-Yu does not mean the end of "frozen" wars, creating space for the further functioning of the new concept of populist authoritarian regimes and leaders. The peace established in the region after the war in Bosnia in late 1995, the conflicts in Kosovo in 1999, and North Macedonia in 2001, further radicalized certain segments of society. Therefore, the stability of the region continues to undermine unresolved status issues. In that part, Serbia and Kosovo's relations are attracting much attention on the world stage, with a lack of political dialogue, tensions, and final status. Attention was focused on North Macedonia and Greece over name and flag disputes and the Albanian minority issue in North Macedonia. Besides, we have Croatian-Slovenian long-term border dispute. In Bosnia, a complex structure of two entities and one district, ethnoreligious division, the EU and NATO integration, is complicated. In the relations between Bosnia and Kosovo, no aspect can be singled out to function at a satisfactory level. Relations remain in the realm of political rhetoric, and the problem of freedom of movement between Bosnia and Kosovo is directly linked to the problem of asymmetric and scarce economic cooperation.

The Balkans' concept, metaphors of constant divisions, conflicts, and confusions, traditionally includes the high antagonism and wars. The initial capsule of all these events was the growing political extremism of certain circles, aided by several other factors and outside influences. At

³ Freedom House, 2018., 2017., 2016., Nation in Transit Bosnia and Herzegovina <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/bosnia-and-herzegovina>

Freedom House, 2018., 2017., 2016., Nation in Transit Croatia, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/croatia>,
Freedom House, 2018., 2017., 2016., Nation in Transit Kosovo <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/kosovo>
Freedom House, 2018., 2017., 2016., Nation in Transit Serbia <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/>

the same time, this crisis is not the result of acute depression but developed during a long negative process. In defining extremism, political theory was largely limited to comments and descriptions of its goals and manifestations. Even many authors, such as Stephen Atkins, find it easier to define terrorism than extremism. Terrorism, Etkins believes, "begins with a conspiracy and ends with a concrete destructive act," while extremism lurks behind the political scene and can produce far more severe consequences than a terrorist act. It is rightly considered that any political extremism is a negation of a democratic constitutional state, and regardless of how it manifests in practice (racism, xenophobia).

Many of the symptoms of the crisis that European democracies are currently experiencing have been developing, expressing and consolidating for years in the southeast of the continent: the crisis of democracy in Southeast Europe is visible to everyone and "the idea of the liberal-democratic consensus no longer exists" (Bieber, 2017). At the same time, this crisis is not the result of acute depression but developed during a long negative process. M. Hein and A. Frustorfer (2016), analyzed several statistics and indicators that measure democracy according to different parameters: developmental, social, and the rule of law. All the countries of Southeast Europe, except for Kosovo, regardless of whether they are members of the EU or not, have recorded a constant downward trend over the past ten years. It concerns a physical deterioration. However, even in the case of subjective parameters, such as citizens' trust in parliaments and institutions of society, the same tendency is shown. Among the countries of the region that are not yet members of the EU or, as in Croatia, which is only members for a short time, the crisis of democracy is accompanied by a more principled crisis of values orientation. Political structures in the region are left or right-wing, sometimes opposing each other, and sometimes cooperating in networked systems of mutual support. However, very often, abuse by the government destroys the essence of democracy.

Increased nationalist rhetoric in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is a maneuver used by some politicians to win votes in the upcoming elections or divert attention from socio-economic problems.(Birn,2016) There are political absurdities in the region wrapped in the form of hate speech daily, through tabloids and in the most prominent media. In such an environment and without a functional system of social and political checks and balances, politicians and every aspect of politics are already radical at their core. Within the framework of peacetime extremism, naturally displaying demonstration, we will consider only a few following examples, all of which took place within the discourse of "naturalness" political patterns.

The train with the slogan "Kosovo is Serbia" was sent from Belgrade to Kosovo in 2017., with no intention other than provocation; stopped at the border after threats of violence, but fortunately without escalation.

Although authorities in the region claim to have a strong stance against foreign terrorist fighters (whether leaving or coming to fight), in Višegrad, a town in eastern Bosnia (brutally ethnically cleansed in Second World War and in the 1992. war), a monument was erected to Russian foreign fighters who died there. War crimes prosecutions in Bosnia and transitional justice for victims are significantly delayed, (ICTY⁴) has been disbanded, and judicial reform is stalled. All attempts to revise the results of World War II in the world, in general, change and falsification of historical facts are punishable. However, in the ex-Yu, collaborators of Hitler's genocidal machines, convicted (ICTY) members of political-military-paramilitary formations regularly, receive pensions, medals, schools, and streets named after them, and celebrate

⁴ The International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the ex-Yu since 1991.

manifestations of assembly. The commemoration of the events follows a ceremony led by religious officials.⁵ Paradoxically, Pavelić⁶, Mihailović⁷, and their followers are assessed by nationalists and clerics as patriots, and anti-fascists and communists have acquired the stigma of national traitors. Today, according to some media, Ustashas⁸, Chetniks⁹, and the like are becoming nobler (almost anti-fascists). We have a physical strengthening of the right-wing in many aspects - from the Istanbul Convention onwards in Croatia, to the rehabilitation of Mihajlović in Serbia.

In the agreement with the assembly of the Municipality of Centar, there are plans to erect a monument to a special police unit in front of the Second Gymnasium in Sarajevo¹⁰, and the chosen design of the monument is a tank.

In other news about education, Milorad Dodik announced that it would never be allowed to teach about genocide in Srebrenica or Sarajevo's siege in schools in Republika Srpska¹¹.

The political debate in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia was set aside for a week when the main Bosniak political party (SDA) re-raised the issue of appealing to the International Court of Justice for a verdict in the case between the two countries in 2007, with both sides have very different definitions of what is needed to support "reconciliation."

The elected mayor of Srebrenica¹², the first Serb to hold the post since the war, said he disagreed with the use of the term genocide, openly questioning the number of people killed in July 1995. In RS, Prime Minister Milorad Dodik (now member of Bosnian presidency) has threatened to secede from Bosnia numerous times, lately, within the Kosovo syndrome (if Kosovo becomes independent). By the Kosovo syndrome, we mean the burden of Serbian politics with the belief that joining the EU means renouncing territorial sovereignty. In its denotative meaning, a referendum is an expression of the will of the people and the embodiment of direct democracy. Its connotative dimension is more important, which has a polarizing effect in society and is understood as a strategy of the final destruction of the state.

Former President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, who wanted re-election, was relying on an Islamophobic campaign, and nurturing a policy close to extreme nationalism, the Viennese daily *Der Standard* assessed, as reported by Tanjug. "Wherever she can, she is not talking about her own country, but about neighbors. Many Croatian politicians have a fixed idea that they should interfere in the affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina," the paper added. *Der Standard*

⁵ Troops commanded by Mihailović carried out the war in cooperation with the Italian and German occupiers, fighting against the partisans. In doing so, they carried out a mass ethnic cleansing of the non-Serb population in the Sandžak area and eastern Bosnia and killed at least 3,000 Muslims in Višegrad alone. R.J.H. <https://direktno.hr/eu-i-svijet/okupljanje-cetnika-vise-totina-pripadnika-ravnogorskog-pokreta-odalo-pocast-drazi-mihailovicu-116084/> 13.03.2018

⁶ A Yugoslavian Croat lawyer, politician and dictator who founded and headed the fascist ultranationalist organization known as the Ustaše in 1929 and governed the Independent State of Croatia (Croatian: *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH), a fascist puppet state built out of parts of occupied Yugoslavia by the authorities of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, from 1941 to 1945.

⁷ Leader of The Chetnik Detachments of the Yugoslav Army in War world 2. The struggle for the liberty of our whole nation under the scepter of His Majesty King Peter II; the creation of a Great Yugoslavia and within it of a Great Serbia which is to be ethnically pure and is to include Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Srijem, the Banat, and Bačka; the struggle for the inclusion into Yugoslavia of all still unliberated Slovene territories under the Italians and Germans (Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, and Carinthia) as well as Bulgaria, and northern Albania with Skadar; the cleansing of the state territory of all national minorities and a-national elements; the creation of contiguous frontiers between Serbia and Montenegro, as well as between Serbia and Slovenia by cleansing the Muslim population from Sandžak and the Muslim and Croat populations from BiH.- Directive of 20 December 1941., (Tomasevich 1975:170)

⁸ Ustasha is a term colloquially used to describe members of the Croatian fascist movement founded in 1929 by Ante Pavelić under the name Ustasha - Croatian Revolutionary Organization (UHRO), which Nazi Germany appointed the ruling party in 1941 after the founding of the Independent State of Croatia. Ustasha - Croatian Liberation Movement (UHOP)

⁹ Members of a Serbian military organization with a distinctly nationalist chauvinistic Greater Serbia goal.

¹⁰ Bosnian capital city.

¹¹ The entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Another entity is the Federation of BiH; besides, one district exist-Brčko District)

¹² Town in Bosnia. During the Bosnian War, Srebrenica was the site of a massacre of more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys, which was subsequently designated as an act of genocide by the ICTY and the International Court of Justice.

reminded that during the meeting with the Israeli colleague Reuven Rivlin, the Croatian president said, according to The Jerusalem Post, that Bosnia and Herzegovina is unstable and under the control of militant Islam.¹³

During the political crisis in Macedonia, VMRO-DPMNE categorized the Albanian language demands as an attempt to destroy the state. Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama has been accused of meddling in Macedonian affairs after inviting Albanian leaders from Macedonia to Tirana for talks on language rights. More broadly, the entire "Skopje 2014" spectacle is seen by many as a provocation aimed at rejecting Greece and excluding Albanians and other non-Slavic peoples.

The unresolved knots remained long enough in the origins and specific goals of AKSH (Albanian citizen of Armata), general calls for the unification of "all Albanians" divided between Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro and the Greek border area with Albania, already disputed during the Italian occupation in World War II. Its performances arose to tensions due to Kosovo's independence and the 2008 election riots in North Macedonia.¹⁴

Furthermore, in recent years, several incidents related to nationalism have been reported. The Balkan pilgrimage of the Russian motorcycle club "Night Wolves", which supports Putin, caused many controversies on their way through areas inhabited by Serbs to "explore the cultural influence of the Russian Empire in the Balkans" and visit Orthodox heritage sites. It is the same organization that offered protection from potential aggression by pro-Kyiv forces in Crimea after its annexation in 2014.

If such extreme political debates and activities are "normal," it is no wonder that the most extreme social actors, regardless of commitment, can find an audience. This political direction and the electoral dynamics that come with it marginalize moderate voices, encourage more divisions and preclude formal or informal efforts to cultivate civic identities or a sense of a shared vision, purpose, or future.

Furthermore, a striking example of political extremism is the education system in Bosnia. Political projects started by war, segregation among ethnic groups continues only through education, within the discriminated educational phenomenon of "Two schools under one roof."¹⁵ "There are those borders, we don't agree, and we don't want to be in touch," says a high school student from Mostar, adding that he was never on the Old Bridge¹⁶ out of fear, because, as he says, "someone will recognize that he is a Croat and get into trouble." "Four students express such an opinion in the same first sentence. The same student states that he can recognize a Muslim "crossing the Bridge by" speech, movement, clothing, facial texture, and darker skin." (Perspektiva,2015) These phenomena show obvious indoctrination with elements that produce antagonism and violence, creating clones of ethnoreligious primogenitors and preventing young people's development into moral citizens-individuals. In this way, ethnopolitics takes care of its reproduction by cultivating new generations of future xenophobes where young Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats learn to see objects in others to maintain their Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats, rather than independent and full human beings. Thus an extremist model of the domination of ethnic discourse over the entire social life of people emerges. In political life, ethnocracy takes the place of democracy, special ethnopolitical totalitarianism

¹³ 2019., <http://balkans.aljazeera.net/vijesti/der-standard-grabar-kitarovic-polaze-na-islamofobnu-kampanju>

¹⁴ Minorities at Risk Project,(2004), Chronology for Albanians in Macedonia, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/469f38b7a.html>

¹⁵ Term for schools in BiH based on the ethnic segregation. Students from two ethnic groups, Bosniaks and Croats, attend classes in the same building, but physically separated from each other and taught separate curricula.

¹⁶ Unesco's 16th-century Ottoman bridge (rebuilt after war destruction) in the city of Mostar in BiH crosses the river Neretva and connects the two parts of the city.

takes the place of national (state) political orientation, and ethno-politics, biopolitics, and populism grow unstoppably against democratic politics. The most important feature of this approach is certainly the creation of a discourse of "naturalness", supported by different, mostly pseudo-scientific, or mythopoetic narratives of a particular nation. The goal of the discourse of naturalness is to devalue alternative discursive patterns as "utopian" or "abnormal." It is a kind of naturalistic delusion of the dominant ethno-political discourse.

Research on vulnerability and resilience to violent extremism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Northern Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and Kosovo was conducted by the Berghof Foundation, from 2017-2019, to cooperate with local partners. The focus was not on the national level, but on the communities. Research has shown that there are similarities with the key causes of violent extremism in other parts of the world, but they are specific to the Western Balkans: failure to create a sense of belonging, strong feelings of injustice among citizens, and lack of critical thinking. Moreover, in this confusion, strong leaders often provide strong support with simple messages derived from national history. Furthermore, nationalism unites communities under the leadership of, admittedly, democratically elected, but leaders who act autocratically. Countries are becoming constantly dependent on external factors, as weak, unfinished, and undemocratic state formations that cannot achieve sufficiently autonomous - economic, political, social, national, and security capacities for progress. This claim is supported by the fact that most ex-Yu states have not been able to reach the level of development since the late 1980s, with an increased risk of losing capital in interaction with other countries. Most countries depend on stand-by arrangements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and some have an Extended Fund Facility (EFF), which varies over an extended repayment period. Societies are also heavily burdened by the legacy of armed conflict and protracted transitions. The large number of demobilized fighters, who fought in the ex-Yu, and their unresolved socioeconomic status pose an additional threat to the region's stability.

A specific (extremely negative) characteristic of the post-Yugoslav space is that religions are identified with nations (majority). Fear of losing identity within multinational communities, such as Yugoslavia, after disintegration led to the sudden "emergence" of antagonistic individual national identities, becoming indivisible, and exclusive. The circular actions of criminal actors and the conditions of new international actors are often attributed to mere ethnic theories that are constantly applied in the Balkans analysis. The most critical question is how all the ruling systems that have emerged on the scene are in their essence of ethno-politics. The answer to that question lies in the constitutive role of war for every policy. (Bhabha, 1990: 128) It means bringing members of one ethnic group into a state of readiness, mobility, which should be a prerequisite for other actions or a barrier against a sudden or "unannounced" attack by another, "rival" ethnic group or groups (Abazović, 2010: 3). The use of ethnicity in discourse produces that kind of political radicalization. In this way, they instrumentalize the issue of ethnicity to radicalize political discourse leading to ethnic homogenization. The result is that political parties that base their programs on ethnic issues remain in power.

2. Psychology of political extremism with a reflection on the former Yugoslavia

The fertile ground for the emergence of the movement is the social situation, especially inequality and insecurity. Uncertainty is a reflection of sudden social, economic, and political change. Insecurity is a subjective feeling that cannot be reasonably interpreted. Human reactions are not intentional and calculated, but illogical and undisciplined. Based on numerous researches on the psychological basis of different types of political extremism, here we will

give a sketch for the psychological profile of the bearer of extremist ideology. Namely, we will single out those main personality traits, the way of thinking and beliefs of a political extremist. Feelings of frustration and hatred, anger, and aggression towards the "enemy" are characteristics of political extremists. Extremists are, as a rule, people whose needs and desires are chronically thwarted. Exposed to constant life stresses (unemployment, poor economic and social situation), they often become nervous, chronically dissatisfied with themselves, scared and angry. Moreover, this state, filled with negative, poisonous, and destructive emotions, often leads to intolerance, hatred, and anger in marginalized social groups (minorities, women, children, LGBT). Insecure individuals, dissatisfied with their lives, have a strong sense of inferiority and a low tolerance threshold, are full of repressed anger and react to the slightest insult with excessive aggression. Extreme political parties satisfy this human need for aggression and destructiveness. They deliberately, systematically encourage the appearance of aggression in people, strengthen it, and direct it in the desired direction to satisfy this need in a socially acceptable way. For extremists, the typical phenomenon is the shift of aggression (from a real but inaccessible source of frustration to a substitute, socially permissible object) and the search for a "scapegoat" (an unprotected group). Many people "need enemies to direct frustrating aggression at them. (...) It is beneficial for someone else to be responsible for "my" failures. To admit that our own shortcomings are to blame means to assassinate ourselves. (...) From a psychological point of view, the enemy is a good invention in the struggle for self-preservation", states Kolakowski (2005). The "enemy" is especially necessary for totalitarian regimes. "Communist and fascist regimes would have to constantly find enemies against whom to direct aggression, and produce those enemies themselves in newer and newer campaigns, purges and assassinations; sometimes the enemies were real, and sometimes artificially created. Aggression was necessary because of the mobilization of the masses, suggesting to them that the enemy cause of all their misfortunes and miseries, so that they would have reasons to exercise their rule more and more oppressively" (Mini lectures on maxi things, 2005). The practice of constant mobilization in the Western Balkans, i.e., collectivist homogenization, takes the place of democratic legitimacy, providing political-elites with a base of power outside institutions and democratic procedures. By instrumentalizing the issue of ethnicity within the radicalization of political discourse, leads to ethnic homogenization, and the result is the fact that ethnopolitical parties remain in power. Mobilization induces and spreads a sense of homogeneity and equality and a sense of security and power in the collective "We." The constant fabrication of dangers (stimulant) that threaten an ethnic group's alleged survival creates a psychosis of fear and uncertainty, defensive internal cohesiveness, making it impossible to discern the danger to the existence of peoples from that group. It is rapidly transferred from one religious group (nation) to another in which the same processes take place, creating a chain of imagined interethnic threats.

In a broader sense of the phenomenon, hostility is especially directed at those who deviate from current regulations, do not respect social norms and behave nonconformist. All those who are "different" (differently religious, national, ideological, or sexually-oriented) target anger, hatred, and aggression. Whoever is different from the majority is perceived as "perverted", "sick", "immoral," and thus dangerous to the "healthy organism" of the nation or state. Any dissent in former Yugoslavia (particularly in BiH) qualifies as a rebellion against the state, system, ethnoreligious group, critically questioning one's ethnic community means exposing oneself to accusations of treason, lack of patriotism, cooperation with foreign intelligence services, while commenting on interethnic relations and dominant narratives about BiH amplifies the outcome. It is its subjective and symbolic power in the Balkans. "Our" identity and the identity of those "others" are interconnected. If there is a conflict, the strengthening of

"our" identity simultaneously strengthens the belief in the diversity of those "others". At the same time, the absence of a democratic tradition, the lack of a "critical public," and the dominance of an "ethnic public" in the region, artificially produced by ethnopolitical indoctrination, affect the survival of ethnic mobilizations.

The trait of authoritarian submissiveness is perhaps the most important feature of an authoritarian personality, according to all researchers, from Adorno to Altmeier. A person prone to some political extremism is characterized by a high degree of unconditional submission to established, legitimate, and powerful authority, towards which he has an uncritical, servile attitude. It is characteristic of such a person that he perceives the world and interpersonal relations in a dominant-subordinate key and considers blind obedience to authority to be the greatest virtue. An individual who has drowned in an anti-democratic group has automatically transferred his sovereignty to a strong, energetic leader who has since been blindly obeyed. The adored Leader received the attributes of a deity, and the significance of the individual in the group fades and disappears. True, a deeper psychological analysis shows that behind conscious idolatry and love for the Leader lies repressed hatred (which becomes manifest when the latter falls from his exalted position). The socio-political climates' in former Yugoslavia essential characteristics are chronic atrophy of institutions due to "constant domination of the party concept over the concept of the rule of law." (Stojanović, 2008: 194) When it comes to studying and determining the origin, causes, and mechanisms of mobilization of ethnic groups, the use of ethnic identity as a resource for political mobilization, we find a significant starting point (mentioned earlier) in the views of theorists of classical elite theory, but also later in the views of modern elite theorists. Both classical and modern theorists must share the view that ethnicity is primarily a political phenomenon, and that despite various technological and organizational innovations, social structures have remained hierarchical and any change is only "camouflage used by the elite to hold political power more firmly" (Malešević, 2009: 203). Elite theorists believe that the fundamental starting point of the elite's goals is submission and that it is best done by force and deception. Machiavelli saw the combination of force and deception as the most powerful weapon that elites can have at their disposal. The violence in the ex-Yu was part of the elites' strategic political orientation, who found themselves faced with political pluralism and mass mobilization. Part of the Yugoslav elite responded to these challenges by initiating violence among different plural communities to demobilize key sections of its population through an attempt to impose political homogeneity on heterogeneous social spaces (Gagnon, 2004:7). Former fighters for socialism and internationalism are becoming supporters of nationalism and racism. That says little about ideology, but more about the nature of the interest in surviving in a position of power at all cost.

There are a complex of higher values (suppressed feeling of inferiority), arrogance, and contempt for members of "lower" groups. Members of extreme political movements and parties have a sense of excellence and supremacy because they belong to a chosen, privileged social group (nation, religion, party, class, race) that fights for one lofty, noble goal that will bring people "happiness", "freedom". "salvation". At the same time, they feel contempt or hatred towards all those who are not "chosen" who are not part of humanity's elite. Psychological analyses show that behind the apparent feeling of superiority, the manifested complex of higher values, and group narcissism, there is a deeply suppressed feeling of inferiority, insecurity, and anxiety. Their arrogance, sense of spiritual superiority, and arrogance cover up the feeling of personal failure and inferiority. Therefore, narrow-minded intolerance is not an expression of their strength, but, on the contrary, it is an expression of spiritual impotence, feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, and personal inferiority.

Fanaticism, passion, and intolerance are present in all extremist movements. Members of one church or sect have persecuted those "others" for centuries as "infidels" or "heretics." The result of fanatical allegiance to one's "true" religion was intolerance, hatred, murder, and mass pogroms of infidels (Voltaire, 2005). What were religious wars in Voltaire's time, later became political confrontations and persecutions of dissidents by ideological extremists. Ideological disputes and ruthless, fanatical confrontations are often completely irrational, based on strong emotions and beliefs, blind to any logical arguments. At the core of any extremist ideology is passionate intolerance, intolerance, and that means the inability to endure different beliefs, opinions, or behaviors. Extremists believe that they must wage a "holy war", a courageous and uncompromising fight against any different way of acting, views, or beliefs, and is persecuting until it is completely eradicated. A reliable measure of extremism and intolerance is not to tolerate deviations from accepted conventions and standards, which even leads to horror at all differences. Anthony Giddens (1994) rightly points out that only dialogue with a dissident can replace violence in a modern heterogeneous, multicultural society, in a "world of enduring cultural differences." In the former Yugoslavia, or a semantically neutral name, the Balkans, the ambitions of some, especially more abundant ethnic nationalisms, often stimulated the imagination to unite the whole area under one self-proclaimed people and denomination, which in turn would lead to war, ethnic cleansing and destruction. We can say that nationalists in the former Yugoslavia are prone to the historical soil of their ancestors who witnessed the flourishing of the nation - a defined and limited area with which members can identify and to whom they feel they belong. We can mention the "extremist policy" that accompanied ethnic cleansing in the war in BiH, where not all participants in the war could use all the resources available to war states, and the goal of the war was not to subdue the enemy concisely, but ethnic cleansing accompanied by a policy of terror. A similar "policy" is the violent "expulsion" of Albanians from Kosovo in 1999. Such strategies create a policy of fear and insecurity, and public debate often refers to "security." Security justifies authoritarian forms of social control, mass raids, arrests, intimidation of the public, collaborating with the underworld. Such campaigns in the Balkans had receded since the fall of communist regimes when it turned out that tycoons linked to "Europeanization" and "market liberalization" also had a criminal past on their own or cooperated with the international underworld.

We have an overdeveloped group identity, which we problematize as a tribal mentality. An extremist has a hypertrophied sense of group identity (national, party, religious), which devours all other affiliations (profession, family). He has a sense of absolute loyalty to his glorified social or political group. A member of an extreme ideology has a special type of group identity built. A. Maluf (2003) calls a monolithic, simple, exclusive identity, in which the entire identity of a person is reduced, reduced, reduced to only one, "essential" affiliation, which stands out, absolutizes and deifies as dominant. It is usually reduced to ethnic, class, racial or religious affiliation. The basis of such a collectivist pattern on the Balkans is the identification of cultural-ethnic and institutional-political identity in which the political community fully identifies with the national or ethnic community. According to this simplistic conception, identity is not only monolithic, "pure", but given that it is given by birth, destiny, and blood, it is also unchangeable. Maluf calls this "tribal identity", which is the source of fanaticism, xenophobia, intolerance, and quarrels, a murderous identity. In BiH, all three ethnopolitical structures pursue containment policies, so "hybrid wars" prevent their necessary transition into three political communities, without adopting a functional rule of law. (Hadžić, 2020: 250) Thus, the described concept, "which reduces identity to a single affiliation, leads people to biased, sectarian, intolerant, commanding, and sometimes suicidal behavior, and turns them too often into murderers, or into supporters of the killer. Their vision of the world is distorted and

distorted." It is black and white, exclusive, Manichaeic, in which there are only two sides, good and evil, angels and devils. National identities built and consolidated with the help of confessional exclusivism in this region (usually associated with ethnic) manifested themselves as extremely impermeable and inflexible, and the rivalry between their national umbrella projects as almost irreconcilable. Therefore, this form of nationalism maintained a firm position in these societies' political processes and collective behavioral patterns.

Dogmatism, rigid, black-and-white thinking are the personality traits of extremists. Dogmatism is a personality trait that manifests in dogmatic thinking, intolerance towards different understandings, blind belief in the opinion of the authority, and acceptance of prejudices and stereotypes. The unqualified opinion is an uncritical, rigid opinion that does not tolerate objections and forbids doubt, criticism, and verification. It is contrary to rational knowledge, based on facts, logical evidence, and is subject to criticism. This "opinion" is not based on reason, but unconditional belief in dogma, and is contrary to research, skeptical and critical thinking. The unqualified opinion is characteristic of an authoritarian person, who believes that the correct, correct opinion is the group to which he belongs. Extremists have a clear picture of the world, are prone to dogmatic thinking, and have a "closed mind". According to M. Rokeach (1960), the "closed mind" corresponds to general authoritarianism, and consists of a syndrome of the following characteristics: closed, tightly connected belief system, uncritical rejection of opposing views, as well as bias in cognition (much is known about positively valued objects. negative - little). In dogmatic persons, cognitions and attitudes are influenced by external authority and passion, rather than logical arguments and a critical search for truth (Rokeach, 1960). The systematic, extremely simplified way of interpreting the world using simple cognitive schemes has its source in need of security and certainty and the need to protect the weak and "vulnerable self" from anxiety. Such individuals, "true believers", who believe in dogmas too rigidly, actually unconsciously doubt and then stifle and suppress that doubt with fanatical faith and persecution of dissidents. Ideologies of internal discord and destruction, and thus natural allies of imperialism, would be given a chance in extreme historical turbulence when there was not much time for discussion and reasonable solutions or imposed by force from outside. Such is the example of the Second World War and the Nazi-Fascist occupation, which employed domestic forces in the fratricidal war, aided by theological rhetoric and traditional mythologies (which is not the subject of this study but is a vital link of the observed phenomena), insisting that Serbian Orthodoxy is the core of Serbian national identity and pride. Claire blessed weapons in the First and Second World Wars, in the post-Yugoslav wars, "consolidating the position on the justification of killing in the name of God."

The set of characteristics are the tendency to stereotypes and prejudices and the persecution of "enemies". A person prone to extreme, undemocratic, and simple solutions, as a rule, is characterized by a Manichean view of the world, an opinion in extreme, rough, black-and-white categories (good-evil, smart-stupid, friend-enemy). According to them, there are no opinions in nuances, finesse, just as there is no compromise in politics and interpersonal relations - "you" are either a "patriot" or a "traitor", "strong" or "weak", "normal" or "abnormal". There is no middle ground between these sharply divided and opposed categories; there are no subtle differences in degree. "He who is not with us is against us," he is the "enemy." In the stereotypical, simplified vision of extremists, there are only ours and theirs, as two warring armies. "We" are good, cultured, smart, peaceful, just, honorable, "they" are ugly, stupid, primitive, dishonest, aggressive, malicious, unjust. "We" are human, and they are in humans, barbarians, demonic beings, beasts. The enemy is necessary to justify the bad situation in one's community (he is the source of all evils) and empty the accumulated aggression on him to prevent the discharge of aggression within the group. Stereotypes as the dominant cognitive

structures, govern the perception, cognition, and experience of people who think "black and white". These stereotypes are formed in childhood due to rash generalization, limited experience, and communication with the majority (Lipman, 1997). Man needs to appear complex realities for easier knowledge and energy savings, simplify and reduce to general schematic characteristics, at the cost of distorting, simplifying, and falsifying reality. Stereotypes, says Kolakovski (2005), are "spontaneously shaped, quasi-empirical generalizations" that "cannot be corrected by later experiences." They have the function of drawing the "we-they" border, homogenizing their social group, and of building group identity. Stereotypes help an individual to more easily and successfully identify with their group (which they are proud of) and to distance themselves from others. Many people, especially extremists, easily generalize: "Muslims kidnapped", "Croats slaughtered", "Serbs raped." They pronounce judgments based on the prejudice that entire nations are "lazy", "insidious," or "genocidal", and such judgments often lead to mass crimes. This way of speaking strengthens the exclusive, tribal identity built on hatred and intolerance towards the "other", thus strengthening the murderous identity and forms angry fanatics, xenophobes, and racists. The language of hatred, criticism, condemnation, must be replaced by "language of compassion", understanding and respect, if we want a constructive dialogue and a productive way of resolving conflicts with other people, according to M. Rosenberg (2003).

Besides, a key extremist preoccupation is victimization and purity. The victimization is the perception of themselves as victims of persecution. The purity that extremists are obsessed with can be ideological, religious, or ethnic. Ideological extremists are not just strongly committed to a specific ideology or belief system. Their commitment is to what they see as the purest or most unadulterated version of their ideology and political orientation. Their biggest fear is dilution, and they see themselves as virtuous because of the purity of their beliefs and goals. Such is the example of the Second World War and the Nazi-Fascist occupation, which employed domestic forces in the fratricidal war, aided by theological rhetoric and traditional mythologies¹⁷ (which is not the subject of this study but is a vital link of the observed phenomena¹⁸), insisting that Serbian Orthodoxy is the core of Serbian national identity and pride. Serbian cases of religiously and „purity“ motivated nationalism were much more open than Croatian ones. Thus, in the former Yugoslavia, parallel policies of memory¹⁹ and

¹⁷ Ever since the first production of the myth about Kosovo (took place in 1389 between an army led by the Serbian Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović and an invading army of the Ottoman Empire under the command of Sultan Murad Hüdavendigâr in today Kosovo; reliable historical accounts of the battle are scarce.), which for the needs of raising these so-called the first Serbian uprising was made by the Habsburg intelligence service, through later legends about the continuity of Serbian and Montenegrin heroism against, mainly, "Turkish oppression," fabrications of folk singers - about Serbian heroes who were most common robbers, a glorification of banditry and robbery, to literary the works of Ivo Andrić and Miloš Crnjanski in which ancient "Turkish" crimes against Serbs were invented, Serbs portrayed in national "romantic narratives, to the point of kitsch, all amid terrible Chetnik crimes against Bosniaks in the Second World War. <https://stav.ba/junastvo-ubica-i-razbojnika-standardni-obrazac-srpske-mitologije/>, (2019), The Kosovo myth or Kosovo cult is one of the critical Serbian political myths, which forms the basis of Serbian national identity and the "atomic core of Serbian nationalism. <http://www.nspm.rs/kulturna-politika/kosovski-mit-i-srpski-nacionalni-identitet.html>, (2009)

¹⁸ A former commander of the Army of the Republic of Srpska, Ratko Mladic (ICTY convict), on July 11 in Srebrenica, literally announced genocide against civilians in front of the cameras in Srebrenica - "Safe zone" of the United Nations. "Here we are in Serbian Srebrenica. On the eve of another great Serbian holiday, we are giving this city to the Serbian people. "Finally, the moment has come for us to take revenge on the Turks in this area." said Mladić. <https://www.dw.com/sr/dugo-očekivana-presuda/a-41448520>

¹⁹ For Croatia, the military action "Storm" in 1995 (The last major battle of the Croatian War of Independence was a significant factor in the Bosnian War outcome, against the self-declared proto-state Republic of Serbian Krajina) is a magnificent victory; for Serbia is ethnic cleansing. The attitudes of ordinary citizens, Serbs, and Croats, have not changed significantly. Many believe that the relations between the two states on the anniversary date of "Storm" are becoming tenser each year. <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/oluja-potpuno-suprotni-stavovi-i-poslije-21-godine/27896141.html>, 2016. The fight against revisionism is an ongoing process. This is evident in the example of the Holocaust. In the case of BiH, that story

revisionist historical narrative within the politics of fear spread influence among young people where ethnopolitical indoctrination has reception and is left to chance²⁰, creating solid preconditions for hostilities in future generations escalate into violence in specific political-economic circumstances. The Orthodox Christian Church openly supported aggressive actions against others, and soldiers were even blessed before and after the crime with an emphasis on a reference to Hrebelijanovic Lazar, a fourteenth-century Serbian prince martyr of the Church. However, although the Serbian Orthodox Church simultaneously denied significant violence and organized rapes and claimed it was victimization, the presence of genocidal initiatives and public and private promotion of the expulsion of Bosniaks and Albanians in the last war from their homes is evident. (Goodwin,2003:174) The manipulation of historical memory and, at the same time, the religious justification of that memory have proved very successful in new social strategies of survival. Anticipating that religious memory is the most resilient, politics cunningly took advantage of it, reaping all the fruits of that cunning along the way in the Balkans.

Conclusion

In a symbolic sense, this region may be burdened with a kind of negative ontology that is very difficult to change. There is an absolute correlation between democracies' power and stability, i.e., defective democracies and instability within the tolerance of extremist ideas as collective behavioral patterns characterized by the Western Balkans mentality, which in local historical and current circumstances implies antagonism to the most dramatic conflicts. Extremist ideologies did not leave the political stage; by assessing the readiness of the international factor to tolerate their actions, they more or less openly maintained their ideological politics. Extremist ideologies are, in fact, just a continuation of the war by other means. They have entered education, and beginning to metastasize and affect the entire social tissue, becoming "naturalness", supported by different mythopoetic narratives of a particular nation. In an environment where politics is extreme, another problem that many avoid concerns the very nature of extremism and the process of radicalization within the discourse of „peacetime“ extremism. The hybrid democracies, defective democracies or form of authoritarianism in the region, the lack of a "critical public," and the dominance of an "ethnic public, together with the creation of "naturalness " patterns, are the most significant aspect of strengthening of extremism in the former Yugoslavia. Such a situation should have aroused additional attention in all of us and challenged and motivated citizens to get involved in political processes or action through civil society organizations, which aim to stop extremism rule around the world. Extremist movements are not a symptom of a sick society or a lack of social solidarity, but the result of shortcomings in the routine of political life, bureaucratized ethnopolitical parties, programmed life, and work. Instead, they should be a means against social stagnation and weak institutionalization of societies. The dynamics of civil society, mobilized and socially responsible professional groups, influential media, and advocates of different perspectives are the preconditions of a mature democracy and a society capable of change. In young democracies, where the risk of extremism is high, new movements encourage change. However, ethnic divisions in this area do not create a more open or transparent government, and thus a

intensified in 2006 and continues to this day. However, now these agents of revisionism have organized and strengthened institutionally.

²⁰ "In sports arenas, kill, and slaughter are shouted, fascists march through the streets, mutual lawsuits are filed for genocide, military parades are held, provocative commemorations are organized in support of nationalism, genocide denied, and mythomania within the transitional crime, corruption, and interethnic hatred" Perica V. <https://radiogornjigrad.wordpress.com/2016/02/19/dr-vjekoslav-perica-hrvatska-je-danas-najjaca-scena-etnickog-i-klerialnog-nacionalizma-na-balkanu/> 2016.

selective approach to the rule of law provides an unstable basis for the future development of freedoms. From a psychological perspective, violent extremism stems from finding two basic human needs: the need for cognitive closure and personal significance. The need for closure comes down to the search for security. It is a search for the belief that can give that security and expand the framework of belief. Within the discourse of political extremism, ethnopolitics within state parties, i.e., elites, is a means of expressing the will and organizing the people and the nation, characterized by orientation to "action" instead of debate. Subordination of the individual to the nation or national community, i.e., the leader, is a psychological form of political behavior marked by an obsessive preoccupation with the decline of the community; sacrificing the process of compensatory, the cult of unification while abandoning democratic freedoms with redemptive violence and, regardless of moral and legal constraints, seeks to achieve ethno-religious threatening collectivity (tribal identity). Extremism uses the properties of consciousness: ethnicity, religiousness, and thinking in absolute categories (in a destructive aspect to add naturalness to its ideas) to justify activities with a sacred or „patriotic“ will. Peacetime extremism, naturally displaying demonstration, can not be tolerated and presented as a free society will. Although the violent potential of nationalism in the Balkans should be overlooked by no means, the inflammatory rhetoric is just a method used by political elites to manipulate the public. As ethnic identities differ, in the multinational and multi-religious space of the former Yugoslavia there is a latent danger of renewing ideologies that advocate ethnic distancing, endangering the security of members of other ethnicities, changing the constitutional order and secession of parts of sovereign states to create new states or join other states. In addition to collective discrimination and gross violations of human rights, such phenomena are often accompanied by particular individual and collective violence - terrorism, (civil) wars, genocide, war crimes, and other interethnic violence inherent in this area. Efforts to prevent and combat violent extremism are necessary but not sufficient to deal with the vacuum of political beliefs/values in the region. Today's former Yugoslavian countries are subject to many forms of extremism, which can be prevented by liberal reforms and radical democratization. The renewed commitment to preventing and combating violent extremism by Euro-Atlantic institutions towards real comprehensive security based on the beliefs of liberal democracy, while closely monitoring the real problems and causes of the future/conflict in the region, remains vital. Instead of violence, which is promoted by the representatives of political extremism, the author advocates non-violent model of communication. Given the heterogeneity and cohesion of threats, violence is the least desirable factor of implosion. Former Yugoslavia's potential lies in building neighborly solidarity, economic liberalization, association, and civic awareness development. Ensuring stability in the former Yugoslavia is key to European security interests and will serve as a model for other fragile regions.

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