

PROFILING SERBIAN POPULATION: EXPLORING THE RISE OF PRO-RUSSIAN LEANINGS

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Abstract: Since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine in 2022, there has been an undeniable upsurge in Russian influence across various regions and developing nations. Among the Serbian population Russia enjoys an unprecedented level of support. Pro-Russian sentiments have never been so widespread in post-war history, as evidenced by numerous polls. The objective of this research is to understand spreading of these public sentiments. The data is collected through a survey involving 1,200 respondents from the territory of Serbia, but the statistical description of the obtained data is only the first scientific goal. A deeper analysis requires assessment of the impact of each independent variable on the formation of the Serbian population's stance towards Russia, which demands to employ an empirical model. Given the categorical nature of all variables, Logistic Regression was applied. Within this model, the survey questions treated as independent variables, while the focal point of analysis is the dependent variable, namely, respondents' commitment to establishing closer ties with Russia. Independent variables (and survey questions) divided into four categories: 1. the perception of the Kosovo and Metohija issue; 2. attitudes and opinions held by the Serbian population regarding the EU; 3. the value system of the respondents (embodied in LGBT movement and traditional family); and 4. socio-demographic characteristics of the population, such as the age and gender of respondents. The findings have unveiled that the most influential factor, characterized by the highest coefficient and utmost statistical significance, is the commitment of Serbs to maintain south province Kosovo and Metohija within Serbia. Subsequently, the variables representing disappointed expectations from the EU, negative attitude towards non-

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traditional values, as well as the age of the respondent, exhibit statistically significant albeit less pronounced impacts on pro-Russian attitudes.

Key words: Pro-Russian attitudes, Serbia, Kosovo, Euroscepticism, survey, Logistic regression, multiple regression.

Introduction

Throughout history, Russia has consistently wielded significant influence over the Orthodox Balkan communities, owing to its status as the largest and most politically and militarily powerful Orthodox and Slavic nation. Imperial Russia played a pivotal role in addressing the enduring Eastern Question, where it was regarded by Orthodox and, particularly, Orthodox Slavic populations as a patron of liberation and unification.

Over the course of the lengthy struggle associated with the Eastern Question, Russia expanded its territorial reach in parallel with the incremental liberation of regions inhabited by Balkan peoples. The zenith of its influence in the Balkans was reached during the 19th and early 20th centuries, marking the conclusive phase in addressing the Eastern Question. Even with the transformation of Imperial Russia into the USSR, there were only partial alterations in the fundamental tenets of Russian policy toward the Balkans. The strong influence endured, propelled by a shared commitment to the pursuit of new socialist societal models.

The objective of this research is to quantitatively assess the direction and intensity of the influence of relevant factors on the formation of the Serbian population's stance toward Russia. It's worth noting that, apart from presenting essential facts from recent political history in Serbia, this study refrains from delving deeper into the historical ties between Serbia and Russia, their shared origins, and religious connections. Additionally, it abstains from providing a subjective evaluation of the importance of European integration, refrains from offering a political analysis of the Kosovo issue, and does not include the author's personal opinions on these topics, even though this body of subjects is acknowledged as pivotal in shaping public opinion in Serbia regarding closer relations with Russia.

The data is collected through a survey involving 1,200 respondents from the territory of Serbia. The relevant factors in this study are organized as a series of survey questions, divided into four distinct categories, each considered critical in shaping the attitudes of the Serbian population towards Russia. These categories serve as comprehensive units to analyze and quantify the dynamics at play. First independent variable includes the

perception of the Kosovo issue. Second contains attitudes and opinions held by the Serbian population regarding the EU. Third independent variable illustrates the value system of the respondents embodied in perceptions toward LGBT movement and traditional family. Fourth variable consists of socio-demographic characteristics of the population, such as the age and gender of respondents.

By structuring our research in this manner, we aim to comprehensively examine the multifaceted factors contributing to the shaping of the Serbian population's attitudes towards Russia, thus providing a more nuanced understanding of this complex issue.

In order to evaluate the direction and magnitude of influence exerted by these factors, it becomes imperative to employ an empirical model. Within this model, the survey questions are construed as independent variables, while the focal point of analysis is the dependent variable, namely, individuals' attitudes towards political rapprochement with Russia. Given the categorical nature of all variables under examination in this study, it is evident that the utilization of linear statistical models is ill-suited for this task. Instead, we will employ Logistic Regression, a robust statistical method well-suited to modelling and interpreting the non-linear relationships inherent in this complex interplay of categorical variables.

The initial section of the article encompasses the theoretical framework, employing the historical method to scrutinize the geopolitical dynamics that have shaped the relationship between the Serbian population and Russia, the European Union, and the Kosovo problem. Within this section, assumptions and hypotheses are formulated, providing the foundational guidelines for the design of the survey research.

The subsequent section offers a comprehensive description of the methodology, delineating the definition of the statistical sample of respondents and the survey questions that align with the assumed factors influencing the Serbian population's attitudes towards Russia. To measure the impact of these factors, a Logistic regression is employed.

The third segment of the article presents the research findings, consisting of two components. The first part outlines the results derived from the survey, while the second part provides the outcomes of applying the GLM, specifically the determined coefficients for each evaluated variable.

The final section of the article is dedicated to the concluding considerations and discussion of the influence exerted by each of the aforementioned factors on the formation of relations with Russia. This

discussion is accompanied by a scientific explanation of confirmed or unconfirmed assumptions, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay of factors influencing the Serbian population's attitudes towards Russia.

In terms of research methods, in addition to the usual statistical description of the survey results, i.e. the distribution of answers and their combinations, the answers of the respondents will be subjected to additional statistical examination, in-depth analysis of the influence, intensity and direction of action of each of the factors that form the attitudes of the population of Serbia towards Russia. With this aim, we apply Multiple regression, which measures the influence of factors within a single model, and Logistic regression, which measures the chances and probability that each individual value attitude and characteristic of the respondents are found in pro- or anti-Russia groups.

The contemporary context of the growing pro-Russian attitudes of the Serbian population

The relationship between Serbia and Russia is primarily defined by their historical proximity, shared religious and cultural heritage (as outlined in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia in 2009), and the perception of Russia as a protector capable of addressing some of Serbia's most pressing geopolitical challenges.

Serbia and Russia have a centuries-old relationship full of ups and downs, but it can be said that since the creation of the modern Serbian state until today, friendship and alliance are abundant. The Russian army took part on the side of the Serbs in the Serbian-Turkish wars of 1876 and 1877-78, and then entered the First World War on the same side (Petrović, 2020, 103). The Second World War gave rise to communist rule in Yugoslavia while Russia was already under the communist grip, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the official relations of FR Yugoslavia and Russia, although close in principle, are colored by Russia's weakness to more strongly support its decades-long ally in the wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and later during the NATO aggression against FR Yugoslavia in 1999.

The deepening of relations between Serbia and Russia has been happening since the Putin era in Russia, which marked the return of economic strength and Russian influence at the global level. Russia under the dominant political administration of Vladimir Putin provides strong

support to Serbia in international organizations, especially regarding the issue of Kosovo and Metohija and Serbia's responsibility for the wars in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The feeling of closeness between the Serbian and Russian people has remained unshaken for centuries, but in times of crisis like the one that exists today (mainly due to the secession problem in Kosovo and Metohija), it gains new momentum and intensity. The long-standing and urgent problem of Kosovo and Metohija entails the potential loss of the historical "cradle" of Serbian statehood and religion. We posit that one's stance on Kosovo significantly impacts their approach to Russia, which steadfastly represents Serbian interests, both through public pronouncements and its veto power in the UN Security Council concerning the recognition of statehood for this secessionist Serbian province.

The affinity for Russia has arguably never reached the proportions witnessed during the conflict in Ukraine in the post-war history of the region. In this period, the USA, NATO, and the EU have escalated their efforts to exert pressure on the Serbian sphere, aimed at diminishing Russian influence (Stanojević, 2021). In response, the Serbian government has consistently issued statements emphasizing its unwavering commitment to European integration while concurrently maintaining comprehensive cooperation with Russia. Given the ongoing strategic conflict between Russia and the entire Western political realm, Serbia's foreign policy orientation assumes profound and enduring significance for the country's future. Since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine in 2022, there has been an undeniable upsurge in Russian influence across various regions and developing nations. This phenomenon can be attributed not so much to inherent qualities of Russia itself but rather to the aspiration of resisting Western dominance. However, in the Balkan countries, which find themselves under significant Western European influence, there has not been a widespread political shift towards Russia. An exception to this trend is evident among the Serbian population, both in Serbia and the Republika Srpska, where Russia and Russian politics definitely enjoy an unprecedented level of support. Serbian support for Russia is now more important than ever, given that the war in Ukraine has been raging since 2022, which has turned the entire "collective West" onto the path of irrational Russophobia without the information when the war will end (Stojanović, Terzić, 2023). Serbia is one of the few European countries that has not imposed sanctions on Russia. The global conflict is teetering on the brink of direct participation of NATO troops in the war against Russia, which, along with existing nuclear arsenals, could bring the entire world to the brink of a nuclear abyss (Stojanović, 2021).

The European Union's policy of conditioning towards Serbia, as well as Russia's unambiguously support for the problem of the secession of Kosovo and Metohija, introduces a huge amount of rationality into the strong pro-Russian sentiment (Пророковић, Стојановић, 2023). Sharp divisions at the global level probably further strengthen the pro-Russian sentiment in Serbia, as our public opinion research shows. The problematic nature of the official pro-EU course of Serbia's foreign policy, while at the same time ignores compliance with anti-Russian political decisions, not only leads to geopolitical confusion, but in the prospective future may place Serbia in the choice of "Russia or the EU". It is necessary to investigate the correlation between the simultaneous rise of Euroscepticism and pro-Russian sentiments in Serbia. It's important to clarify that this paper does not aim to determine the level of Euroscepticism in Serbia, as sample data on this subject already exists, including more recent studies (Stanojević et. al., 2022). Instead, the objective of this group of questions is to gauge the extent to which Euroscepticism influences the stance towards closer ties with Russia.

Economic relations with Russia are also of great importance for the Serbian economy. Serbia stands out as one of the few countries worldwide to have entered into a free trade agreement with Russia, a move initiated in 2001 that has since unlocked significant economic potential (Stanojević, 2016). Regarding imports, Russia ranks as the third most crucial partner for Serbia, with imports totaling USD 3 billion in 2022, while also holding the sixth position as an export destination, with Serbian goods valued at USD 1.2 billion (ITC, 2024). In terms of energy, Serbia and Russia have had strong ties since 2008, when the Russian Gazprom became the majority owner of NIS. Serbia's dependence on Russian oil and gas is huge, with the potential to expand to other energy fields of cooperation, such as nuclear power plants (Stojanović, 2023).

Regardless of the fact that Serbia declared military neutrality in 2007, solid military cooperation with Russia has continuity. Serbia is an observer in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and conducts military exercises with Russia. In 2017, Russia equipped Serbia with six MiG-29 aircraft, thirty T-72 tanks and thirty combat reconnaissance armored vehicles BRDM (RTV, 2016). In 2021, Serbia bought modern "Kornet" anti-tank missiles from Russia (Politika, 2021).

Beyond geopolitical, security, and economic considerations, a deeper examination of the factors driving Serbian citizens' inclination towards closer ties with Russia reveals a complex set of values. This includes attitudes towards the LGBT movement and traditional family structures. Russia is a country that upholds traditional family values and prohibits the promotion

of LGBT narratives. Russia's Supreme Court has moved to classify the „international LGBT social movement“ as an extremist organization (Time, 2023). As an addition to an already-existing child protection legislature, Russia passed a federal law in June 2013 that made illegal for children to receive materials endorsing non-traditional sexual relationships (Guardian, 2013). This led to the several arrests of Russian LGBT persons who openly oppose the law. It has been seen as a *de facto* way of criminalizing LGBT culture and has drawn criticism from European medias, human rights experts, and LGBT campaigners worldwide. The law was expanded to cover all people in 2022, regardless of age, making it unlawful to promote non-traditional sexual relationships through any form of expression (Reuters, 2022).

Different areas of cooperation between Serbia and Russia are not the cause, but the consequence of centuries-old friendly relations between the two countries, and especially the feeling of brotherhood between the two Slavic peoples. All of the above affects the positive perception of Russia among the Serbian people, regardless of occasional political conflicts in Russian-Serbian political relations in the past.

Surveys of domestic and foreign, pro-Russian and anti-Russian researchers and institutions conducted during 2022 and 2023 showed that around 80% of Serbs oppose sanctions against Russia. According to a poll published by the Carnegie Foundation (Samorukov & Vuksanovic, 2023) (Carnegie Europe, 2023) in March 2023, more than 80% of Serbian residents are against introducing sanctions against Russia. The Belgrade Demostat survey showed that it is slightly less than 80% (Demostat, 2022), and the Western Balkans Security Barometer shows slightly more than 80% (Vuksanović et al., 2022). According to a survey by the pro-Russian New Serbian Political Thought (NSPM), about 84% are against sanctions against Russia, while according to a survey by the pro-EU organisation CRTA, „every tenth respondent believes Serbia should align its foreign policy with the EU and impose sanctions against Russia“ (CRTA, 2022). Also, according to survey by the well-known Belgrade agency House of Win from May 2022, only 20.6% of the citizens of the Republic of Serbia support the introduction of sanctions against Russia (House of Win, 2022). Interestingly, according to the same survey, if the EU offered Serbia immediate admission to the EU with the condition of imposing sanctions on Russia, that percentage jumps slightly to 30.5% of citizens who would support sanctions (House of Win, 2022). Therefore, there is a firm attitude of the citizens of Serbia in terms of a positive attitude towards Russia, which cannot be shaken even by a hypothetical „carrot“ from the West.

Understanding that public sentiments on a particular issue are intrinsically intertwined with the agendas of key political stakeholders in the long term, it becomes imperative to investigate the factors that shape Serbia's public opinion concerning the necessity of political alignment with Russia during this pivotal period.

Methodology

Variables

Dependent and independent variables are discussed in details in the first section.

Dependent variables (RUS), which are at the centre of this research, are the attitudes of the Serbian public opinion towards Russia in conditions of major international changes and regrouping.

Independent variables are factors which we assume have a significant impact on the attitude towards Russia, which were discussed in the first section (KM, EU, LGBT, AGE). These are the value orientations of the population of Serbia, as well as the age of the respondents, which is basically a demographic characteristic, but in this case, it is also viewed in the context of value orientations, bearing in mind significant changes in the political environment in various generations.

Methods

Survey

As a basic source of data, a survey of 1,200 respondents was conducted, a questionnaire with 5 questions, the first of which refers to Russia, and the rest of the questions were designed to give a more accurate representation of the views of the respondents on the factors that we consider as independent variables. The questionnaire with general distribution of answers by groups is given in the table . The results will be presented with a statistical description.

Multiple Regression

Multiple regression analysis is the one of the most common used methods of delving into factors influencing public attitudes. This statistical model allows to assess the impact of multiple variables on the dependent

variable. By incorporating described factors (variables), it would be identified which variables significantly contribute to shaping public opinion. Multiple regression analysis evaluates the independent effect of each variable on the outcome, adjusting for the effect of the other variables included in the same regression model.

The multiple regression equation takes the form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_k X_k + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

where Y is the dependent variable, X_1, X_2, \dots, X_k are the independent variables, $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_k$ are the regression coefficients representing the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, and ε is the error term.

Logistic regression

The logistic regression equation is a statistical model used to predict the probability of a binary outcome (0 or 1) based on one or more predictor variables. Although there is also a multinomial logistic regression that includes multiple instead of binary outcomes, it is not so precise, but more generalized method. In our survey, attitude towards Russia had three possible outcomes: pro-Russian, anti-Russian and the third option of all varieties between the previous two answers. So, for the more precise measurement of intensity of impact of each independent variable, we will exclude from the sample all answers of respondents who do not have a strong pro- or anti-Russian attitude.

The Logistic regression assumed that the probability of an event is related to the predictors through a logistic function. The procedure fits a model using maximum likelihood. Likelihood ratio tests are performed to test the significance of the model coefficients.

It takes the form:

$$\text{logit}(p) = \log\left(\frac{p}{1-p}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_k X_k \quad (2)$$

Logistic regression can also include all factors simultaneously as a multiple regression. Since in the previous analysis the influence of each of the variables on the attitude towards Russia was assessed within the multiple regression system, the logistic regression was performed here separately for each variable. In this way, the chance and probability that each special characteristic or attitude of the respondents is found in the

group of the pro-Russian population was investigated. In this way, the chance (odds) is estimated for each answer in each variable to be found in the group of pro-Russian-oriented residents of Serbia. Odds and probability are two different measures, both addressing the same aim of measuring the likelihood of an event to occur. Conversion from odds (o) to probabilities (p) is simple by:

$$p = o / (o + 1) \quad (3)$$

The research will evaluate both, odds ratio and probability.

Hypotheses and tests

The null hypothesis (H0) is that there is no relationship between the growing pro-Russian mood in Serbia and their political-value attitudes about the EU, KM, LGBT and demographic characteristics such as gender and age. Hypothesis 1 (H1) is opposite and assume that there is statistically significant relationship between dependent and independent variables.

The tests will show with what reliability the null hypothesis can be rejected, that is, whether the obtained results of measuring the influence of the variables can be accepted as statistically relevant.

The T-test to find is the relation between variables are statistically significant or merely coincidental. For p-value, as a result of t-test, a threshold of 0.05 was set, that is 99.5% of confidences.

ANOVA procedure performs a multifactor analysis of variance for dependent variable. It constructs various tests to determine which factors have a statistically significant effect on population attitude to Russia. It also tests for significant interactions amongst the factors, given sufficient data. The F-tests in the ANOVA table allow identification the significant factors.

Results

Statistical description of survey results

The results clearly show the dominating pro-Russian sentiment of the people in Serbia. As many as 71% of respondents see themselves in the pro-Russian corps, while only 12% are anti-Russian. The hard core of the joining EU advocates at any cost stands at a modest 28%, while there are 32% of irreconcilable opponents of Serbia's entry into the EU. The connection between the problems of Kosovo and Metohija and Serbia's entry into the

EU can be seen in the policy of conditionality, and even 26% of citizens are not in favor of joining the EU if it would mean giving up the territorial integrity of the Serbian state. The percentage of Europhiles coincides with the percentage of those who are in favor of solving the problem of Kosovo and Metohija at any cost, but as many as 65% of respondents are against signing the normalization agreement between Belgrade and Pristina. The high anti-LGBT mood in Serbia is reflected by the percentage of 77% of those who oppose same-sex unions. It is interesting that the number of strongly pro-Russian respondents is slightly higher than those who hold the strongest position regarding the preservation of national interest and integrity, as evidenced by their stance on the Kosovo issue.

Table 1. Distribution of responses to survey questions

Question	Answers	Number	Share
How would you describe your attitude towards Russia?	Pro-Russian	852	71%
	Anti-Russian	144	12%
	Something between	204	17%
Which statement is closest to your position on Serbia joining the EU?	I do not support Serbia's entry into the EU at all.	384	32%
	I do not support if the condition is the giving up of KM.	312	26%
	I support Serbia joining the EU in any case.	336	28%
	I don't have an opinion on that issue	168	14%
Would you support the normalization of relations with Pristina according to Agreement on Normalization?	No, because it is against the national interests of Serbia.	780	65%
	Yes, because it is necessary to solve the issue of KM at any cost.	288	24%
	I have no position on that issue.	132	11%
What is your attitude towards the introduction of same-sex unions in Serbia?	I oppose	924	77%
	I support	132	11%
	I don't care	144	12%

Question	Answers	Number	Share
Your age?	18-29	264	22%
	30-44	312	26%
	45-59	300	25%
	60+	336	28%
Your gender?	Male	564	47%
	Female	636	53%

The distribution of different attitudes towards Russia by groups formed around other issues is too extensive to be presented in its entirety. We will only carry out the distribution of clear determinations, leaving out neutral answers, except when they are specific or unexpected in some way.

EU determinations and attitude towards Russia

- Among the opponents of Euro-integration, 88% lean towards a pro-Russian stance. In the EUKM group, respondents who support European integration if Kosovo is not a condition share the same pro-Russian stance, at 88%.
- About 77% of all respondents who are anti-Russian are in the pro-EU group.
- Conversely, among strong EU supporters, 75% hold an anti-Russian stance.
- There are twice as many respondents with anti-Russian attitudes among EU neutrals (19 respondents) compared to the group EUKM (only 10 respondents).

Attitude towards Russia and the issue of Kosovo

- Among the decisive opponents of giving up Kosovo and Metohija, who consider this a key national interest, as many as 90% have a pro-Russian leaning (702 out of 780 respondents). This relationship is also the most convincing among any survey response and attitudes about Russia.
- Approximately 9% of these respondents have a more neutral attitude towards Russia, falling somewhere between pro and anti-Russian, while anti-Russian attitudes in this group are represented by only 0.5%.

- Even within the group of respondents who believe that resolving the issue of Kosovo and Metohija is imperative at any cost, 28% lean towards a pro-Russian stance.

Non-traditional value system and attitude towards Russia

- In the relationship between traditional social values and pro-Russian attitudes, a strong correlation exists.
- Among opponents of same-sex unions, as many as 87% hold pro-Russian views simultaneously.
- Conversely, 60% of respondents who support same-sex unions exhibit anti-Russian attitudes.

However, it should be noted that although both correlations between these attitudes are very high, this does not imply that traditional values cause a preference for Russia. This principle also applies to other variables, as statistical description does not establish a causal relationship between phenomena; it merely highlights processes that can be stochastic (random).

Attitude towards Russia by age of respondents

- Pro-Russian leaning is significantly more prevalent in all age groups compared to negative or neutral attitudes towards Russia. However, the differences between generations on this matter are notable.
- The oldest group of respondents is proportionally the most represented in terms of pro-Russian leaning, at 81%. This group also has the fewest undecided respondents (11%) and the lowest percentage of negative attitudes towards Russia (8%).
- The 45-59 age group comprises 73% pro-Russian respondents.
- The youngest generation expressed the lowest level of positivity (64%) and the highest level of negativity (19%) towards Russia. In the 30-44 age group, the majority of undecided respondents answered “something in between” (23%).

Distribution of attitudes towards Russia by gender

- Male respondents exhibit a pro-Russian leaning significantly more often than females, at 82% versus 61%.
- Among female respondents, the moderate response “something in between” is approximately four times more common than among men (26% versus 6%).
- Negative attitudes towards Russia are equally represented in both sexes.

Results of multiple regression

The P-values are less than 0,01 in the four variables, EU, KM, LGBT, AGE, and these factors have a statistically significant effect at the 99% confidence level (table 2). Since the GENDER variable did not show statistical significance, it will be excluded from further analysis.

Table 2. Results of multiple regression

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>T Statistic</i>	<i>P-Value</i>
CONSTANT	-0,9976	0,1349	-7,3913	0,0000
EU	0,2355	0,0412	5,7105	0,0000
KM	0,5748	0,0667	8,6079	0,0000
LGBT	0,2060	0,0503	4,0983	0,0000
GENDER	0,2160	0,4221	4,2124	0,1411
AGE	0,3209	0,0281	11,4436	0,0000
Number of observations	1200			
R ²	0,7246	R ² (adjusted for d.f.)		0,7218
Standard Error of Est.	0,5576	Mean absolute error		0,3866

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

<i>Source</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F-Ratio</i>	<i>P-Value</i>
MAIN EFFECTS - Model	334,406	4	83,6015	268,79	0,0000
EU	39,8212	3	13,2737	51,91	0,0000
KM	47,6882	2	23,8441	93,25	0,0000
LGBT	2,3431	2	1,1715	4,58	0,0104
GENDER	1,4755	2	0,8664	5,45	0,1822
AGE	35,8088	3	11,9363	46,68	0,0000
RESIDUAL	304,02	1189	0,2556		
TOTAL	706,08	1200			

All F-ratios are based on the residual mean square error.

The ANOVA table decomposes the variability of RUS into contributions due to various factors. Since Type III sums of squares have been chosen, the contribution of each factor is measured having removed the effects of all other factors.

The output shows the results of fitting a multiple linear regression model to describe the relationship between attitudes towards Russia in the population of Serbia and four independent variables. The equation of the fitted model is

$$\text{RUS} = -0,997573 + 0,235497*\text{EU} + 0,574856*\text{KM} + 0,206025*\text{LGBT} + 0,320965*\text{AGE} \quad (4)$$

Estimated coefficient, T-statistics and F-Ration indicate by far the strongest influence of the KM variable, i.e. the greatest influence of the respondents' attitude towards the problem of Kosovo on the formation of their attitude towards Russia. This does not provide details on pro-Russian or anti-Russian leanings; it is the result of the preceding statistical description and subsequent logistic regression. The results of the multiple regression solely indicate the predominant influence of the attitudes of the Serbian population towards this significant national issue on the formation of attitudes towards Russia in general.

According to the estimated coefficients, the variable AGE follows, which refers to the age group of the respondents, but considering the F-ratio, the attitude of the respondents towards the EU has a slightly greater influence.

The value system, depicted by the LGBT variable, in the statistical description showed Estimated coefficient is at the lower and similar level for all other variables (0.2), but F-ratio (force) makes difference, with modest impact of LGBT (table 3). It is also highly significant but not strong variable.

The R² statistic indicates that the model as fitted explains 72% of the variability in population attitude toward Russia. The rest unexplained 18% are factor that are not included in this model and most often refer to a numerous individual factors that form the attitudes of individuals (personal experiences, family, friendship or business ties with Russian or anti-Russian individuals, institutions and the like).

Logistic regression

When neutral attitudes towards Russia were excluded from the analysis, a sample of 996 respondents remained for logistic regression. The results of Logistic regression illustrate the impact of each variable on the odds ratio of the

observed event of interest. These results are presented in Table 4. To reiterate, these are four separate models of simple logistic regression, where the Pro-Russian stance is set as the dependent variable, and the independent variables represent the determination of respondents within the respective groups.

Table 4. Results of Logistic regression: Coefficients and Odds

Parameter	Estimate	Standard Error	Estimated Odds Ratio
Pro-EU (constant)	-0,0645	0,1358	
Anti EU	4,7830	0,5956	119,467
EUKM	3,3895	0,3493	29,6533
Neutral	2,0179	0,2802	7,52281
KM (constant)	4,6634	0,3797	
Neut KM	-3,7627	0,5024	0,0232
NoKM	-5,1270	0,4063	0,0059
Pro-LGBT (constant)	-1,9095	0,3093	
Anti LGBT	5,3889	0,3700	218,9700
Neut LGBT	1,6393	0,3956	5,1513
AGE 60+ (constant)	2,4849	0,2170	
AGE=18-29	-1,3680	0,2677	0,2546
AGE=30-44	-0,8804	0,2764	0,4146
AGE=45-59	-0,4103	0,3007	0,6635

The results indicate a slightly negative relationship between pro-EU attitudes and pro-Russian sentiments. Conversely, the remaining three response categories demonstrate positive relationships of varying degrees. Anti-EU sentiment exerts the strongest influence. The odds ratio for this variable indicates that residents holding anti-EU stances are 119 times more likely to exhibit pro-Russian attitudes compared to those who view the EU membership as an imperative. For EU-neutral attitudes, the chance for pro-Russian stance is 7.5 times higher and for EUKM is 30 times higher than for pro-EU peoples (table 4).

A significant portion of the pro-Russian Serbian population does not harbour negative attitudes towards EU integration, encompassing those with EUKM and EU-neutral perspectives. Their proportion within the total

pro-Russian population is nearly equivalent to that of anti-EU respondents. This indicates that while there is a strong correlation between pro-Russian stances and anti-EU sentiments, the former is not solely rooted in the latter. Additionally, this distribution underscores the significance of another factor: attitudes towards Kosovo.

The logistic regression analysis examining the relationship between pro-Russian attitudes and attitudes towards Kosovo yields clear results consistent with those of multiple regression. Specifically, a neutral stance towards Kosovo and advocating for Kosovo’s renunciation for the purpose of ‘normalizing relations’ both demonstrate negative estimated coefficients. Conversely, among the majority of the population, only an unequivocal stance on preserving territorial sovereignty exhibits a positive correlation with pro-Russian positions. Additionally, the odds ratio of encountering a neutral attitude towards Kosovo or advocating for its renunciation among pro-Russian respondents is minimal (0.023 and 0.005 respectively) compared to those firmly committed to preserving territorial sovereignty unconditionally.

Table 5. Logistic regressions: Likelihood Ratio Tests

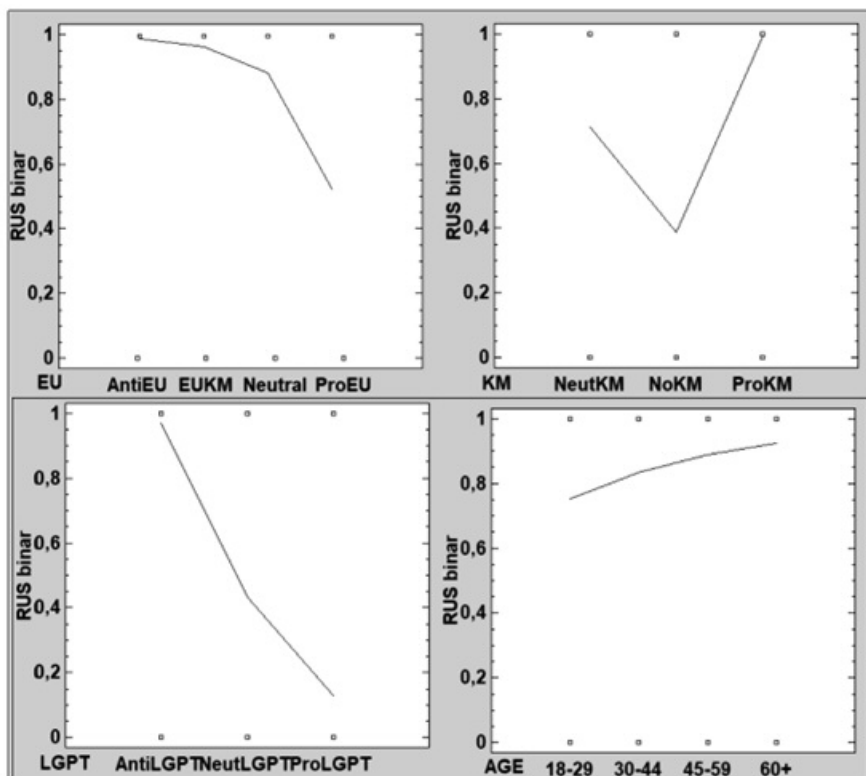
Factors	Percentage of deviance explained by models	Chi-Square	P-Value
EU	37,259	306,673	0,000
KM	51,047	420,149	0,000
LGPT	38,868	435,144	0,000
AGE	33,879	301,305	0,000

In separate logistic regressions, pro-Russian attitudes are predominantly explained by the attitude towards KM, with over 50% of the variation in the attitude towards Russia being defined by the attitude towards Kosovo. In the other models, this percentage ranges from 33% to 38% (see Table 5). The statistical significance of the Likelihood Ratio is confirmed by the p-value, with statistical significance exceeding 99%.

Generally, odds are preferred over probability when discussing ratios, as probability is constrained between 0 and 1 (see Figure 1), whereas odds range from $-\infty$ to $+\infty$ (refer to Table 4).

The probability of pro-Russian attitudes for each commitment in each group was obtained through the transformation of the estimated Odds Ratio as specified in the description of the logistic regression procedure, and is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 1. Results of Logistic regression: Probability



The responses with the strongest pro-Russian leaning in each of the four question groups are designated with a maximum probability of 1. Similar to the preceding logistic regression table, where odds were assessed in relation to the dominant group, this section of the logistic regression estimates probability in the same manner. This aspect of logistic regression reveals the following:

- The likelihood of a pro-Russian attitude is highest among Anti-EU respondents, decreasing to 90% in the EUKM group, 83% in the EU neutral group, and dropping to the lowest probability of 50% among Pro-EU supporters.
- The probability of pro-Russian leaning in the group of respondents who believe that the Kosovo issue should be ended regardless of the outcome

is only 40%, while it is approximately 70% in the group with no clear attitude toward Kosovo.

- The probability of pro-Russian leaning within the same-sex union group is the lowest in the survey, at 17%.

The most significant contribution to probability estimation in logistic regression is evident in age groups. Here, it becomes clearer that the probability of pro-Russian attitudes is similar among generational groups, a pattern not discernible using multiple regression.

Drawing conclusions about the influence of each of the four key factors on the formation of attitudes toward Russia among the Serbian population requires consideration of all analyses: statistical descriptions, multiple regression, and logistic regression. Each of these methods offers a slightly different perspective on the relationship between various attitudes and characteristics regarding Russia.

Conclusion

Profiling, which entails the statistical description of survey results, revealed that the most typical pro-Russian-oriented resident of Serbia is reluctant for Serbia to join the EU. Territorial sovereignty and national identity are of vital importance and priority for them, and they oppose same-sex unions. Typically, they are older than 60 years.

In general terms, the statistical description of the survey data is sufficient to form a picture of the current attitude of the Serbian population towards Russia. However, additional in-depth research has proven necessary to understand the mechanisms that influence these attitudes, their intensity, and the probability of different combinations of attitudes.

The result of the multiple regression, which illustrates the measure and strength of each of the examined factors, is particularly significant. This allows for a distinction between stochastic and causal relationships. For instance, concerning the variable related to the traditional-non-traditional value system, statistical description and logistic regression indicate that almost all pro-Russian respondents are simultaneously opponents of same-sex unions. However, multiple regression suggests that while this relationship is evident, its strength is relatively weak. This suggests that a potential change in attitude towards non-traditional communities has a negligible impact on the subsequent change in attitude towards Russia.

Both multiple and logistic regression align closely with the statistical description of the correlation between attitudes towards Kosovo and Russia. In this instance, additional measurements have confirmed the strength, depth, and causality of the connection between these two attitudes. All methods have demonstrated that a decisive commitment to the preservation of Kosovo is the strongest determinant of pro-Russian attitudes in Serbia. Due to public support, as well as in the UN Security Council, Russia is perceived as the protector of the sovereignty of the territory of Serbia. But, this strong interdependency between two values of population leads to the conclusion that the resolution of the national issue of Kosovo, regardless of the outcome, would likely result in the decline of strong pro-Russian sentiment among the Serbian population in favor of a more moderate option within a relatively short period of time. The disappearance of the problem of Kosovo or the reduction of tensions over the urgency of its solution would also diminish the need for a major protector, as Russia perceives in the current volatile situation.

The rise of Euroscepticism and anti-EU sentiment in Serbia also demonstrates a clear correlation with increasing pro-Russian leanings across all statistical methods. However, it is evident that this connection is not as pronounced as in the case of the national issue of Kosovo. Specifically, the vast majority (88%) of Eurosceptics in Serbia lean towards pro-Russian sentiments (statistical description); however, the reverse relationship is less convincing, as the majority of pro-Russian respondents are not opposed to European integration (logistic regression).

These findings align with estimates from all available public opinion surveys, which suggest that approximately 80% of the Serbian population leans towards pro-Russian sentiments, while about 50% are against EU membership. Therefore, our statistical analysis indicates an asymmetry in the strength of this relationship

In terms of the influence of respondents' age, more relevant conclusions are drawn from statistical description and, particularly, logistic regression, than from multiple regression. This is expected, given that it concerns naturally variable characteristics (aging) rather than relatively permanent value attitudes. Although multiple regression demonstrated the significant strength of this factor, simpler methods provided significant indicators that pro-Russian leaning does not increase notably with age. Multiple regression, which measures the influence of specific variables while holding all others constant, indicated this variable to be significantly stronger than in reality. However, in direct correlation (logistic regression), it was revealed that there is little difference in the probability of finding any age group among the pro-Russian population.

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