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**POLITICAL REMINDER**  
**Guided exploration trough terms and ideas of power**



**Novi Sad, 2024.**



## **Author's Preface**

In contemporary society, many politicians have experienced a significant transformation. The essence of a politician lies in the dedicated conduct of policies and actions that serve the common good based on a deep understanding of political principles. However, an increasing number of modern politicians seem to prioritize their public image over the solemn responsibility of their roles. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider basic political concepts and ideas to understand the importance of effective political leadership.

Responsibility, transparency, and integrity form the cornerstones upon which political institutions build their credibility. In contrast, many politicians today seem more inclined to engage in theatrics, seeking the limelight for personal gain rather than meaningfully contributing to social betterment. This shift is dangerous because it erodes public confidence in the political process, creating a disillusioned electorate that questions the foundations of civilized and humane governance. Although the stated and festive populism does not necessarily exclude the correct fulfillment of policies for the common good, the motivation behind one's actions significantly affects the nature and sustainability of their impact on the world. True change often comes from a sincere desire to improve the lives of others, while seeking popularity can bring fleeting attention without necessarily contributing to lasting positive

transformation. It is the main reason this book aims to serve as a guide, passing on essential political knowledge and values to the next generation.

A clear motivation and call extends to the younger generation, encouraging them to resist the temptation to seek roles and privileges devoid of essential ideals. Meaningful political engagement requires a commitment to ideas based on a comprehensive understanding of history and political discourse. Only by equipping themselves with a deep of political principles and a commitment to factual public service can they contribute to a future restoring the true essence of politics and ensuring a society that thrives on integrity, responsibility, and the common good. This appeal echoes a clear and unwavering message directed towards present-day political figures and those on the verge of emerging leadership: prioritize the fundamental responsibilities of political governance above the allure of media prominence. The imperative is that politicians make sense to engage with their constituents, formulate prudent policies, and unwaveringly contribute to the collective well-being of society. For something like that, one needs political education and knowledge of basic political terms at least.

At the same time, this academic discourse extends a significant appeal to students and aspiring leaders, eschewing imitation of contemporary political behavior for a deeper engagement with political theory and governance mechanisms. The absence of genuine leadership and the prioritization of media-centric prominence over substantive political governance has far-reaching consequences beyond mere political discourse. The

erosion of politically educated leadership breeds a dangerous trajectory, bringing societies dangerously close to a state of pre-political existence. This trajectory requires deep consideration and highlights the imperative to correct the prevailing deviation from principled governance.

Therefore, before you is a diverse and accessible book that serves both as a starting point for beginners in political discourse and as a reminder for individuals already in positions of political power, hence its title. Tailored for novice readers and those actively engaged in political spheres, the book's dual nature reflects a thoughtful approach to cultivating a deeper understanding of political principles while providing actionable insights for those entrusted with governance.

While the book may not guarantee a complete transformation of perspectives, its aspiration to help reshape young people's perceptions and approach to politics is evident. By encouraging more informed, thoughtful, and purposeful engagement in political discourse, we hope this book contributes to nurturing a generation of individuals who understand the importance of their roles in shaping society's future. Every political decision, policy, and action has real consequences extended far beyond the immediate moment. By fostering this understanding, "Political Reminder" contributes to a more informed and conscientious generation that recognizes the importance of its role in the political landscape.

As we navigate the turbulent waters of contemporary politics, we deal with established theories and the emergence of new challenges that require a new per-

spective. One such challenge is the rise of conspiracy theories, which weave webs of doubt and uncertainty around political events. In an era of overflowing information, and individuals can shape narratives with a simple touch of the keyboard, there is an increasingly urgent requirement for a scientific approach to these theories.

Within these pages, we invite readers to become familiar with the basic concepts of political science but also with contemporary theoretical challenges. By equipping ourselves with a solid understanding of political terminology and embracing a scientific way of thinking, we empower ourselves to navigate the complexities of the political realm with clarity and insight. As we go through the chapters, there are terms rooted in the wisdom of ancient political thinkers – words that have stood the test of time and continue to echo through the halls of governance. At the same time, we will navigate the uncharted territories of modern language, exploring terms so fresh that they may not yet find their place in mainstream discourse.

The book navigates the historical and contemporary aspects of political theory, ensuring a well-rounded understanding for the readers. Considering the author's background and affiliation, we utilized literature in the Serbian language. However, in citing the bibliography, we also included English titles to make the search more comprehensive. Accessible language and style ensure that readers can grasp fundamental concepts, while practical instructions serve as a valuable guide for those new to political roles.



# I

## POLICY DEFINITION AND MEANING

Politics is the oldest form of social regulation of relations in a community, from prehistory to the present day, and will remain a part of our social life for a long time because it will be hard to find a replacement for it. Any attempt to regulate relations between people, mediated by social rules, especially those that acquire mandatory status for the entire community or its parts, can be called politics. Even more so during periods when these rules pass institutional codification through values, customary, and religious norms, to later become part of the mandatory architecture of a political community. Therefore, the designated norms are initially established and shaped as customary and religious ones, and only later as part of the law and the legal system, and in an institutional and structural sense, they acquire all the characteristics that politics has today.

A vigorous process of establishing political relations will begin with the emergence (appearance) of the state in human history, as well as its institutional apparatus of authority that builds the order of power in a structural and functional sense, and this is the founda-

tion for every political and legal system of relations whose source and origin is in the state. From a historical point of view, the concept and contents of politics have changed and acquired different characteristics and meanings from epoch to epoch, but never so much as to call into question its main characteristic – that it is a system of social relations mediated by a position of power. Therefore, politics as an order of power is first extracted from the corpus of values of a political community and determined by legal, customary, and religious norms, and then as an order of authority defended and protected by various forms of normative codification and the institutional apparatus of the state and society.

Throughout the centuries, many authors have attempted to capture the essence of politics. Their goal has been to define and identify its most prominent features, procedures, values, institutions, relationships, and systems. Such efforts have relied on historical analysis of the political era mediated by legal norms and political rules. As contemporary political science disciplines evolve, including political philosophy, political theory, political sociology, political anthropology, political systems, geopolitics, and international relations, political science will increasingly prioritize political analysis in its methodological and substantive approach and theoretical-political synthesis. While social sciences like historiography, law, and economics once dominated political science, they are now considered auxiliary scientific disciplines.

This book explores political science as a scientific entity that comprises various disciplines. By integrating

these disciplines, we can develop a comprehensive understanding of political science from a conceptual, methodological, and theoretical perspective. Politics is an essential structure that defines it as a fundamental phenomenon and the core of human activity, influenced by the system of social power. In the following pages, we will delve into the modern concepts, theories, and methods that describe the phenomenology of politics. These tools help uncover hidden meanings, expose institutional power structures, analyze complex positions of power, and examine their significance for modern human existence. Additionally, we will incorporate the Anglo-Saxon perspective of politics, presented through the conceptual triad, that is, polity (institutional aspects of politics), politics (procedural aspects of politics), and policy (normative aspects of politics). This conceptual triad provides a more accurate and distinct reflection of the essence and phenomenology of politics.

According to Dragan Simeunović, a professor of Political Sciences in Belgrade, politics is a deliberate and organized action to enhance the quality of life within society. It involves rational activities that establish appropriate relationships and processes, leading to the creation of the state and other organizations. Even activities that do not appear political can have a distinctly political character and belong to political phenomena. In other words, politics is a conscious, practical, and intellectual effort to achieve the common good (D. Simeunović, 2009: 23).

For Andrew Heywood, politics involves creating, maintaining, and changing the rules that govern a society. Also, exercising power and authority, making col-

lective decisions, distributing limited resources, and sometimes engaging in fraud and manipulation. Heywood identifies four basic meanings and functions of politics:

1. The performance of public affairs
2. The exercise of power and distribution of resources
3. The agreement and consent of the people
4. The art of ruling (A. Heywood, 2004: 14)

Thomas Meyer defines politics as all activities related to the preparation and adoption of mandatory decisions aimed at general welfare and benefiting society as a whole (T. Meyer, 2013: 31). That distinguishes politics from other social activities like economy, culture, or social action. The main goal of politics as a social activity is to serve the general good of the community. Meyer's definition is similar to the ancient Athenian understanding of politics, which focused on the community's welfare rather than power. Only those who can propose, enact, implement, control, and sanction the violation of rules have the power to effective and designed politics. Whether such a policy is legal does not matter as a social activity. Those who derive their power from existing institutions after the election have institutional power, while those who bring power into the institutional apparatus of the state as its owners in the context of the society are bearers of social power.

Some authors define politics as a process of decision making and implementing it collectively. Therefore, they focus on its procedural and control aspects, considering that politics is a collective activity that

takes place within and between groups. It involves making decisions on issues affecting the group, usually to resolve disagreements about what needs to be done. It also implies a competitive struggle for power and resources among people and groups seeking to achieve personal gain (R. Hague; M. Harrop, 2014: 4). Thus, these authors focus on important aspect of politics, aimed at explaining the motives why some people or groups are more or always involved in politics and some rarely or not at all.

Our perception of politics is quite pessimistic, yet grounded in reality. We primarily view politics as a tool for acquiring power, which then tries to legitimize itself utilizing the state apparatus. Even if its representatives are not direct executors, that is, those who have taken up institutional positions of authority, but rather an institutional transmission of power. A desire to accumulate social resources, such as wealth and influence, drives political participation. Individuals or groups are highly motivated to acquire power, and preserving or expanding their already conquered positions becomes their primary concern. The most effective and reliable way to achieve this is by obtaining and controlling government institutions. We believe that possible gains for the social community are only incidental or secondary motives for those holding the power. By the holders of power/authority, such benefits are a “necessary evil” and a pragmatic “obligation” through which they receive a sort of legalization for their political activities. The logic “well, we have to give them something so that we can continue to take it away from them”, is often present in those obscure political circles.

The term politics is derived from the Greek word “politikos”, which means activities related to the public work of ancient city-states or polis. Professor Jovan Marjanović believes that politics must be understood in the context of its reality reduced to the activity of the state organization, the apparatus of violence in solving various problems and general affairs of the social community (J. Marjanović, 1973). Although politics has received newer and more complex definitions over time, the core essence of politics remains the same. It is an integral part of every political activity, independent of the historical epoch defined by the cultural-civilizational ethos.

This book does not provide a detailed explanation of the methodology used in political science, except for a few occasional remarks. Political science is a separate subject studied at every Faculty of Political Science as a distinct scientific field. However, it is meaningful to note that political science uses the classic methodological apparatus of social sciences. It includes logical methods, methods of abstraction and analysis, specifications and classifications, inductive and deductive methods, historical methods, and content analysis. In addition, political science also employs other methods such as the hypothetical-deductive method, statistical method, analytical-deductive method, comparative method, axiomatic method, dialectic-critical method, positivist method, structuralist method, functionalist method, and modeling methods (S. Milosavljević & I. Radosavljević, 2000). With the increasing use of empirical schools of social research, these methods are becoming more frequent (S. Branković, 2014).

## II HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF POLICY

### 1. Ancient Political Thought

According to Academician Ljubomir Tadić, the roots of recorded and structured knowledge of politics can be traced back to ancient Greece. The Greeks believed that politics reflected the character and structure of their political community, embodied by the polis, a city-state. The polis served as a microcosm of political life, representing the inseparable unity of politics and the community. The Greeks did not distinguish between society and the state, as the polis encompassed political activity within the community. At that time, the only recognized natural economic community was the *oikos* or household, consisting of a man and his family.

In the ancient Greek city-state, known as the polis, the relationships among its free citizens were symmetrical. It meant that everyone had equal power and authority to rule and obey, and it was a public space for political freedom and self-government. For the free citizens, politics was the only respectable way of life. On the other hand, in the *oikos*, the relationships were

asymmetrical. It meant a clear distinction between the one who ruled or followed. The *oikos* was an intimate and personal space where the host was the master, and the other members obeyed unconditionally. The *oikos* relied on the work of slaves to support their livelihood. Slaves were treated as mere objects and didn't have any rights. Since slaves were not considered free citizens, they could not belong to either the polis or the *oikos*. Thus, the *oikos* represented the economic basis of the ancient polis organized in this way, which primarily depended on slave labor.

Economics (in the Greek language) means house management. In this sense, in Aristotle's Ethics, man is called an economic being. The household economy, which used slave labor, was normal. Labor was counted only as slave labor and was shameful for free citizens (E. Spektorski, 1997: 37). "The existence of slaves and discrimination against women were dark stains on the image of the polis. Although that allowed free citizens to devote themselves to the polis matters fully. They had time to think about society and its changes" (D. Mićunović 1, 2010: 13). Although it rested on a slave relationship that was a condition of freedom for others, the ancient Greeks sincerely respected such freedom, and this is their indisputable contribution to the promotion of politics as a public good.

Benjamin Constant believed that political freedom in the modern era meant freedom from state power, which had changed character and essence. In contrast, he regarded the ancient political arrangement as free participation in state power (Lj. Tadić, 1988: 18).



Political life for ancient Greeks was a practical activity used to solve political problems in the polis as a community of free citizens. Therefore, for them, politics had the status of practice – praxis, concrete action in the community without any form of mediation and institutional restraints and distractions. Politics was a multi-dimensional activity for the Greeks. Firstly, it was a social practice that involved active and public participation in discussing all issues that concerned the life of the polis. Secondly, it was the most important, at the same time, the most demanding skill to master, which enabled participation in policy management. Lastly, it was considered the most important science, which encompassed all aspects of governance and policy-making. Aristotle provided the most complete explanation of politics in ancient Greece. He defines man as a political being: man is, by nature, a political (state) being. It means that man is a being born to live in the polis, to be a citizen. Being a citizen meant participating in a unified self-government based on public debate and personal responsibility (D. Mićunović 1, 2010: 12).

For the ancient understanding of politics, interpreted in Aristotle's review (the works *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*), we highlight the following definitions: man's being is political (*zoon politikon*), a being that must live in community because he is “neither God nor beast”, which seeks the active good of that same community. As a free member of the political community, man works for his own good by contributing to public prosperity. The connection between the free members of the community is made by speech, as a means of communication and political communication,

as part of the *logos* is inseparable from *praxis*, from *praxis* understood as the very essence of political life which is mediated by dialogue (dialogue as conversation), as the only legitimate means of politics.

“The ancient Greeks believed that force is voiceless and as a way of dealing with people, it is below the level of politics. The application of violence as a non-political means only applied to foreigners treated as barbarians and slaves, as “talking tools”, and therefore did not have the status of people” (Lj. Tadić, 19). Force is naturally voiceless and could not be a fundamental part of ancient Greek politics. Therefore, they did not consider it appropriate to mediate in any way in the relations of free people.

Between politics and ethics, there was an unbreakable connection. If justice and the common good of the community are the goals of politics, then ethics is an integral part of good governance. Its essence was also law, whose purpose was to legally codify the value corpus of the community and ensure their unquestioning respect and exercise through a system of norms and sanctions. As a humble contribution, we would like to provide a universal example that clearly illustrates the importance of not killing. The norm of not killing serves to preserve life as the highest value. Any violation of this norm would result in a sanction, which is a logical consequence of disregarding the value maintained by the norm. It forms a conceptual triad of value, norm, and sanction.

In this context, Aristotle outlined five paths or possibilities for the “ability of human thought” to attain truth.

1. The term 'art' or 'skill' is commonly understood as *techne*, which means the ability to manage or create something. Over the centuries, classical art has been associated with skill-based activities such as playing, singing, and painting. However, this term also pertains to the ability to create something materialistic through the practical application of work and creation, such as construction, production, agriculture, hunting, and fishing. In essence, it is about the ability to produce something new by applying experience, knowledge, and possession of it. Art focuses on the creation or employment of materials and things, while in practical wisdom, the focus is on action based on ethically correct will. The defining characteristic of art is a skill, and of practical intelligence is a virtue. In art, the goal of creation stands outside of creation, while in action, the goal is solely right-doing. As Aristotle puts it, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, “the principles of what we ought to do are in the goals of our actions” (*ibid.*, 20).
2. Knowledge as an *episteme*, as logic and a way of correct thinking, as a general and necessary conclusion based only on the so-called “*apodictic judgments or logical necessity (that it should be just like that and nothing else)*”. It is about the classical system of formal logic and categorical syllogism as the embryo of any causal thinking based on strict rules of logical derivation. Aristotle considered the categorical syllogism a fundamental form of any possible correct conclusion. Without it, it is impossible to establish a genuine scientific opinion.

3. Practical wisdom or prudence – phronesis, understood as a virtue/dialectic that deals with human matters that need and can be decided by proof, argumentation and dialectic (as the art of confronting contradictions). Practical wisdom as prudence decides what is adequate for a person and what is not. Unlike knowledge that is general and necessary, practical intelligence must also know individually, precisely because it relates to action, and every action, Aristotle says, takes place in particulars. Choice and decision are not apodictic certain judgments, but dialectical judgments. They represent conversation, counselling and advice. Judgments of dialectics are judgments of probability and not of logical necessity (Ibid., 21). There are two types of judgment: logical, which involves demonstration, and dialectical, which entails argumentation. Dialectical, also known as Aristotle's Topics, are beliefs that we hold but are not necessarily obvious or logically necessary because otherwise, they would be considered demonstrative judgments. In Topics, an idea is more credible with greater supporting arguments. (ibid., 22). Therefore, due to the nature of dialectic (Topics), Aristotle recommended that one should not argue with everyone or engage in dialectic with anyone. Because, with some opponents, the conclusions are necessarily distorted (ibid., 23). Hence, practical wisdom or prudence is closest to the essence of politics as an activity, it must not rest on the apodictic judgments of logic but on the reasoned judgments of dialectics and topics. Practical thinking tends to reveal the meaning of things and

their specific relationship to man, as well as man to things. That prudence concerns the formation of historical and human reality and future how. In this sense, the dialectical thinking is historical and humanistic thinking *par excellence* (ibid., 25).

4. Genuine scientific knowledge, wisdom (Sophia) or *scientia per causas*, is achieved through classical scientific methodology and experiments, as a combination of wisdom gained through real insight into the subjects of scientific and empirical research, i.e. through experiments of verified and confirmed knowledge related to the facts of a particular field of scientific research. According to Aristotle, science is the study of cause-and-effect relationships necessary to understand the world. Today, we refer to this as the micro and macro cosmos. Scientific knowledge matures and becomes wisdom due to its reflective thinking, which retrospectively critically examines not only science but also its research results. Science, when devoid of wisdom, becomes just an instrumental tool serving the interests of power. Unfortunately, many academics lack the conscious awareness of this fact. Science without reflection is nothing more than pragmatic fundamentalism, a tool for all kinds of abuse. Slowly but surely, it transforms into dogma, abandoning critical thinking and the search for new evidence that would confirm its views of life and reality.
5. The mind or speculative thinking (*nus*) is related to pure mental speculation as one of the ways of knowing the complex reality of the inner and outer world of known and unknown facts. Mental cognition,

while limited in its ability to reach the “truth”, can still offer valuable insights into the complexities of human life. Especially its existential character, which we often call reality.

In the Greek world, therefore, politics was understood first of all as a practical mental activity aimed at cultivating virtues in man. This capacity is precisely the reason why politics is the highest science. To upbringing people in virtue! In the commandment for man to be good and just, to serve the goals of justice, good and general benefit, politics expressed the character of a prescriptive science. It was precisely in this capacity, and not according to the accuracy of its conclusions, that it was the 'highest science. The so-called *recta ratio agibilium* (as opposed to *recta ratio factibilium*) also contains the principle of moderation: a smart and prudent man never abuses his word (ibid.: 25). Socrates argued that a valid individual is a prerequisite for good order and that a systematic education in virtue is necessary for becoming a do-gooder individual. Both are the utmost tasks of politics, society, and the state.

The political concepts of the ancient Greeks were, compared to today, very narrow. They denoted the state with the same word as the city (polis). Political for them meant both state and city. The ruler of each state was just a kind of mayor. They did not consider politics a science discipline but rather an easy art. The ideal of such a small state was considered autarchy, i.e. self-sufficiency (E. Spektorski, 1997: 36).

Therefore, academician Ljubomir Tadić, inspired by Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics, rightly concludes: A

smart person has an intelligence and insight, the ability to understand changing circumstances. It is not enough for a smart person to know what is good, but also to become good. Đuro Šušnjić continues in the same tone: To do good, you have to know what is good. The science of the good for man is still a political science because man is a living being who by his nature is determined to live in a properly organized community and for whom it is not possible to find the good that is suitable for him outside the community; because man, as Aristotle formulates it, is by nature political, by nature a political living being (H. Maier; H. Rausch; H. Denzer 1, 1998: 46).

So, here we are talking about a complex perception of the understanding of the whole world, including the world of politics, which only simultaneously creates a realistic insight into the totality of appearances in which we live. Also, ancient thinkers tried to understand the world through physical laws and spiritual implications that together form a whole. And through the search for the meaning that this world has, because only then does reaching the “truth” begin to acquire its essential importance. In one part of his biological and social existence, man is an inseparable part of the space-time continuum. Sometimes, by delving into the philosophical musings and practical experiences of his most accomplished individuals, one can gain a deeper understanding of their spiritual essence. Alongside this understanding, they also become more aware of the limitations of their insights, their way of cognition, and their methodology. Namely, we are talking about the painful form of the physical dimension of our existence

through which, unfortunately, we evaluate the world in which we live.

Despite the increasingly clear knowledge that these are colossal illusions of our mind, man does not stop wondering what the essence of that space-time continuum is. Which meaning should we decipher in its physical domain, and which one when we look at our metaphysical dimension of existence? Spiritual knowledge teaches us that only God as the creator has answers to all man's questions and that in the capacity of God as love, he has left us inexhaustible freedom to search for existential truths and the essence of our existence. It would be good for us, as humans, to talk to God more often or, more precisely, to become aware when He speaks to us. Many existential troubles mediated by social fears would then slowly disappear. To have new spiritual experiences, we must awaken from the deep slumber of self-forgetfulness. We must free ourselves from the theology of separation and strengthen our awareness that we are an integral part of a whole inextricably connected to God and his essence.

## **2. Concepts of Politics in the Middle Ages**

The complicated structure of medieval society emerged slowly in an evolution manner, particularly the one related to Western Christianity. The feudal order arose on the ruins of the Roman Empire and the so-called barbarian states that participated in its destruction. The societies that won the historical victory over Rome transformed into a feudal order with an admix-



ture of Roman culture through acculturation mechanisms. The Roman Catholic Church contributed powerfully to this, decisively controlling the entire process. Although more spontaneous than planned, it will give birth to a medieval feudal order full of contradictions and antagonisms. Exactly the only way it could be: blocked by the monopoly of Catholicism, state autarchy, economic inefficiency, underdeveloped transport infrastructure, cultural neglect, and security problems, without the dominance of established truly legal order and political rationality as it was in ancient Greece.

The understanding of politics in the Middle Ages had a dominantly Christian colour and the stamp of church authority. The overall social thought of that time was under the decisive influence of the Christian church, its dogmas, institutions and high clergy, especially strongly in the western part of Europe, under the tutelage of the religious monopoly of the papacy and the Roman Curia. Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages necessarily, in addition to dogmatic reflection and development of their faith, especially in the processes of its exegesis, also reflected on the sphere of politics and the political. They did not hide their political ambition and ecclesiastical will for church authority domination in secular matters, while in matters of religion and the church, it was not questionable. The Church was established as an unequal society configuration (*societas inaequalis*) built on the hierarchical difference between clergy and laity. It was a teaching (*ecclesia docens*) and a warring church (*ecclesia militans*). As a “scholar”, she demanded exclusive authority, and as a “warrior”, she needed power (E. Spektorski, 1997:

104). This power is given precisely by the secular authorities who had the obligation to recognize the supremacy and serve the church and its goals and interests. When later a great dogmatic rift arose in the ranks of the Western Church, caused by the challenge of the religious authority of the Roman Curia by Protestantism (Lutheranism and Calvinism above all), the struggle for power and control moved from the field of ordinary church authority to the area of exegesis (interpretation) of the true faith. The collapse of Catholic universalism brought to the fore not the problem of faith but the problem of knowledge: which of the two religious knowledges is true? The answer was necessary to legitimize the pretension to power, considering that both sides agree that the “true religion” should rule the state (M. Brdar, 2015: 23).

In contrast to the world of the ancient Greek polis, where politics was a public matter and the activity of free citizens, Christianity limited its experiences and access to politics to the realm of privacy and showed a considerable aversion to the general public and politics as public matters. Just as the family was considered the basic unit of society, the Church, according to Thomas Aquinas, perceived the whole society as one family. In ancient Greek terms, the essence of political engagement and economic activity was in the sphere of the *oikos*, the household as a private organization located far from the public eye. Therefore, Aquinas, contrary to ancient models and standards, moved the world of politics from the public sphere to the space of the private “intimate” household. We should especially remember the character of relations in the sphere of *oikos* (house-

hold), which were always asymmetrical. The review of Thomas Aquinas is in the predominance of the authority of the pater familias, whose authority was not only dominant but also unquestionable, just as the church demanded its spiritual and secular authority from the laity. The secular government must subordinate to the spiritual, papal authority, and a life filled with virtue corresponds to a life pleasing to God (Lj. Tadić, 26). Thus, the patriarchal structure of life was complete. The dominance of one authority was enthroned and unchallenged by the other members of the community, regardless of whether that community was the church, society or family. The social theory of the Middle Ages, therefore, had to put on theological garb. The church obscured people's consciousness with a "thick fog of religious dogmatics." Although the known fact is that only monks were literate, her spiritual monopoly was secure (D. Mićunović 1, 2010: 155).

Conceptually, *privatus* in Latin also means deprivation. A life devoid of the public and its attributes (seeing, hearing, telling, gathering, organizing, communicating, rebelling). As a space without freedom and transparency. It is, therefore, about that tragic field of obscured politics that has survived in some of its crude variants until today. The field of politics created as a medieval alternative was reduced to twisted "privacy" as the historical ground on which political and practical life devalued in the hierarchy of human values or subordinated to the goals of private life. So, confirmation of the arcane nature of politics is definite. Cryptopolitics and its conspiratorial dimension are becoming increasingly important with time. Becoming more com-

plicated, the need for power structures within politics to make their activities almost invisible grew progressively. Especially those dimensions of politics that concerned decision-making, hiding the true nature of interests and actors appeared as the bearers of its power (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 2021: 72).

In the world of the feudal order of the Middle Ages, there is a strong correspondence between the structure of ownership and the structure of government. “The church is, therefore, the authority that at that time introduced the institution of the *fief* (service), since it was not allowed to sell its land, allowing the landless to use it without property rights over it for certain counter-services” (Lj. Despotović, 2013: 4). The power belonged to those who controlled the property, complemented by the authority of the patriarchal society and the traditional form of government. This type of government had a private-legal character. That is why it was not called *imperium* but *dominium*. Its prototype was private ownership of land and everything on it. State administration did not exist. The government did not guarantee the population either property or security. They had to take care of it themselves (E. Spektorski, 1997: 128-130). In such a context of general property and social insecurity, medieval chivalry will appear as some form of professional class that took care of security (of the Church or feudal lords) while enjoying a form of professional autonomy and receiving material compensation for its protective function (mission).

Jürgen Habermas lucidly notes that the review of Thomas Aquinas is an inversion of Aristotle's understanding of the political. In the structure of medieval

order and politics, *civitas* magically became *societas*, and the class character of medieval society in “Thomism” received a kind of social ideology (philosophy) as an apology for the ruling political order. Indeed, all three elements of the state have fundamentally changed: the territory, the people and the government. The Middle Ages did not know about strictly demarcated state territories. The political map of Europe at that time resembled a colourful carpet woven from multicoloured pieces. In the medieval state, there was no nation in the national or political sense, which would consist of subjects or citizens. In medieval universities, ‘nations’ denoted student corporations (ibid., 129-131). An important characteristic of the beginning of this period is the decline of the state. Although the state as an institution still exists, it is distant and useless. People in a world of underdeveloped transportation and with great uncertainty turn to the closest people in power and ask them for protection, becoming dependent. New class society has replaced tribal collectivism with the political dominance of the ‘warrior class’, later crystallized into nobility (D. Mićunović 1, 2010: 152).

Common property disappeared, and private property became the basis of the economic relationship of the medieval. Later, hypostatized into the inviolable possessive individualism of the coming civil society of liberal type and capitalist provenance. The turning point in the development of capitalism occurred in the 15th and 16th centuries when it affected almost all of Western Europe; however, it has not yet appeared in its true industrial form and manifestation because its essential elements were still under a cloak of feudalism (J. Kolaković, 1981: 31).

### **3. Political Thought during Humanism and the Renaissance**

The restoration of human freedom after medieval restraints began in the era of the Renaissance and humanism. During the Renaissance, people stopped dreaming about freedom. Instead, they started singing about it, fighting for it, and talking about it in public through the works of their most talented individuals. It is the age of the creation of a new anthropology, the renewal of humanism inspired by ancient models, and the establishment of a homocentric view of the world. The label of humanism came from the study of man (*humana studia*) as opposed to theological studies (*divina studia*), but also from the literary selection that was still under *humanitas* among the Romans (E. Spektorski: 151). Man is, therefore, the subject of social, political, artistic, scientific and overall events, the creator of his destiny and the society in which he lives. This new humanistic ideology was the guiding thought of the nascent citizenry, an expression of its unwavering will for a free life and an individual perspective of existence.

Such a radical change to the world of the Middle Ages was made possible by a series of parallel and synchronous processes that were a kind of tectonic shift that enabled the emergence of new forms of human manifestation and expression. These were, first of all, the discovery of ancient models, freedom, and the overcoming of a world oppressed by the medieval monopoly of the Christian church, an excessive theocracy

whose fruit is asceticism, which suffocated all worldly life and its values (D. Mićunović: 192). The revitalization of the material foundations of Roman culture, as well as new geographical discoveries, expanded the previously limited perception of the world, culture, religion and civilization.

The development of cities and the first forms of manufacturing production followed. Art and culture flourished, as well as the initiation of secular forms of education and science, especially new astronomical discoveries. Byzantine writings and cultural heritage, authentic religious interpretations led to the crisis of the monopoly of the Christian church in the review of Roman Catholicism. One of the strongest influences that overthrew the theocratic predominance in politics, society, and religious monopoly was the increasingly rapid development of universities. Education and science are becoming more accessible to a larger group of people. It is not limited to just a few passionate individuals or secretive groups like Freemasons, who were willing to make sacrifices to keep these stimulating activities exclusive to themselves. People challenged Christian practical misogynist views at every turn, especially in the arts, while glorifying Female beauty and her physicality, and eros is exalted. It was a time of great liberation, especially in visual arts, music and literature.

In political attitudes and views, ancient Greek teachings, especially those of Plato and Aristotle, dominate increasingly. Renaissance thinkers restored the ideals of Athenian democracy, the free study of philosophy, dialogue and public debate on social and political topics. One of the finest examples of such dis-

cussions is the work *Speech on the Dignity of Man* by Pico del Mirandola (G. Pico della Mirandola). It was a previously unrecorded public speech (debate) about the new anthropology, the image of the free man, his dignity and elevated form of life, above the social form of life and its political implications. It was a renewal of Cicero's concept of *humanitas* and the Greek *paideia*. The new understanding of man and the new humanism in Renaissance circles emphasized man's independence (ibid., 196). Pico found this re-newed anthropology and human freedom completely understandable in God himself. It is not just a tribute to that time and a debt to the Christian faith but a genuine feeling that man received the grace of his free will from the Creator directly, not from the Church or the secular authorities, as has been claimed for centuries without proof. Pico says about it in an inspired tone: "Oh, supreme generosity of God the Father, supreme and admirable happiness belonging to man! Which is given to him to have what he wants, to be what he wants".<sup>1</sup> His massive contribution to freeing man from religious restraints was insisting on man's natural right to be its centre and, therefore, the centre of society and politics.

Nicholas of Cusa significantly contributed to the renewal of political thought (political philosophy) and understanding of the "new" world, society and man. He develops the idea of the harmony of the social organism, composed of a series of corporations that possess self-government. Corporations are also the bearers of sovereignty because they can appoint rulers, but also

.....  
<sup>1</sup> ibid., 33



remove them if they break the contract (ibid., 199). Accordingly, Nicholas of Cusa is the forerunner of the natural law theory and the social contract, restoring the right of sovereignty to the corporations of the time as forms of collective representation in society and politics. Although he was a theologian, a bishop and a cardinal, Cusanski did not succumb to the dictates of ideological-religious censorship but tried to think and write freely in the spirit of his time and the coming emancipation of man, society and politics. Nicholas of Cusa introduced the concept of political pathology. He considered the rulers to be doctors of a sick state who should consult with political philosophers and learn from the experience of other states. The formulation that “consent of the people” is the basis on which political power rests comes from Nicholas of Cusa. He advocated for a representative system of government and is the creator of an original sketch of such a system of government (ibid., 200).

Thus, he established today's modern postulates of a democratic system of government (consent of citizens on a good political order, their consent to consider such government as legal, especially the first forms of representative democracy), which will only come to life later and become the foundation on which every modern political order.

### **3.1. Niccolo Machiavelli – One Understanding of Politics**

A Renaissance personality, a man of political theory and practice alike, misunderstood and accused, mis-

interpreted and imprisoned – Niccolò Machiavelli was all that in one. No one in his time, and even later, caused so much controversy, wrong or even malicious comments, challenged and praised at the same time he was. His understanding of politics was new for that time, radical in separating politics and morality, politics and religion, under praxeological principles and the need to conduct real politics. Niccolò Machiavelli is the first modern political thinker, in the true sense of the word, who is also a real Renaissance man and writer. He radically liberated social thought, both from the theological content and from the ethical basis (D. Mićunović, 200). His theoretical activity is an offshoot of the significant political process of building a new statehood in Italy at the time, which did not yet exist as a state creation but rather as a geographical concept, also as an imagined national community created only in the 19th century. So, we can say about the awakening of an early proto-national movement which later, under the political activism of Giuseppe Mazzini (movement for the unification of the Risorgimento) and the military engagement of Giuseppe Garibaldi, will create Italy as a national state. Machiavelli wanted to overcome the fragmentation of the state, constant political struggles and dynastic disputes, and thus transcend the “medieval theocracy” and fight for the autonomy and freedom of the nation-states. “Politically speaking, that High Renaissance Italy is a mosaic of countless larger and smaller monarchies and republics fighting for life and death” (H. Maer; H. Rausek; H Denzer, 1998: 170). For a time, Machiavelli was, in addition to everything else, an official of the state administration – specifically, the secretary of the Florentine Republic.

The theoretical importance of Machiavelli's teaching is that he brought complete clarity to politics as an art and a political method of state education. He does not consider the state a natural creation, as it was in antiquity, nor a gift of God or a devil's invention as in the Middle Ages, but a creation of human skill. The rules of this art, called politics, are based on the conviction that a political man or homo politician, unlike a private person, is free – and to such an extent that no one was allowed to dream of this kind of freedom until then (E. Spektorski, 169). Politics has thus changed its meaning. It was no longer Aristotle's teaching about the state as a natural creation and about the forms of government divided into proper and corrupt from an ethical point of view. This art sets goals for the state and chooses expedient means. It is neither ontology nor deontology. These are teleology and technique (ibid., 170).

Therefore, Machiavelli posits political theory as a study of social reality, i.e. political reality, often an entirely unveiled reality devoid of ontological and deontological admixtures, aimed exclusively at finding the best means to achieve set political and state goals. Machiavelli rejected the metaphysics of morality in the political sphere and the traditional philosophy of man. For him, knowledge of true human nature is a prerequisite for successful political theory and practice. Man is as he has been shaped by social reality and by historical conditions to which he has adapted immediately (D. Mićunović, 201). Machiavelli derived his understanding of politics devoid of ethical postulates and moral scruples precisely from this anthropological attitude.

But, before analyzing that part of his understanding of politics, we must emphasize Machiavelli's pronounced anthropological pessimism. He is the progenitor of anthropological pessimism in modern political theory, just as Jean-Jacques Rousseau was when it comes to another school of political thought labelled as anthropological optimism. "For him, man is an insincere, egoistic being sunk into evil. He, similar to Calvin and Hobbes, believes that man is originally corrupt and that only strong social measures of the state can discipline him and keep him in submission" (Lj. Despotović, 2001: 132).

For Machiavelli, man, seen in the context of the political reality of the time, is a product of passion, greed, levity, reticence, self-love, vindictiveness, arrogance, ingratitude and similar character traits. The regulators (motives) of social behavior are "personal benefit and fear of punishment". "It was a very pessimistic picture of human nature," rightly states D. Mićunović. By nature, says Machiavelli, "people are greedy, forget their father's death more quickly than the loss of their father's property, because they value possessions more than honor." Logically, in such a harsh anthropological and social context, politics "became the art of managing people, the technique of ruling, instructions on how to win and preserve power" (D. Mićunović, 2003). He paints a very realistic "picture of the man of his time", as Machiavelli sees it, "very crude and pessimistic." People are evil, selfish, unfaithful, fickle, greedy. But these are the political people of his time, and he advises to start from that fact" (ibid., 209). We must state here that, when it comes to the sphere of politics, things

have not fundamentally changed much for the better since the time of Niccolò Machiavelli. Perhaps also because the context of real politics (politics) represents an arena for the conflict of interests regarding the coming to power and its preservation. Political space is full of institutionally difficult-to-control power and insatiable greed of interests that are difficult to channel in the direction of fulfilling the public interest defined by law.

In the future, despite such views that were a sublimation of the reality of the time, Machiavelli will be accused of the unscrupulous motto “The end justifies the means” and of complete amorality. Many practitioners of political science, and especially the media, even today uncritically accept and attribute the authorship of this catchphrase to Machiavelli. Many of them either do not know or have overlooked the fact that the scholar Nikola Milošević reminded us of back in the eighties of the last century and warned that the creators of such an attitude were the Jesuits, with which they justified their position of uncompromising defence of the papacy and Roman Catholicism, and that Machiavelli claimed something completely different, that the means should be appropriate to the achievement of the goal. Thus, in contrast to the axiological position of the Jesuit order that “the end justifies the means”, Machiavelli advocated the praxeological point of view. That is, the means must be appropriate to the goal if the intention is to achieve that goal. “Machiavelli consistently adhered to the praxeological precept: the end determines the means.” Hence, it is wrong to attribute to this thinker the praxeologically problematic statement “the end justifies the means”. The political means that Ma-

chiavelli recommended were not value-neutral, therefore, equally usable, both for moral and amoral purposes, but exclusively adapted to a specific goal of conquering and maintaining power, which, as we have seen, Kolakowsky himself does not deny. It is why Machiavelli's doctrine is not subject to immanent praxeological criticism, like some political doctrines. There is no discrepancy in Machiavelli's Ruler between the proclaimed goals and the means that should serve their realization" (N. Milošević, 1986: 76). "He repeated: morally judge the goals and not the means!" The logic of history is cruel, but that's how it is. Machiavelli's instruction is not that "the end should justify the means", but to indicate that the end dictates the means and erases the difference between good and bad" (D. Mićunović, 212). Machiavelli is the creator of another known doctrine in the study of politics, especially the functioning of the state. He is the originator of the so-called state reason, a term (doctrine) that was often misused during the political history of modern states and often by the highest power holders or intelligence service. "Machiavelli's ideas are often linked to the doctrine of the so-called state reason (*ragione di stato*, *raison d'état*, *staatsraison*). In most of his judgments and recommendations to current or potential rulers, Machiavelli allows completely immoral actions and behaviour. But in no case for personal benefit, only for the good of the state, exclusively when the state's existence is under threat. Machiavelli's followers shaped this understanding of the expediency of political means into the idea of a state reason" (Lj. Despotović, 2001: 134). "In the context of the theory of state reason,

which Jovanović also accepts (A/N Slobodan Jovanović), Machiavelli can only be criticized for one thing. And that's because he didn't see that the state must nurture the moral development of people for its interest, so the state, by definition, must be a moral institution.” (ibid., 135).

“Finally, we pointed out that Slobodan Jovanović saw Machiavelli's greatest merit precisely in the fact that he emancipated politics from the auspices of theology and constituted it as a separate science” (ibid., 138). These salient dimensions of Machiavelli's work are brought up by D. Mićunović, emphasizing his emancipation of politics from the theology frame and the praxeological character of politics as a practical activity that works in the realities of political life filled with the struggle of ideas and the conflict of different interests. “Machiavelli's work *The Ruler* has long been in disrepute because of the popular motto 'the end justifies the means'.” It was a vulgar reduction of Machiavelli to amoral politics, which obscured his historical role in political thought liberation and practice from metaphysics and religion. Machiavelli said, 'Deal with the goals, not the means', 'the goals are important, not the means'” (D. Mićunović, 205). Because of his perception of politics in that context, effectiveness is most important to set goals achievement. “Efficiency is significant for affirmation, both for political and personal, in that era. The successful one and one who meets submission, he rules legitimately” (H. Maer; H. Rausek; H Denzer, 1998: 170).

As a small theoretical recapitulation of Machiavelli, we cite the views of professor Vukašin Pavlović,

who highlights several dimensions in Machiavelli's understanding of politics:

- Political realism is primarily reflected in the perception of different interests and appreciation of the importance of social conflicts.
- political principle is the understanding of politics as the choice of the lesser of two evils. In this sense, Machiavelli's inescapable law of politics reads: the least evil is always the best decision.
- He rejects Aristotle's solution of the middle way and is against compromise and hesitation in practical political life.
- Machiavelli's republican understanding of politics, at the deepest comprehension is democratic.
- Machiavelli announces the politics of the new age, which reckons with political actors of the new order, sizeable political figures, but including active masses” (V. Pavlović, 2012: 35).

## **4. Understanding Politics in Civil Society**

### **4.1. Political ideas of emerging citizenship – creating the foundations of democracy**

Emerging citizenship was the basis for new political thought. Political and social thinkers thus prepared to upgrade socio-economic trends. One of the most important processes of this type was the constitutionalization of the state and the construction of its public and legal order. Despite all the obstacles and resistance, the state has rapidly established itself as a constitutional. In



a legal and social sense, it receives a constitutional basis and consequently obtains it as a fundamental for building civil order and a democratic government (through the concepts of the rule of law in Germany and the rule of law in England). “The constitutional regime opened the door to democracy by inviting society to participate in state life” (E. Spektorski, 325). However, time will pass before the final democratization of the government. A significant amount of political energy and personal sacrifices contributed to a democratic civil order becoming certain. Several social thinkers played crucial roles. Jean Bodin and his concept of state sovereignty is unquestionably one of them.

True, he is of a more conservative provenance, but still new and comprehensive for the time. Relying on the Roman terms *majestas* and *imperium*, Bodin defines sovereignty as a permanent and absolute category. According to him, the source of sovereign will and law, as a legal explanation, is exclusively the sovereign (monarch), i.e. a ruler who expresses his sovereign will through the state. “The sovereign thus becomes the source of the entire power, which is permanent and absolute. The subjects have no right to consent or resist the laws of the sovereign power” (D. Mićunović, 262). Bodin denies subjects the right to revolt or tyrannicide, even when the government is tyrannical and sees it as a way to preserve the sovereignty of the state and the absoluteness of the authorities. He bases his rigid understanding of sovereignty and the denial of any right of consent or rebellion of his subjects on the view that society lays on the family, that is, on the corporative rather than individual principle defended by theorists of

sovereignty, natural law and the social contract. In such a manner, Boden believes, he overcame the defect of the citizenship emergence reflected in the increasing atomization of society.

Another salient political thinker from the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century was Johannes Althusius. In contrast to Boden, he is the creator of popular sovereignty theory. “He links sovereignty to the concept of the people, considering we need not to talk about state sovereignty because the state is nothing more than a public union in which several municipalities and regions undertake to have, represent and defend the right of government. But the supreme, inalienable and indivisible power belongs exclusively to the people” (D. Mićunović, 266). Contrary to Boden, he gives citizens (the people) the right to replace the government, basing such an attitude on the increasingly popular idea of the social contract based on the natural right of man as an individual. Althusius distinguishes five levels of society: “family, association, municipality, region and state”, and believes that each of the listed has a foundation on a social contract as a fundamental expression of national sovereignty (will) and agreement on what kind of community the people want to live in. Those ideas represent an entire later configuration of the modern civil order.

Hugo Grotius was an ardent exponent of natural law and the social contract. In his work *On the Law of War and Peace*, Grotius presents the first forms of humanistic understanding of war and peace based on interstate agreements to avoid wartime confrontation between citizens of two or more states. Since natural law

is dominant in his positioning of the individual as a citizen, he understands international law as a logical application of natural law to international relations. He is among the first to point out the liberal principle that the state is only the guardian of human rights, not their source. "That's why the purpose of the state is not to maintain authority but to protect human rights." Grotius goes further in his liberalism, demanding that the state be the guardian and guarantor of private property, which he perceives as one of the inviolable rights of man as a citizen. "The state exists, first of all, to protect private property, and only with that protection can it protect the individual and his rights (D. Mićunović, 288). He develops a democratic idea according to which, for the state to be democratic, the ruler represents the people's will. "The ruler is under the constant control of the people, and his only function is the protection of legality" (ibid., 289). To successfully establish his democratic theory, Grotius thoroughly lays out democratic and liberal principles based on natural law and the social contract. "He based his natural-legal theory on rationalist thought, and by defending the freedom and autonomous decision of the individual, as well as private property, as a source of autonomy, he laid the foundations for later developed liberalism" (ibid., 289).

Samuel Pufendorf's work *On Natural Law and the Law of Nations*, following the teachings of Grotius and Althusius, takes a step forward in his determination of the theory of natural law and the social contract. He believes that natural law is the basis of every legal system and above scholastic or positive jurisprudence. Pufendorf adds to the concept of the social contract by

giving it a triadic structure. He declares three types of social contract:

- the first, which expresses the mutual agreement and consent of the citizens themselves to join in one social life, that is, in one society;
- the second, which concerns the making of an agreement on the formation of a political body, that is, the state as its direct explication;
- and the third contract, between citizens and sovereign, which defines the character of the government, the forms of submission to such authority and the political relations of the ruler and freely associated citizens.

“In this way, Pufendorf specified the relationship between the social and state contract and much more limited the absolutism of the sovereign. Because, in the second phase of the contract, citizens decide by majority vote to whom they would entrust the management of society” (ibid. 292).

Many excellent political scientists who have dealt with the history of political ideas of Thomas Hobbes consider him to be the first and most comprehensive modern political thinker who formulated a complete and consistent theory of the social contract. His capital theoretical contribution concerned an attempt to base philosophical positions on the scientific principles of his time. At the time, natural sciences flourished, so he tried to establish his political theory on these results and methodology. True, in a pessimistic manner, but at the same time innovative. His anthropological pessimism will manifest entirely, extending the legacy initi-

ated by Niccolò Machiavelli. Like Machiavelli, Hobbes separated politics from ethics, holding it is of no help; on the contrary, it can only get in the way because the field of politics is activated and regulated by our instinctual being. "He therefore excludes free will as a factor and reduces all human actions to the drive of fear, that is, the drive for self-preservation or avoiding violent death. When all motivations dwindle to an instinct drive, the human realm becomes susceptible to straightforward observation and measurement, akin to other phenomena in Galileo's physics. In such anthropology, man is "a being who only follows the urges of his physical and psychological nature, just as an animal follows his instincts" (D. Mićunović, 296). Thomas Hobbes directly and radically criticizes Aristotle by disagreeing with his main anthropological characteristics of man. According to Hobbes, man is not a social being, as Aristotle claims, and especially not a political being, so he does not have the drive of sociability that grounds him socially, but the drive of preservation that is dominant in determining his social behaviour. For Hobbes, there is no difference between people in terms of abilities, as argued by Aristotle (ruling – subjugation). They share inherent equality, primarily influenced by the instinctive aspect of their beings, guiding them toward social conduct with the ultimate aim of preservation, namely, self-preservation. That is the reason Hobbes makes a very sharp distinction between the so-called natural state and civil life. "Man's natural state is a life of worry, scarcity and fear, and civil life is born only with the creation of the state." Hobbes' departure from Aristotle's theory is that the state of nature

precedes the creation of the state and civil society” (ibid., 298).

In addition to the instinctive part of the human being, according to Hobbes, his common sense also participates in the social behaviour of man, which is a type of corrective factor by whose action man creates civil society, that is, the state (political community). He engages in this behaviour guided by the principles of common sense, driven by the imperative to shield himself from the potential harm emanating from the state of nature. In exercising prudence, he constructs the state as a manifestation of his foresight, envisioning it as the guardian and defender of life and its associated qualities. By creating a political community-state, as the best result of civil society, man makes that crucial effort to protect his threatened existence stemming from the state of nature. The political state is the force that protects it from the war of all against all (*Bellum omnium contra omnes*). “Hobbes bases the construction of the state on the social contract. Only social contract ensures social peace that consists in the agreement of each one with each other, as if each would say to the other: I authorize this man or this group of people to rule me and transfer to him my right to do it myself, on the condition that you also transfer your right to him and approve all his actions in the same way. In this way, multitudes of people are united in one personality called the state or, as Hobbes calls it, Leviathan (monster)” (ibid., 302).

Baruch Spinoza is one of the early theorists of democracy in the new century. For him, citizens' right to autonomously determine the form of government they

deem legitimate is a manifestation of freedom. In all appearances, a modern democratic theory that emerged from his political philosophy continues to serve as a source of inspiration, offering a recourse when the substance of democratic governance starts to diminish. Spinoza was a “prisoner” of the advanced science of his time and the inheritor of natural scientific methods and geometric deductive logic. Hence, he asserts that the entirety of the current environment is either God, nature, or *Deus sine natura*. That philosophical pantheism is a consistent explanation of the scientific knowledge of that time. In his Theological-Political Treatise, Spinoza consistently says that natural laws are the basis of man's social being, not only his drive towards self-preservation. Like his predecessors, he distinguishes the state of nature from the civil state. In the state of nature, private property does not exist because “in nature, there is nothing that is mine or yours.” Within the civil state, all interpersonal relationships, including ownership, are governed by the state. That is why, for Spinoza, the state is an “eternal” category “because human nature is immutable, and the state should be in harmony with human nature” (ibid.: 308). The same applies to society and its purpose of communication between people. Therefore, society has a more communicative function, and the state has a juridical-political function, that is its essence. “Spinoza sees the limitation of state power in the inalienable natural rights of man and the inalienable rights of peoples. Spinoza concludes that the paramount law governing the divine and human realms must be the common good, representing the people's interests.” (ibid.: 308). Therefore, Spinoza bases his choice for a

democratic form of government on the following natural-law position: "I chose to talk about democratic government more than others because it seems the most natural, and the closest to the freedom that nature gives to everyone, in it each does not transfer his natural right to another but to the majority of the entire society of which he is a member. On this basis, everyone remains equal, as they were before in the state of nature" (ibid., 309). Spinoza's democratic theory represents the highest expression of human freedom up to that time, shown clearly and directly. For him, the state is the guarantor of man's inalienable rights. Its legal and political order creates the basis for the "unbreakable bond of equality and freedom". In contrast to Hobbes, Spinoza believes that the state does not arise from man's fear of survival and bare existence preservation but as an expression of a higher form of organization whose purpose is to achieve and preserve man's freedom and security. "The purpose of the state is not to rule over people, but their freedom. The state was created not to keep man subordinate to anyone through fear but to free him from fear." He writes inspiredly about it: "The purpose of the state is not to transfer people from the state of rational beings to the state of stupid animals and automatons, but that they, freed from fear, do their jobs, to be beings without hatred, without anger and treachery, to tolerate each other without malice. The ultimate purpose of the state is freedom" (ibid., 311). Spinoza established the principles of democratic governance, which would face risks centuries later as the freedom of individuals becomes endangered through the manipulation of fear by those in power, facilitated by government institutions



and media systems. This manipulation could contribute to the erosion of democratic values, ultimately leading to the decline of individuals' existence as engaged citizens.

#### **4.2. Liberalism as an Ideological Pillar in the Modern Civil Order**

As we see from the previous, the new-century civic understanding of politics radically differs from the medieval one. Three main concepts constitute it – public, privacy and ownership (property). These three fundamental postulates, expressed in diverse conceptual-ideological derivatives, construct a political framework for the new century. Of course, the common denominators of this basic triad are the interests and the individual perception of the civil world of politics, society and the economy on which they rest. Some Western theorists also called this possessive individualism (or possessive idealism) in the desire to mark its dominant essence and determination. John Locke identified the right to property as the predominant feature of the individual, subsequently becoming the cornerstone of citizenship and the liberal order itself. “It was a citizen-bourgeois, whose characteristic is possessive individualism, as Macpherson called it, in his famous work of the same name. Civil society emerged, guided by the merchant class, shouldering the historical mission of overthrowing the millennial rule of the nobility and clergy, which lasted in a feudal political form, as the third estate. John Locke's social theory is a political program of emerging social forces” (D. Mićunović,

323). “It was a citizen-bourgeois, whose characteristic is possessive individualism, as Macpherson called it, in his famous work of the same name. Civil society emerged, guided by the merchant class, shouldering the historical mission of overthrowing the millennial rule of the nobility and clergy, which lasted in a feudal political form, as the third estate. John Locke's social theory is a political program of emerging social forces” (D. Mićunović, 323).

Academician Lj. Tadić asserts, “Civil society is an overarching emphasis on privacy, encompassing private interests, individual needs, and their fulfilment – specifically, tangible movable private property and individual rights. Simultaneously, we observe the separation or abstraction of the public from privacy and the division of the civil sphere into society and the state. Within the state, the public transforms into an autonomous entity, assuming the role of public authority that does not necessarily align with the general populace.”(Lj. Tadić, 29).

The civil (liberal) political order conducts division into state and society. Growing citizenry did this final structural, institutional and functional change. While in antiquity and the Middle Ages, they were almost united, i.e. insufficiently differentiated entities, the citizenry as the dominant social stratum will insist on this distinction, defending society as a bastion of its autonomy and the foundation of political freedom. Simultaneously, they saw the state as a functional guarantor of the legal order and won political freedoms. Social stratum Karl Marx designated as a class, thus emphasizing the class character of the civil order based on the pre-

dominance of private ownership and ownership of the means of production.

“John Locke, as the leading ideologist of liberalism, in his famous work *Two Treatises on Government* (1689) will state a clear position that becomes his basic postulate, but also the basis of every democratically organized society: Power can be transferred to a specific person or group of people only by contract, and not by God's announcement or anointing” (D. Proković, 2018: 68). This denies the prevailing medieval perspective asserting that all authority originates from God, suggesting that those in power, being God's chosen representatives, are immune to being elected, altered, or replaced by the citizens. Before that moment, any defiance against such a divine order was sacrilegious and met with ruthless punishment. Lock criticizes and disputes the views of Robert Filmer, who justifies the so-called divine right of kings, proving that the Bible gives no arguments of that kind. Locke noticed that even according to the Bible, God did not single out any man as a master over other people. He contrasts the modern political theory, which finds its foothold in natural law and individual freedom of man as an individual (citizen). Freedom transforms into the right to choose the form of government and its political character based on the so-called right of the people. “He believes that state authority is not absolute and that an individual does not renounce all their rights, because there are always natural ones which are inalienable. Later liberal theories of society relied on Locke's political theory, developing ideas about representative democracy and referring to Locke's notion of consensus

as a condition for recognizing a government as legitimate” (D. Mićunović, 323).

Precisely because of this, the foundations of Locke's democratic order of government rest on the following so-called secular, i.e. natural law principles and the theory of the social contract, which served as the basis for the construction of legitimate government:

- Political power is of secular origin and rests on the agreement of people as members of the political community;
- The legal and political order serve human well-being and correspond to the rational principles of the mind;
- Every governing authority must acknowledge and uphold the inherent, natural rights of every human being;
- People's natural rights are independent of the state; the state serves merely as their guarantor and protector.

Liberalism, therefore, is the main ideological framework for those principles developing. The essence of liberal values was codified in the Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen of the French Bourgeois Revolution from 1789. As does the attitude that “the principles of all sovereignty are found only in the people. No one, no person can exercise authority that does not come from the people”. All these values and principles are unequivocally highlighted in the Declaration of Independence of the USA from 1776, “The people create states and organize a just government”, and if any “government is harmful, they can replace it, abolish it

and establish a new state” (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 2012: 51). We consider the following truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that their creator has given them certain inalienable rights, that these rights include life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that these rights guaranteed by establishing governments that derive their legitimate power from the consent of the governed, then that it is the right of the people to change the government they are not satisfied with and that they have the right to install a new government (D. Mućinović, 323).

The modern understanding of politics, therefore, kept that basic civic mood and determination, adding to it new meaning frames that moved in the direction of legal cataloguing of the so-called five generations of human rights and freedoms (political rights, social rights, cultural rights, environmental rights and collective rights), further development of the concept of the legal state and the rule of law, expanding the autonomy of civil society (defensive and offensive functions), strengthening the legitimate basis of the democratic order, i.e. re-legitimization of government, re-sovereignization of the citizen as the foundation of every democratic government, effective control of the concentrated field of political power, strengthening of the institutional capacities of the political system, and functional representation.

On the margins of the marked democratic processes, over time emerged tendencies of alienation of political power, increasing dominance of political elites, dislocation of decision-making centers outside the institutional framework of democratically elected gov-

ernment, dedemocratization of the entire political system, strengthening of the role of the so-called deep states, abuse of power, strengthening of transnational and corporate structures, increasing dominance of non-state actors, especially the so-called of the non-governmental sector, challenging the free operation of the media, strengthening the power of financial elites and their malignant influence on state institutions, an increase in pathology related to the activities of political parties (malignant alteration, fatty degeneration, habitualization, etc.), de-sovereignation of the state and many other pathological phenomena that will in to a large extent to question the democratic order and challenge its legitimacy, especially dangerous in the phase of the neoliberal attack on the democratic order and its values. The upcoming chapters of the book offer additional insight into those tendencies.

### III EMERGENCE AND DISCIPLINARY DETERMINATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

The formal introduction of the term “political science” in 1880 by Herbert Baxter Adams, a history professor at Johns Hopkins University in the USA, allows us to trace the conceptual origins of this field to that period. Dragan Simeunović, on the other hand, presents a slightly divergent historical perspective. He underscores the establishment of political science as a discipline and shifts the commencement of political studies as a university practice to the early seventeenth century. The formal study of politics occurred at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands in 1613, followed by the Department of Political Studies at Uppsala University in Sweden in 1622 and Politics and History in 1640 at the Abu Academy (today's Finland). The Catholic University in Dublin, Great Britain, established the first academic Department of Social and Political Sciences in 1855. As an academic discipline, it rapidly and successfully developed in the 19th century in the USA. In 1857, Columbia University instituted the first political science professorship in the USA, followed by the first Political Science Department in 1868 at Cornell Uni-

versity. The American Academy of Political Science was founded in 1880, marking another milestone in the discipline's growth. France saw the establishment of the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* in 1872, and later, the prominent London School of Economics and Political Science began operating in England. In Germany, only after the First World War was the High School for Politics founded in Berlin, and then in Spain the Institute for Political Studies in Madrid” (D. Simeunović, 2009: 20). In Serbia, the first College of Political Sciences was founded in Belgrade in 1960, from which the Faculty of Political Sciences grew a little later, and in 1968 the Institute for Political Studies, as a scientific institution for the study of political sciences.

The field of political science, nestled within the broader realm of social sciences, gradually gained autonomy, tracing its roots back to ancient times and the initial endeavours to comprehend the intricacies of politics, define its essence, and understand the undeniable political nature of humanity. However, a more substantial institutional ascent commenced in the nineteenth century, coinciding with the initial forms of liberal order and democracy. This period also witnessed the ascendance of science, including social sciences, which, in terms of rigour and verifiability, began to parallel the expertise of natural sciences and their swiftly revealed scientific regularities. The decisive development of political science took place after the Second World War and the first attempts to systematically study and approach the institutional and contextual functioning of modern political systems, that is, the contemporary political order.



According to Professor Radivoj Stepanov, political science operates independently within social sciences. (In Russian: политология; in English: political science; in German: politikwissenschaft; in French: la science politique) “It deals with the philosophy, theory and practice of politics, the analysis and description of political systems, and the forms, actions and relations of homo politicus in the political community. Contemporary political science covers numerous issues of social reality. Fields and subfields of political science include political theory and philosophy, political systems, political ideologies, psephology (the science that studies election and electoral behaviour), political economy, geopolitics and political geography, studies of the principles of politics, comparative politics, national systems, political analysis of different state systems, supranational politics and politics between different governments, globalization, regionalization, political development, multi-ethnic and multicultural relations, international relations, international law, international politics, foreign policy analysis, peace analysis, conflict analysis, public administration analysis, political and constitutional order (of individual countries), public administration and state organization, political and legal institutions.” (R. Stepanov, 2008: 19). As can be seen, the subject, disciplinary and methodological division is scattered, as well as numerous theoretical and explanatory approaches to the study and determination of political phenomenology and its essence.

Academician Lj. Tadić also highlights the theoretical and objective disunity within the field of political science, along with terminological incompleteness.

This imprecision, to some extent, persists in segmentary even today. “Under the name “political science”, various contents are often hidden: scientific politics, science of politics, political science. They denote not only a different understanding of the essence of political science and its scientific goal but also a different understanding of politics itself.” For example, professor Tadić rightly points to the misnomer of political science, domesticated mainly in the western regions of the former SFRY or those scientific circles that Croatianized their linguistic and conceptual practice. “The name *politologija* (Serbian, Latin Serbian) is an artificial linguistic creation made without knowledge of Greek language rules” (Lj. Tadić, 1988: 45).

Andrew Haywood, a contemporary political theorist, also confirms that the development of political science took place after the Second World War, and its accelerated constitution as a science took place in the 19th century. In the 1870s, political science courses were incorporated into the curriculum at Oxford, Columbia, and Paris universities. Subsequently, in 1906, the American Review of Political Science was established. The fervour for political science peaked in the 1950s, particularly in the USA, marked by the rise of political analysis heavily rooted in behaviourism. (A. Heywood, 2004: 32).

As an autonomous discipline within the broader field of social sciences, political science is inherently shaped and influenced by various social definitions and conditions. It examines those human activities and institutions that relate to the exercise of power, complex power relations, and consensus or conflict in the distri-

bution of natural and social resources and deals with the philosophy, theory and practice of politics, the analysis and description of political systems, and the forms, actions and relationships of homo politicians in the political community.

## **1. Political Theory**

Even in contemporary political science literature, a tendency persists to conflate or confuse political science with political theory. This confusion stems from the authors's misrepresentation and misapprehension of the broader methodological and objective underpinnings of science, encompassing the field of politics. Additionally, the incomplete disciplinary framework within political science contributes to this issue. A further complication of this problem is the complexity of the subject under investigation, which delves into the intricate essence of politics and politically phenomena.

Political theory encompasses cognitive thought processes, a foundational structure, and a unified set of specific concepts for comprehending particular causes or phenomena. In scientific methodology, A. Heywood elucidates that scientific models often serve as theoretical abstractions of empirical data, simplifying real-life forms to facilitate understanding and research. Scientific theories, in turn, offer a systematic explanation of empirical facts, enabling a clearer understanding of the surrounding reality. The reliability of scientific knowledge is consistently perceived through a theoretical-explanatory framework, viewing scientific theories as

systematic thought units providing a cohesive explanation, classification, and interpretation of the political world.

“In contemporary political science, three fundamental 'starting points' of political theories exist: normative political theories, empirical-analytical theories, and dialectical-critical theories” (R. Stepanov, 21).

Classical normative political theories, divided into classical and contemporary categories, have historically concentrated on the normative aspect, defining the value framework of political reality around values (norms) representing the good of the community and free citizens (such as the good life, freedom, and virtue). It is essential to highlight an often-overlooked triad of concepts related to the axiological aspect of our communal existence, which, though coded differently through the ages, consistently maintains its triadic conceptual structure. Whether manifested in customary law, religious norms, or positive law, the emphasis invariably centred on the triadic order: values – norms – sanctions. Consequently, the values protected by the normative order precede the norms, and sanctions follow as consequences for unacceptable behaviour that violates them, thus endangering the rudimentary values of the community. Contemporary normative theories serve the same function, now situated within a different value system standardized and sanctioned by the prevailing spirit of their time, predominantly anchored in democratic ideals and principles of free order.

Empirical-analytic theories are grounded in a neo-positivist logic that conceptually distinguishes between “value judgments” and “fact judgments”, acknowledg-

ing only fact judgments as scientific. They are still called deductive-empirical or empirical-generalizing in the methodological literature of social sciences. They form their judgments and scientific statements about politics exclusively on the analysis and research of empirical material, using above all methods of deduction and generalization, and generalize the results of their research. In Western scientific circles, this kind of theoretical research prevails as the only scientifically valid approach, distinguishing itself from others regarded as pseudo-scientific. The great French historian Fernand Braudel criticizes this approach, pointing out that empirical research without the mediation of a long-term process is just ordinary event dust with which we cannot discover the deep historical currents that determine their meaning and character.

Dialectical-critical theories, in their approach to political research, typically start from historical analyses of specific societies or epochs, emphasizing a critical relationship in the desire to penetrate the deep layers that determine and define them. They underscore the role of political ideologies that reshape social reality in line with their ideological postulates, constructing a certain totality of social-class relations. Often originating from Marxist-inspired segments of economic science, these theories continue the methodical critique of the “social base and superstructure” built on such relationships. Marx's critiquing capitalism as a mode of production and consumption based on the class conflict of labour and capital influences this theoretical approach to politics. Dialectic appears here also as a methodical procedure, not just as a philosophical postulate

about the struggle of opposites, in which revolutionary overcoming of the capitalist relationship as socially unacceptable resolves accumulated social conflicts.

## **2. Political Philosophy**

On this disciplinary level, we understand political philosophy in an Aristotelian manner as a practical mental activity intended to cultivate human virtues. And precisely in this capacity, it is the highest science, that is, to educate man for virtue. Political philosophy deals with “fundamental issues of politics, state, government, law, power, peace, just society, using primarily the normative-ontological method. The most common topics of political philosophy are the concept and essence of politics and the political phenomena, the state, forms of government, the sense of civilization and the need for human rights, participation of citizens in political life (society), respect for the principle of tolerance, social justice, the issue of international relations, ensuring peace (R. Stepanov, 22). Essentially, the focus is on determining what aspects should predominantly shape society and politics and how they ought to be. That is why political philosophy, as a disciplinary synthesis of philosophy and politics, primarily uses the normative-ontological method because it deals with the value corpus of politics and society as a political community, the basic norms on which these communities should rest, but also the legal order that protects them through a system of legal regulated sanctions. The ontological part of the methodological procedure concerns

the attempt to understand the being of politics, society and man, without which it is not achievable to build a just and functional political community.

Some theoreticians consider political philosophy a border discipline where philosophy and politics touch, while others reduce it to a “history of political ideas and doctrines”. Professor R. Stepanov treats it as a “critical reflection of political science”, that is, as a philosophical interpretation or reinterpretation of politics in the context of human action as a social and political being. In any case, political philosophy, as a discipline of political science, represents an unavoidable area of synthesis that primarily deals with the axiological and normative political being.

### **3. Political Anthropology**

Political anthropology is interested in the mutual, that is, the reciprocal relationship between human nature and politics, that is, the connection that one has to the other. Human nature affects everything we consider to be man's world, his environment, of which politics is one of the most important. And politics, as a rudimentary human activity, has a feedback effect on human nature, affecting and changing it. “The field of interest of political anthropology includes language patterns in politics, political values such as dignity, phenomenology of betrayal, and lustration. Political anthropology can be oriented both on global and regional or local topics. Close to political anthropology is the anthropology of the state and the anthropology of law” (R. Ste-

panov, 23). In that sense, political anthropology necessarily investigates the genesis, domain, form, content, reach and retroactive effect on human nature.

From the ancient world until today, many political theorists have been interested in human nature, that is, how it affects the character of social relations in a political community. Or the feedback effect of the political community, its values, institutions and rules on human nature. Over time, two almost extreme views on human nature have condensed: anthropological pessimism, whose ardent advocate was Niccolò Machiavelli, and anthropological optimism, advocated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Both perspectives originate from the nature of human beings and how that nature impacts politics, albeit with different starting points and conclusions. Advocates of anthropological pessimism argue that politics (society) only expose the true nature of corrupted human beings without the veneer of social masks. On the other hand, anthropological optimists assert that individuals are inherently good but argue that society or politics corrupts them as they mature and engage in necessary participation.

Therefore, political anthropology, like cultural anthropology, deals primarily with the value dimensions of human behaviour, customs and ways of their manifestation in society. Political anthropology focuses on human states or emotions, such as fear, hatred, insecurity, evil, will to power, and fairness, but also political rituals, festivals and similar forms of established behaviour in politics. Political anthropology, therefore, comprehensively analyzes human nature in correlation with politics and considers aspects of what man is in his



complex being: homo politikus, homo ekonomikus, homo faber, homo religiozus, homo ludens, homo civikus and other similar characteristics of humans as a social and political being.

#### **4. Political Sociology**

Political sociology is a discipline that primarily explores the social conditions and characteristics of political phenomena and processes, with key figures such as M. Weber and M. Ostrogorsky often cited as its founders. Scholars within this discipline emphasize the frequent intersection of political science and sociology in their research. Political sociology aims to illuminate the social backdrop of the political sphere, with its methodological approach primarily directed towards understanding the relationship between society and the state, which serves as the predominant arena for pertinent political processes.

“Contemporary political sociology, also “new political sociology”, closely considers the relationship between personality and political power, the impact of social structure and social inequality on politics, and comparative historical analysis of different systems of government and socio-economic organization to understand the political climate in a society (by comparing and analyzing history and sociological data, political sociology obtains information about political trends and patterns), the influence of non-institutional structures (personalities, non-governmental organizations, movements) on politics and political processes, media influ-

ence on politics, and political culture” (R. Stepanov, 24).

Political sociology investigates the social context of political decision-making and the social conditioning of political parties and elites. It analyses the sociological context of political and social movements and their impact on society, in what relation is political behaviour with social factors, such as economy, social stratification, culture and the linguistic (discursive) dimension of politics, ethnic and religious factors. Political sociology, therefore, investigates the social circumstances of politics through the theoretical matrix of three explanatory frameworks: pluralism theory, elite theory and class theory. Pluralism theory, established by Robert Dahl, views politics as a competitive arena involving various interest groups. Elite politics theory perceives the state as a central institution of power where diverse interests interact, directing numerous affiliated organizational structures. Class theory originates from the Marxist critique of capitalism, focusing on the class power of capital and its bearers, the capitalists. It involves a form of class-social differentiation that addresses who holds power, in whose interest, and how this differentiation influences social stratification and power relations in society. In his work entitled *Political Sociology of Contemporary Society*, Zoran Stojilković defines political sociology as its methodical and analytical application to social and political phenomena. According to him, it is an approach that closely appraises the logic and dynamics of the development of political processes and institutions, as well as the actions of political actors. He elucidates and situ-

ates this cluster of issues and topics within the broader social, economic, and political processes domain. “At the same time, unlike the sociology of politics, which exclusively focuses on the influence of social structuring on political processes, political sociology and political sociologists equally focused the field of analysis on the return impact of political decisions on the (re)shaping of the social structure” (Z. Stojiljković, 2014: 15)

## **5. Political Systems**

Political systems study and compare individual political systems of government and their institutional arrangement. This discipline is interested in the classification and typology of political systems, researches their origin and development, and explores capacities of democracy or authoritarianism and the dominant patterns of political culture. In addition to the historical part, i.e. their development component, political systems pay special attention to the vertical and horizontal organization of power, the constitutional and legal structure of the political order, the type of government organization (parliamentary, presidential, semi-presidential and parliamentary system of government), electoral and party systems, forms of political and social participation, the structure of the legislative authority and local self-government, and the development of civil society.

“The science of political systems relies on the methods of political science, primarily the political sci-

ence method and the comparative method, to the extent that this method can compensate for the limitations in the application of others. It is precisely why studies and analyses of political systems can be twofold. They include the analysis of one or more political systems without a comparative approach, and on the other hand, analyses of political systems with an emphasized comparative approach” (R. Stepanov, 25).

## 6. Political Ethics

Political ethics is a combined political and philosophical discipline that investigates and analyzes the moral aspects of politics. The object is specific human action in politics manifested through individual, moral and ethical content and behaviour, as well as the essential meaning of such action for man in his political community. “One of the many examples in everyday political life involves ethical dilemmas apparent in the approaches of political leaders and parties toward migration. Instead of genuinely addressing and resolving the migration issue, some may exploit it for political gains and the acquisition of power within their respective countries. It often involves adopting an extreme stance, leading to heightened tensions and escalating conflicts.” (N. Vukčević, 2023: 150).

As a primarily philosophical discipline, it deals with what is moral and goodness and how it consequently relates to politics, i.e. how morally grounded and ethically based politics itself is, given that it is in positions of power and authority, and that is recognized

in reality as crypto-politics, i.e. as a darkened space full of conspiracy content.

Consequently, political ethics consider axiological, i.e. virtuous aspects of human action, as well as discussions on valid issues of peace, freedom, happiness, justice, and the common good. It questions the deontological aspects of politics and good governance. “Political ethics deals methodically and systematically with what is morally good and what is *Gelebeten ethos*<sup>2</sup>. It is not a question of politicized ethics, ethics that serve politics, but the question of whether and in what way ethical principles apply in politics” (ibid.: 26).

## 7. World Politics

While the term “world politics” is frequently employed in international relations literature, for the specificity of delineating the political science discipline, we choose to use the term “contemporary international relations (CIR).” Accepting this terminology encompasses various crucial dimensions explored and defined by this relatively recent scientific discipline within political science.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “Gelebeten ethos” (Deutsch) does not appear to be a widely recognized term in English or commonly used in academic or general discourse. From Aristotle, ethos doesn't refer primarily to the physical place of living but rather to the manner of living shaped by our habits. Hence, “Gelebeten ethos” might be translated as a lived ethos, signifying an ethos that influences society from our mental or spiritual interior.

Primarily, it focuses on researching the modern era of international relations in the past century, a period believed to mark the emergence of this field as an independent discipline within political science. While the methodological aspect delves into research extending to the historical roots of international relations, particularly their political history, this discipline undertakes such exploration due to the need to analyze their dynamics. The greater the precision, the more effectively the scientific description serves as a foundation for new knowledge and an endeavour to identify potential patterns of state behaviour in international relations. Subsequent efforts aim to establish typologies and ascertain causality, all in pursuit of better and more accurate anticipation of the future behaviour of actors in international relations. The necessity for contemporary politics lies in the imperative that its actions align with the most certain trends of future development in what we refer to as global society over the past few decades.

Secondly, as a relatively recent scientific discipline, Contemporary International Relations (CIR) explores not exclusively the political dimensions of international relations but also encompasses other facets such as economic, financial, cultural, military, scientific and technological, security, communication, ecological, and humanitarian aspects. Therefore, in our opinion, it is unnecessary to narrow down its primary determination and name only to political aspects, no matter how precisely they are the overall expression of the multidimensionality of contemporary reality.

Third, the number of international actors or the so-called subjects of contemporary international relations

has multiplied to such an extent that a scientific discipline such as CIR must comprehensively investigate and express them in its scientific syntheses. Through this methodological approach, it becomes possible to offer high-quality scientific knowledge regarding the complexity and interdependence of the world in which we live and work in a professionally relevant manner. Then, no less important, most of the scientific theories and doctrines with which we interpret international relations are modern and try to prove their theoretical relevance and explicativeness in the interpretation of the current dimensions of complex phenomenology, which we label as contemporary international relations even when their meaning sublimations extend to some eras or periods of history that have long passed, and all to provide themselves with a universalist character in a reversible way.

Therefore, CIR as a scientific discipline on international relations has a pronounced temporal dimension because it is objectively focused on the synchronic aspects of international relations seen in the interaction of the subjects of international politics, even when we refer to diachronic insights from the political history of world politics. The periodic contemplation of significant historical events serves a crucial purpose: to extract lessons and identify potential patterns. Such insights contribute to an enhanced comprehension of the present and enable better anticipation of the future in international relations.

After a detailed analysis of theoretical-methodological issues and the subject specificities of CIR as a scientific discipline, professors Vojin Dimitrijević and

Radoslav Stojanović conclude “that the science of international relations studies the basic facts of relations between political, territorial, complete states – those that are states today – the degree and form of interdependence between them, the factors that influence them and the objective and subjective processes in the movement of international relations and the organization of the form of these relations, to discover the laws that determine them” (V. Dimitrijević; R. Stojanović, 1988: 22).

Professor Radovan Vukadinović, under the name of international political relations, offers a simplified but disciplinary plausible definition of CIR, whose scientific task is to find and penetrate the dynamics of the world political movement and mark in it “those basic categories, laws and tendencies that determine that development”, as and to determine “the fundamental elements for realization of this progress” (R. Vukadinović, 16). He then cites several notable authors who have attempted to give a closer object specificity to CIR as a scientific discipline. For example, S. Hoffman believes that the primary goal of Comparative International Relations (CIR) is to analyze the factors shaping foreign policies and the governance of the major entities that constitute the global landscape. According to F. S. Duna, international relations deal with the activities of autonomous political groups in the world, where there is no concentration of power in one place. D. Vital, on the other hand, insists on understanding the positions of governments in creating the foreign policy of their countries and the process of making foreign policy decisions. L. Lederman adopts an approach focused on



examining intricate phenomena within international life, encompassing religious, spiritual, social, economic, and political aspects. This approach delves into the fabric of international practice, exploring the ideological, ideational, and doctrinal foundations underlying these relations. Additionally, Lederman's perspective encompasses an analysis of the rules, mechanisms, and institutions that serve as regulators within the international community.

G. Schwarzenberger focuses on the evolution and structure of international society, its actors, behavioural models, and driving forces, i.e. interests and motives, as well as problems related to international planning. Finally, summarizing, R. Vukadinović characterizes the study of international relations as a scientific pursuit centred on interstate relations, interactions among diverse international actors, the examination of factors shaping their collective behaviour, and the exploration of causality in the conduct and actions of entities within such political system. (R. Vukadinović, 52).

Vladimir Prvulović sees the primary task and role of contemporary international relations as a scientific discipline in the function of analyzing and interpreting international relations through the dynamics of communication and cooperation between states and other international entities (V. Prvulović, 2008: 66). The main international subjects are, in addition to states, intergovernmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations (especially those of a global character, financed by private foundations), regional organizations, as well as significant individuals or groups of intellectuals (think tanks). CIR, therefore,

studies these relationships well and determines possible regularities, tendencies, and causality so that on the acquired knowledge, it can predict future directions of development in the global international community.

This brief examination of the disciplinary and subject definition of Comparative International Relations (CIR) as a scientific discipline underscores a clear perspective. It highlights that contemporary international relations is a relatively recent scientific discipline and acknowledges a comprehensive awareness of its theoretical and methodological limitations. This discipline is limited not only because of the shortcomings and imperfections of its methodology and thinking matrices but primarily because of the complexity and ambiguity of international relations themselves, which, with their dynamics and mimicry, further complicate the work of their researchers. As mentioned, the standpoint emerges that the primary theoretical objective of Comparative International Relations (CIR) as a scientific discipline is to provide an accurate scientific description. After that, in the phases of the research, there is a need to supplement this with a conceptual refinement and specification of their meanings. Furthermore, this involves establishing dependable classifications and typologies for international associations and identifying specific behavioural patterns prevalent in the interactions among international entities. It also entails constructing theoretical-explanatory frameworks to interpret these patterns and, ultimately, facilitating the anticipation of potential future development trajectories within the global international community. (Lj. Despotović; V. Glishin, 18).

## **8. Globalism as an Ideology of the New World Order**

Globalism is the ideology underpinning the emerging world order, a concept enforced through the often harsh mechanisms of globalization. Alexander Dugin, a renowned Russian geopolitician and architect of the new Eurasianism testifies (articulating the current Russian geopolitical doctrine): “Globalism is an anti-human ideology, directed against humanity, which strives to free man from any collective identity – from religion, culture, people, and even from gender, and tomorrow also from belonging to the human race, which is what posthumanists and supporters of artificial intelligence strive for. Under the guise of freedom and democracy, liberals seek to establish a new dictatorship of technocracy and political correctness. That is why globalists change history according to their interest by determining who was the victim of history and who was the executioner. Culture, history, science is the field of modern battle, sometimes more atrocious than direct military conflicts”.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously, Dugin emphatically highlights the heightened conflicts persisting within the network society, manifested through what he terms as “network wars” occurring in cyberspace. The central aim of these conflicts, as asserted, is to dismantle the collective identity of a nation. On the scene is an intense process of recoding the value code of the atom-

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<sup>3</sup> Aleksandar Dugin “Geopolitics is the destiny of Serbia”; interview on the Iskra portal; online edition; February 26, 2021.

ized and alienated individuals who should become the predominant mass of humanoids in what remains of society after this malignant phase of the struggle for their souls.

Academician Mihajlo Marković argues that this is the true ideology of globalism, explicitly emphasizes the aim of globalism, that is, “the exertion of control over the world economy, politics, and culture by the governments and multinational corporations of the USA and its allied nations. About the propaganda mask of world integration that should mask globalism as an ideological and retrograde concept of the struggle for world domination” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 2019: 233). It is about an ideology that appears through soft totalitarianism disguised through globalization as a desirable framework for the emergence of liberalism and facade democracy. Furthermore, the ultimate objective is a new world order achieved by transforming human rights and freedoms into an ideological instrument.

So, in a theoretical sense, it is about a triad of concepts: globalism, expressed in the form of ideology; globalization as a process of imposing globalism as an ideology; and the new world order, presented in the form of one world government offered to the rest of the world as a saving alternative in the allegedly chaotic order of contemporary international relations (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 158). Hence, we are discussing a form of destructive geopolitics wherein the mechanism of “colored revolutions” and “democratic changes” is employed to shape public opinion. The objective is to generate preconceived images and stereotypes that, once adopted, guide prepared masses toward the dis-

mantling of national state structures, the erosion of institutions, the disintegration of their own identity, and other objectives aligned with a destructive agenda (Lj. Despotović, 2015: 63). Everything starts with “innocent” intellectual games in which the meaning of the traditional notions of nation, state, family, patriotism, religion, and gender are rearranged and re-evaluated in public discourse. Those who think differently and uphold tradition and a universal value system face ridicule. Ridicule and mock ensue when small nations attempt to preserve their national identity and state sovereignty by nurturing the feeling and form of the patriotic spirit. The flood of new content via global communication channels inundates and narcotizes public opinion with narratives of democratization. In this encoded manner, they direct their destructive energy towards dismantling everything traditional and existing. None of the content carriers is conscious that they have become tools in the interests of hidden centres orchestrating a redefined global hegemony. “The human need to resist the system is stifled in every way, so the media spread messages that assure users that everything is fine” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 2019: 235), “and the new reality offered by the advocates of globalism is what the citizens need” (M. Đorić, 17). According to them, the old order is backward and dysfunctional, and resisting the future that has supposedly already arrived is stupid, unnecessary, and even harmful to the interests of the citizens.

## 9. Geopolitics

In addition to political dimensions, geopolitics unites several other sciences and academic disciplines, such as geography (political and economic geography), sociology, cultural studies, military strategy, historiography, defence studies, demography, and communication studies. Geopolitics originates from the premise that politics is motivated by spatial and territorial considerations, emerging from the symbiotic relationship between the political actions of a state and the geographical space in which that state exists.

Geopolitics emphasizes the importance of space as a factor for the maintenance and expansion of political communities. He especially emphasizes the importance of the so-called natural-geographical and social-geographical factors in cooperation with political factors in defining geopolitics as a form of the political behavior of states in a given spatial environment. Milomir Stepić defines geopolitics as a science that synthesizes the interdependence of geographical location, natural resources, and political phenomena, examining specific goals and interests of the state and various military, political and economic alliances and non-state actors. It represents a rational methodological and disciplinary mixture of geography, political science and history, primarily to reveal the behavior of geopolitical subjects in spatial scope. It discloses their goals, interests, plans and narratives, which are sometimes clearly visible or hidden and must be indirectly decoded from their international behavior and geopolitical discourses (M. Stepić, 2016: 19).

Geopolitics is a relatively young science, created at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when the Swede Rudolf Kjellen first employed it. It emerged in a divided world between three great empires to provide a new understanding of political reality. Disciplinary complexity, theoretical multidimensionality and political functionality are prerequisites characterizing geopolitics aiming for objective understanding and interpretation of international relations. In other words, geopolitics is the key to understanding international relations. Therefore, geopolitics is a “complex science that deals with pattern-consequential connections between the geographical and the political. On one hand, it synthesizes and analyzes cause-and-effect relationships between physical-geographical and socio-geographical factors. On the other hand, it encompasses political action, political and international relations, and political organizations and processes. Geopolitics enables a combined approach to the subject of research, deals with concrete and abstract phenomena, and requires skills (*techne*), knowledge (*episteme*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) to purposefully reflect on the concrete goals and interests of states, state and non-state organizations” (Lj. Despotović; V. Glishin, 185).

Geopolitics represents a science bringing together various scientific disciplines, gradually progressing in its theoretical advancements to establish novel disciplinary and sub-disciplinary fields or dimensions. For instance, Applied Geopolitics operates within the theoretical frame of geopolitics, with its primary research objective being the analysis and synthesis of novel insights into how socio-geographical factors, when com-

bined with political (cultural, civilizational, political-ideological, economic, institutional, security) elements, shape the geopolitical conduct of political entities (such as states, ideological alliances, military blocs, parties, and movements) within specific geopolitical contexts. So, how certain political, economic and similar problems arose as part of the geopolitical activities of international entities and how they are solved. Continuing the same methodological trajectory, sub-disciplinary fields within geopolitical phenomenology research are gradually taking shape. These fields primarily focus on specific geopolitical behavior or activity by particular political or social entities. In this regard, we shall enumerate tangible instances of prospective subdisciplines within the domain of geopolitics, namely: the geopolitics of identity, the geopolitics of poverty (as a component of economic geopolitics), the geopolitics of destruction, the geopolitics of the Internet (cyber-geopolitics), and the geopolitics of health within the framework of globalization. Then, the geopolitics of emotions, the geopolitics of television series (D. Moisi, 2012: 2016), the geopolitics of chaos (I. Ramonet).

The ongoing advancement of geopolitics at a disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical level is contingent upon the imperative to investigate emerging challenges that manifest nearly daily, prompting geopolitics. Consequently, as an essential and tangible social science, geopolitics will persistently necessitate aligning its theoretical and methodological frameworks with the significance of novel research challenges. This imperative arises from the diminishing relevance or devalued significance of natural-geographical factors in



contrast to the growing prominence of social-geographical and political-economic processes within the post-modern world.

## **10. Political ecology**

Up to the present, insufficiently constituted as a discipline of political science, especially in Serbia, political ecology began to develop in the mid-1980s thanks to the scientific and pedagogical work of Professor Vukašin Pavlović at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. Within the thematic domains of social movement research, there is a distinct theoretical focus on the ecological movement. This focus centres on the movement's role in shifting societal awareness towards institutional policies and the imperative for environmental protection. This shift is particularly crucial due to the escalating prevalence of pollution and contamination, a consequence of humanity's relentless actions. Globally, disciplinary differentiation started in social ecology, from whose subject, methodological and theoretical discourse, political ecology will gradually develop.

In the preface to the book *Ecological Paradigm – Contributions to the Foundation of Political Ecology*, Professor Radivoj Stepanov writes: “Political ecology, therefore, represents a modern, intelligent effort to include in its subject and methodological register not only etymology, species, movements and measures to protect the human environment, and not only disciplinary which speculatively or theoretically-empirically explore

the relationship between man and his natural-social world but also strive to shed light on visible or hidden, social or state, individual or institutional encroachments on nature, which concern the very ontological structure of human existence” (Lj. Despotović, 2002: 7). That ontological reaching out to the environment began with Modernity and humanity's imperial desire to dominate nature. “The modern perspective on nature was grounded in scientism, mechanism, reductionism, hypothesizing, and instrumentalism. Scientific methodologies fragmented the “whole”, and man's interaction with nature became mediated by segmented and hypothesized representations. In nature, modern man sees not only a mute object of research but the source of his riches and enjoyment. Modern civilization's social, economic, legal, and political structure reflects the objectifying, controlling, and disciplining mindset towards nature. The syncretic notion of progress, understood as the imperative of power over nature, had to be extended to man” (ibid., 17).

Darko Nadić was one of the pioneers in Serbia who systematically shaped political ecology, drawing from pertinent scientific literature to define its subject matter and establish its theoretical framework. “Hence, political ecology examines the impact of politics, political ideologies, political phenomena, political relations, political parties, institutions, and other aspects of political life on society's connection with the environment. It should also analyze how specific and general environmental issues influence and reshape political dynamics. This definition of political ecology, positioned within political science and serving as a political exten-

sion of social ecology, suggests that the various groups of political relations encompass not only economic aspects but also all other relations existing within a society. It underscores the notion that these relations cannot be arbitrarily excluded from the political context. Political ecology establishes a scientific and methodological connection between politics, the environment and the economy, i.e. political ecology is a political science discipline that establishes a connection between the distribution of (political) power and the ideological analysis of socio-ecological relations” (D. Nadić, 2012: 28).

That is why, in further disciplinary and subject specification, Nadić lists five important research tasks, i.e. dimensions. The first dimension concerns the research of specific sectoral policy (environmental policy) and political processes that affect society's relationship to the environment, specified through individual social groups, classes, strata, and movements. The second dimension is ecological awareness as a part of political awareness that questions the relationship between politics and nature. The third dimension focuses on understanding ecology as an activity that critically reviews traditional and conservative attitudes towards nature and the environment. The fourth dimension explores the ideological moments of ecology and appears in two forms: ecologism and environmentalism. The fifth dimension of political ecology deals with the comparative research of political organizations based on environmental protection priorities (*ibid.*, 30).

Thus, political ecology as a political science discipline deals with the research of those specific political

activities in the field of concentrated political power, which primarily concerns nature, that is, the environment as the primary existential human context. Politics (through economics and technology) acts on that environment as a generator of environmental crises and climate change or as its primary protector. The scientific research function of political ecology understood in this way will gain more and more importance over time and become an irreplaceable part of the overall construction of ecological awareness. Recognizing the shift in our connection to the fundamental imperative of maintaining a sustainable environment is crucial for the ongoing survival of our species and living and non-living elements on Earth.

## IV STRUCTURE OF POLITICS Polity, Politics, Policy

Policy structure can be characterized as a multi-layered division within policy analysis, highlighting critical aspects of its operation. This emphasis is contingent upon the particular layer or component of this intricate human activity that we aim to scrutinize, analyze, and investigate. Consequently, we can perceive the structure of politics as a contextual examination encompassing political power, values, needs, interests, goals, and means. It's worth noting that some political scientists incorporate political hope (expectations) into this sequence. That is why we will look at such a complex political structure through the disjointed conceptual triad: polity – politics – policy, which comes to us from the rich political experience of Great Britain and with a clear need to break down the complexity of modern political phenomenology and make it more cognitively comprehensible and methodologically more explicative. “As the English language has become not only the language of politics and business but also of science in the time of globalization, these three terms are gradually becoming an integral part of the political-

scientific vocabulary in a large number of countries around the world” (D. Simeunović, 71)

## 1. Polity

Polity expresses complex institutional aspects of politics, such as constitution, political order, political institutions, political system, political elections, legally protected body of human rights and freedoms, type of political culture, political tradition, state and its political-legal functions. This aspect of politics essentially affects the building of political will and the constitution of the political space in which other aspects or dimensions of politics operate. Politics and Policy consistently operate within this way-defined institutional framework of politics. Therefore, Polity manifests itself in a threefold way:

- 1) Through the constitution that regulates the organization and mutual foundations of state authorities through the so-called horizontal and vertical organization of government.
- 2) Through other systemic laws passed by the state through parliament, which regulate relations in the institutional segment of political power (the government as the holder of executive power, the parliament as the holder of legislative power, the judicial system of government, the electoral system.
- 3) Through a codified body of social norms and customs that, based on a value system, determine the so-called political traffic and political communi-

cation, i.e. prevailing public discourses. The entire structure of these relations is regulated, in fact, by the type of dominant political culture that rules the public space, as well as by established political patterns that define the essence and quality of the relations of a political community. Therefore, “Polity affects the building of political will and the space for the action of other dimensions of politics” (R. Stepanov, 39). Dragan Simeunović defines this term in such a way that its essence focuses on “constitutional arrangement and formal-normative determination of the political order and system of a country” (D. Simeunović, 2009: 70).

## **2. Politics**

Politics encompasses the procedural facets of political affairs, including political interests, conflicts, compromises, legitimacy, and power dynamics. Metaphorically, politics can be a political arena where the public life of political processes unfolds. Within this political arena, there is a collision of diverse political interests and formidable cores of political power vying to assert their perspectives on the entire political community, aligning with their respective interests. In this dimension of politics, influential entities actively endeavour to acquire political legitimacy through compromise-driven actions. It represents the sphere of politics wherein genuine political power is either gained or relinquished, irrespective of the prevailing political

position within government or opposition structures. It constitutes a rigorous political space where the political will of the more potent or adept participants in the political arena prevails, akin to the competitive arenas of ancient Rome.

“The forms and manner of acquiring power, as well as the preservation of power, are significantly important in democratic, i.e. responsive systems, which is why democracy represents a subtle political form of government.” Authoritarian systems reduce politics to the political imperative of a monistic factor that excludes political compromise of various political options and subjects” (R. Stepanov: 40). Simeunović sees the essence of the term Politics as “political processes that indicate the building of will, the expression of will and decision-making, in which the various actors express political power to realize their interests that lead to integration or conflict, therefore, mainly what we usually call politics” (D. Simeunović, 2009: 70).

### **3. Policy**

Policy embodies “normative ideas about the content of politics” or the envisioned nature of politics. It articulates a distinct conception of what public policies ought to be, inherently designed to safeguard and encapsulate the perceived public interest of citizens within the political community. Essentially, policy functions as the *modus operandi* of political actors within the political sphere, a metaphorical political arena. Within this framework, transparent criteria de-



lineate what constitutes good or bad policy – policies that either serve the realization of the public interest of citizens or exhibit malignant pathological deformities.

The political entities involved in policy encompasses citizens, voters, political parties, social movements, various forms of citizen-led civil initiatives, lobby groups or pressure groups. Within this context, the political programs of these entities are characterized as offerings to citizens, presenting a clear plan and program of action should any of the political subjects garner the trust of voters, be it through exercising power or overseeing it via various forms of civil society's protective function.

These political programs essentially comprise a lucid list of political tasks actualized upon receiving citizen support and act as political goals or civic obligations with clearly defined commitments from their endorsers. “Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the terms Politics and Policy because their meanings in life intertwine and merge” (R. Stepanov, 41). Simeunović formulates the term “Policy” by emphasizing the functional domains of politics and the specific decision-making processes within these domains. Examples of such fields include health policy, education policy, social policy, foreign policy, and defence policy, as evident in the nomenclature of the corresponding ministries, differs from society to society” (D. Simeunović, 71). N. Spasojević correlates this term with the term “public policy,” denoting policies adopted as practical programs aimed at realizing the public interest of citizens in specific instances, as articulated by Simeunović. Amid the definitions of this

term, a common thread discernible is that public policies constitute pragmatic approaches to address various issues, varying in scale and ensuring satisfaction within the community and among its members.” (N. Spasojević, 2021: 161).

These three aspects of politics constitute an integral unity in actual political practice. However, they are presented here in a structured manner to facilitate theoretical insights into the fundamental nature, manifestations and conduct thereof. Consequently, we review auxiliary theoretical-conceptual models that enhance comprehension of the three pivotal aspects of appearance and operation. This approach ensures that the integrity of politics is maintained, acknowledging that in practical political life, the separation of these aspects is practically unattainable.

## V FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS IN POLITICS AND POLICY

### 1. State

In the Middle Ages, people articulated the concept of the political entity referred to as the state by various terms. The evolution of the modern state occurred gradually and in distinct phases, wherein medieval manifestations assumed pivotal roles in the crystallization of its contemporary functions. Terminologies such as *societas civilis*, *res publica*, *body politic*, *gute polizei* were instrumental in shaping the trajectory toward the conceptualization of the state. A fundamental characteristic inherent to the state is its sui generis organizational nature, distinguishing it markedly from other societal structures. Notably, individuals find themselves irrevocably affiliated with the state from birth, a status perpetuating throughout their lifetime, even if they subsequently acquire citizenship in another jurisdiction. Unlike voluntary affiliations characteristic of many social organizations, state membership is obligatory and automatic through legal processes accompanying birth. This compulsory nature of state membership un-

derscores its institutionalized role as an intermediary entity, facilitating the harmonization of myriad interests while concurrently championing a universal character – embracing the collective interests of the populace. This dichotomy is reminiscent of Rousseau's conceptualization of the state as an institutionalized mediator, distinguishing the general will from the will of the individual constituents (The general will is concerned with the common good, whereas the will of all prioritizes private interests and merely represents the cumulative total of these conflicting interests).

The state is a permanent institution and a necessary association having control over all other voluntary associations. Only the state has a monopoly on the so-called legitimate use of physical force in conducting laws and regulations that it enacts. The state exercises political power through its institutions and the horizontal and vertical organization of government, serving as the legal and political form for such governance. Therefore, it organizes and regulates the public life and interests of citizens. And it does it through a stable system of most accepted social values and prescribed norms and rules. A. Heywood suggests the definition that “the state is a political association that establishes sovereign jurisdiction within certain territorial boundaries and exercises power through a set of permanent institutions, which are public since they are responsible for the collective organization of community life financed at the expense of the public” (A. Heywood, 2004: 171).

In international relations, the state is the main subject and sovereign body, defined and recognized through permanent population, territory (bounded by

internationally recognized borders), and legal and legitimate authority recognized by other international subjects. Hence, “We posit that an exclusive focus on the nation-state perspective in historical narratives is inherently inadequate. Such an approach neglects the pivotal role of external influences, which decisively shape the development of institutions and processes within the defined confines of the nation-state.” (N. Vukčević, 2020: 455).

Within the framework of numerous polemics about the history and theory of the state, the biggest dilemmas related to the timing of its origin at the end of the Middle Ages, to build the type of political organization that is functionally the forerunner of the modern state as a clearly defined political-legal entity. During the twentieth century, political science interest shifted from the state to other political topics, such as theories of interest groups, research into political behaviour, new polyarchy pluralism, theories of social movements, and civil society.

Nevertheless, the central theoretical debates in the last two decades have once again returned the interest of political scientists to the subject of the state, its position, functions, and the dynamics of changes it faces. Without intending to deal in detail with a retrospective historical section of the doctrinal understanding of the nature and character of the modern state, it is necessary to mention several theoretical positions of political science that are necessary for understanding its direction and evolution in the contemporary post-Westphalian world. In this way, we will briefly cover the theoretical determinations of modern conceptions of statehood.

Niccolò Machiavelli is the inaugural figure in a sequence of political thinkers emerging in the new century. His perspective on the state revolves around its autonomous political authority, neglecting the interplay with the moral and spiritual dimensions of society and its inhabitants. Another significant political thinker in that era was Jean Bodin and his concept of sovereignty as one of the most important properties associated with the state. This series of thinkers includes Thomas Hobbes, who raised the issue of the concept of the security state, which will later, during the modern era, gain more and more importance, as well as John Locke, who laid the foundations of the contemporary constitutionalization of the state and civil society as an inevitable correlate of the state.

Furthermore, we should not forget Jean-Jacques Rousseau and G. V. F. Hegel, whereby the former insisted on the concept of general will and advocacy for direct democracy, and the latter on the mental order of the state, which with its internal logic should overcome all forms of particularity and egoism that exists within civil society (particular altruism of the family, universal egoism of civil society and universal altruism of the state), which historically tends to be realized as an altruistic order of the state, rounded in its legal and political universality. Other significant thinkers are Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Alexis de Tocqueville. Karl Marx made his theoretical contribution by marking the class character of the state and analyzing the dominance of the particular interests of the ruling classes and groups over the entire social life. Max Weber saw the state as a political organization with the character of a

public institution, with bureaucracy as its essential feature and exclusive right to the legitimate use of force. Alexis de Tocqueville nuancedly indicates the importance of the state in at least several political fields: in the theory of democracy, in the theory of civil society and political culture, as well as in the field of transition from the old authoritarian order to the order of a democratic society (V. Pavlović, 2008: 13).

Regardless of which tradition of defining the state and its main features we rely on, a modern political community must be able to fulfil at least three essential functions to be considered a state. The initial function pertains to ensuring both internal and external security, safeguarding public order and the well-being of citizens. The second function involves furnishing an adequate level of legitimate and operational representation, while the third role of the state centres around facilitating economic functionality, specifically ensuring a satisfactory standard of well-being through the redistribution of goods and services to its citizens. To successfully execute these fundamental functions, the state must meet six essential prerequisites:

1. precise territorial determination through one source of sovereignty and legally unlimited power within constitutionally defined territoriality;
2. a transparent and guaranteed set of constitutional principles and rules, as well as a differentiated national identity;
3. guaranteed corpus of uniform rights and freedoms of citizens;

4. direct and unmediated (without other intermediary communities) relationship of citizens with the state and state institutions;
5. a clearly defined corpus of the so-called one nation and majority representation and decision-making;
6. in the case of complex states – equality of federal units (Đ. Stojanović; Ž. Đurić, 2012: 30).

Based on these foundations, the modern state, as conceived in contemporary conditions, has plunged into a profound crisis to a considerable extent. Globalization processes with their consequences (de-sovereignization, deterritorialization, de-industrialization, de-institutionalization, delegitimization, pauperization, destruction of identity) caused a radical threat to the essential role of the state, as well as a reduction of its independence. Characteristics of the classical state become secondary, and its numerous functions begin to die out. The size of the population, the strength of the military force, national morale, national character and ideals that were the main cohesive force of the political organization of the state are also in decline. On the territory of the Westphalian states, a plurality of new, collective entities of different levels and scopes, often of a changed nature, are being created, which are the ideal foundation for further transformations by the force of globalization processes and interests.

Today, nation-states are not the only, and especially not the main, holders of power in the world. Numerous alternative political entities (citizens' associations, non-governmental organizations, international



corporations, political movements – from regional to interstate) are emerging and developing, with their particularities in defining interests (which are fundamentally different from the national interests of states, understood in terms of international security and socio-economic progress) also have specific mechanisms of action to achieve the goals for which they were founded (Lj. Despotović; A. Gajić, 2017: 293).

When discussing the state, it is essential to provide a succinct review of the fundamental theories concerning the state, encompassing its elements, organizations, and functions, basically into classical and modern theories. Classical theories advocate the point of view about the constitutive elements of the state as the minimum condition for it to be called a state. Therefore, they point out that each state must have three elements in its corpus: territory, population (people, citizens) and sovereignty.

In the simplest form, the territory of a state is the territory bounded by the internationally recognized borders of a state on which its authority, that is, sovereignty, extends. It is a clearly defined state area of its sovereign jurisdiction over citizens and territory over which no other state has the right to interfere externally in any meaning. The legal system of a state is the exclusive framework of legal norms that holds sovereign authority for enforcement within its territory, which includes other regulations from international law and other states, but only when the respective state has freely accepted and incorporated them into its legal system by concluding and ratifying international treaties, either bilateral or multilateral agreements, or the

acceptance of international conventions and agreements, whereby those norms become part of the legal order of the state.

The population consist of individuals (citizens) residing within the state's territory and subject to its authority. Consequently, they are responsible for upholding the established legal and political order. Through birth within the state's territory, every individual automatically attains citizenship rights and is duly registered as a citizen, entailing the accrual of associated rights, freedoms, and obligations inherent to such status.

Sovereignty is a term that indicates the essence of every state, and it implies that the state power is supreme from the inside and independent from the outside. Sovereignty has several significant attributes – unlimited, inalienable, non-transferable and indivisible, which implies the understanding that state power is absolute and permanent as long as a state exists.

In Haywood's interpretation of the theoretical views on the state, the following postulates crystallized (A. Heywood, 170):

- The state is sovereign. It exercises absolute and unlimited power above all associations and groups in society.
- State institutions are public, unlike private institutions of civil society.
- The state is an expression of legitimacy. Its decisions are (though not necessarily) accepted as binding on members of society, as they are in the public interest.

- The state is a means of domination. State power is force-supported. It must possess the power to ensure compliance with the law and to punish those who break it.
- The state is a territorial association. Its competence is theoretically determined and includes all those within the state borders, regardless of whether they are its citizens.
- The state is superior to the government. It constitutes a comprehensive association encompassing all public domain institutions and members, namely, the citizens.
- The state is an entity that lasts, one could say, an eternal entity.
- The state exercises impersonal power. Employees in state bodies are hired and trained in a bureaucratic manner.
- The state, at least in theory, represents the unchanging interests of society: the common good and general will.

Contemporary theories of the state, in the temporal sense created in the 20th century, indicate significant segments of the functioning and organization of the state. We will briefly present some of them.

Neoliberal theories of the state arose under the auspices of the so-called New Right as their point of view tries to redefine the function of the state (R. Nozick; S. Hayek and others), all in the discourse of neoliberalism, both in the area of economic and financial paradigms and in the area of politics and political values brutally imposed as ruling political patterns. This doctrinal ori-

entation arose in the sixties of the 20th century and is known as the Chicago school, with a clear intention to change the paradigm of the Keynesian understanding of the state and society embodied in the model of the welfare state. Supporters of the Chicago school try to create a new ideological thread of changes in the sphere of economic-financial relations, favouring the interests of the rich and renouncing all the values of Keynesianism.

Following the implementation of alterations in the economic foundations of production and consumption, the very essence of the state, when examined through its functions, undergoes transformation rather than remaining unaltered. Advocates of the Chicago school perceive the state as a political market characterized by supply and demand dynamics. Conceptually, the state's role as an economic enterprise exclusively orients toward profit maximization, primarily the budget. However, this pursuit of profit is often at the detriment of less affluent citizens, as the interests of wealthy elites persist in being legally, politically, and economically safeguarded. In the doctrinal framework of this theory, it is possible to recognize a clearly expressed liberal triad through which it is easy to see the essence of its demands on the organization of the world of capital, which the state must follow. We are talking about three processes that necessarily followed the transition flows from the Keynesian model of the welfare society in the West or socialist societies in the East to the dominant neoliberal model of organization after the implemented transition. Those are:

1. privatization of everything that can be privatized, including state and social property.

2. there must be the deregulation of regulations when a considerable part of property becomes private because the new legal environment must not only favour large capital owners but must also legally guarantee their unhindered penetration into the vital fabric of the so-called dangerous classes and their further looting.
3. reduction of costs that justify mass layoffs of workers and officials, and their transfer to the harsh labour market and the opening of a new cycle of elementary struggle for existential survival.

Pluralist-neo pluralist theories of the state reduce the state to the government as the bearer of executive authority and its activity – politics – as a chain of reactions to social and political inputs that reach it from the economic, social and political environment. Among the proponents of these theories are R. Dahl and H. Laswell. According to them, the state's executive authorities communicate with leaders of interest groups, considering them as wielders of social power, and negotiate agreements based on shared interests. More direct contact with this type of interest group will lead to their favouring in terms of approval of various types of state privileges, such as concluding business arrangements, obtaining subsidies, and favourable crediting, against other parts of society with which there is no such type of direct communication and agreement.

Neo-Weberian theories of the state, while highlighting the traditional Weberian attributes of state bureaucracy (administration), including features like education, rationality, expertise, and efficiency, emphasize

the notion of a developmental state. This conceptualization is grounded in three pivotal postulates:

1. state autonomy is understood as an essential condition for its impartial role in the redistribution of justice and social goods;
2. development of overall capacities to be effective in that work;
3. strengthening of authority, that is, the ability to serve the needs and interests of the entire society, which is the concentrated form of legitimate power.

The whole theory is the improvement of Weber's understanding of the functions of the state, especially on the principled position that the state is not (must not be) a parasitic organism on the body of society, but on the contrary – that its strength and functional importance is an efficient organizational and rational activity aiming the development of society and the satisfaction of its needs, and not at the government itself and the concentration of illegitimate power of its holders. The state has the function of solving social problems and meeting growing needs, and beyond that, there are not many functions or meanings. Contrary to the neoliberal theory, neo-Weberians believe that the market cannot create favourable conditions for the development of society, but only a rightly understood state can.

Theories of the welfare state express the modern view that the state represents an institutionalized compromise of class agreement in society. This concept aims for maximum social justice, which is a consequence of the so-called class compromise of labour and

capital, whereby both should be satisfied with the essential features of such a compromise. It should provide, in labour, minimum economic conditions that guarantee existential status, the protection of political and trade union rights, the avoidance of mass employment, and the achievement of a rational scope of participation in cultural, educational, health needs and other social interests. At the same time, the interests of capital for profit, as the mechanism of capitalist production and consumption, would not be threatened by anything. At the same time, the neo-Marxist current quite justifiably points to the modern crisis of the legitimacy of the modern capitalist state and the displacement of that crisis from the sphere of economic relations to the space of state institutions and their authorities, which are increasingly placed in the function of protecting the interests of capital, financial monopoly and transnational corporations, intensifying the so-called state interventionism precisely in favour of these subjects. The functionalist current, on the other hand, insists on, according to them, the fundament function of the state, the one that should manage the crises generated by capital and the market. The state should primarily deal with the following tasks: the protection of the established order, the promotion of capitalist accumulation and the production of legitimacy because its functions encroach on the entire complex structure of society. The intention of the state power thus established is hidden but still clearly detected as the intention to organize the ruling class and disorganize the subordinate class using tried and tested means of social manipulation, such as education, religion, and media.

Within its theoretical framework, the neo-corporatist theory of the state advocates for the involvement of economic actors organized into diverse forms of corporate representation. By reciprocal dialogue and the state serving as a mediator, these actors aim to reach a consensus on a model of social agreement perceived as the optimal form of social compromise. It is about three political and economic partners: employers as the representatives of capital, trade unions as the representatives from the sphere of work, and the state as a mediator through the government. So, an example of the form of tripartite corporatism. Within this theory, we recognize two forms of corporatism – state and social.

State corporatism arises mainly in economically and politically underdeveloped societies in which the state incorporates the institutions of civil society and uses them as instruments to achieve its dominance. We are referring to a political structure wherein civil society is in a nascent stage of development, and its endeavours cannot effectively engage with the formidable realm of political power entrenched within.

As a rule, social corporatism arises in developed societies in which the state order with its characteristic interventionism and the parallel order of civil society with interest groups parallelly create a systemic counterbalance to the institutions of state power. Such an order can achieve a certain balance and produce the cooperation of both orders much more than their conflicts or the dominance of the state as a field of concentrated political power that sometimes acts through the institutional order and often beyond it.



Corporatism, interpreted in this manner, is in the active position of civic groups and initiatives (corporations) creating political relations in society. It is a process carried out through cooperation with an increasingly powerful state. The main goal of both is to increase the manageability of the entire system of political relations, which includes economic and financial flows, as well as the overall democratic development of society. The name “Corporate” is because this system insists on corporate identity representation of and its interests, and not on the atomized role of autarchic individuals who, as citizens, would not have such a powerful capacity to negotiate and defend their legitimate interests (R. Stepanov, 46-56).

In a short recapitulation of theoretical positions on the state, we can conclude the following (B. Axford et al., 2002: 259):

- The state refers to all institutions, services and actors that operate within the state's territorial space, have legitimate power and authority over us and can legitimately apply force as a (final) sanction against us if we do not accept its laws, orders, resist its actions or we act against it.
- In addition to possessing the power and authority for the legitimate use of violence, the state can also be said to consist of a certain number of actors and services, so within the state, there are government ministers, the judiciary, officials, the army, the police, education system and local authorities. In this sense, the state is a broader concept that includes all services that make and implement collective decisions and rules of society.

## 2. Authorities

Political science literature predominantly explores the concept of authority by elucidating it through the lens of power. The legitimate power signifies the entitlement to shape the conduct of individuals, that is, citizens residing within the state wielding political authority. This perspective of authority also encompasses institutionalized power, denoting the capability to effectively induce compliance from citizens within the established constitutional and legal framework, either through persuasion or legal coercion. Political power represents the capacity to influence others' behavior, and authority is the right to do so within the confines of a recognized legal order and under the limits prescribed by law. Government is the operational core of state power. Within the formulation and execution of state policies, the government functions as the “brain” of the state, thereby sustaining its continuity (A. Heywood, 172).

When we consider that power is, in fact, a product of political obligation, then we can define it in that way. It concerns the acknowledged responsibility of citizens to comply with a legally and legitimately elected government. In this context, political power embodies legitimacy grounded in the law. Consequently, the right to the lawful and legitimate use of force is reserved exclusively for the government (the state). In practice, the legitimacy of political power is intentionally confused with the concept of legality. While legality means a government elected based on the freely expressed will

of the majority of the electorate and concerning the electoral laws of a country, legitimacy is a slightly more complex political concept. Legitimacy should refer only to a government supported by the majority of citizens that respects the election program that received majority support in the elections. This concept also implies a government that unwaveringly upholds the rule of law, respects media freedom, and democratically exercises power through the political mandate given by the citizens. Only such a political government can be considered legitimate, and citizens owe submission to it based on the aforementioned political obligation – a form of social consensus in which political community citizens want to live, with which values, and what laws citizens show loyalty to by respecting them.

### **3. Political obligation**

The essence of political obligation revolves around four pivotal political principles that fundamentally delineate the nature of the political system and the civic milieu in which individuals reside. These principles can be elucidated through four inquiries citizens contemplate upon assuming a political obligation:

1. To whom are we obligated to adhere, specifically in discerning the locus of sovereignty?
2. Under what circumstances are we compelled to comply, and conversely, when are we entitled to assert our legitimate rights through civil disobedience?

3. What rationale underlies our obligation to yield to legitimate authority?
4. What constitutes the foundational underpinning of the obligation to submit, delineating the essence of our political obligation?

Answers to these fundamental questions of political obligation are given in free and democratic elections and during the period of exercise of power by the elected political group that has won the majority of citizens' trust for a certain mandate period. During periods characterized by governmental instability, undemocratic governance, revolutionary occurrences, or substantial political upheavals – instances wherein the essential nature of the state apparatus or political framework undergoes significant transformation (e.g., transitioning from monarchy to republic) – the obligation may be contested or rescinded. At such junctures, citizens reclaim their inherent sovereignty, determining collectively desired forms of political and constitutional order in which they wish to reside.

“It is rightly pointed out (C. Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation*) that since the 18th century, the problem of obligation has become a central category of political thought. The acceptance of political obligation as a self-evident and unquestionable proposition, akin to a natural fact, is grounded in the framework of a liberal state and liberal democracy. The theoretical origins of the concept of political obligation go back from the doctrine of rational natural law, wherein the pivotal concepts of “consent” and “contract” hold central significance. The general starting point of these theories is

that political obligation rests on the voluntary act of individuals, their consent, access, promise, choice, and agreement. What differentiates these theories is the answer to the question: what is the most suitable way to express this voluntary consent to political obedience (contract, protection, benefits, participation)?" (M. Matic; M. Podunavac, 1994: 187).

The term "political obligation" ought not to be construed in a strictly literal sense. It serves as a foundational manifestation of civil sovereignty. Analogous to the theories of natural law and the social contract, we contemplate it as if it were an event that has already transpired – a historical occurrence – though it may not have inherently possessed such a characteristic nature. It, above all, serves as the theoretical basis or foundation of any democratic order of government, which again cannot be imagined without civil sovereignty, social contract, and respect for the corpus of human rights and freedoms codified by constitutional norms based on the principle of the rule of law of an organized state. Hence, the position that the state and political authority are not sources of political obligation but only guarantors and steadfast guardians. Its basis, therefore, must be the sovereign and freely expressed will of the citizens in which political order they want to live and on which system of social values they want their political community. That attitude contains all its essence and irreplaceability.

#### 4. Coup d'état

The term coup d'état is related to any sudden, rapid, violent, and illegal change (takeover) of state authority by people who belonged to the government before it or were part of the governing power structure. A coup d'état is the result of an unstable and inefficient authority that is unable to realize the public interest of its citizens in a legal and relevant manner or a part of the alienated interests of the power that takes steps to remove such government and install a political set that allegedly strives to establish legal order and a broken political order. Coup d'états can manifest in overt or covert forms, with the predominant outcome typically being a reshuffling of the immediate holders of power rather than a fundamental alteration in the foundational structure of the state system.

“Modern coups are almost always inspired by political factors or special services, by creating an environment for the application of effective methods of political coup without violence or with very little violence, which most often comes down to the action of different police units with less or more force. It distinctly underscores one of the integral attributes of a coup d'état- despite the forceful means employed to effectuate a change in power, substantive alterations to the state system are notably absent. In essence, socio-political relations within the country persist, to varying degrees, on the established foundations.” (M. Parežanović, 2013: 142).

As manifestations of political upheaval, coups d'état may encompass internal and international dimensions. While the internal ones mainly concern the change of the personal holders of political power, the international ones are (as a common rule) related to the action of external factors that support the resulting political changes. They often help them, especially in the preparatory phase, by acting through intelligence services or “agents of influence” through the formation of desirable public discourses and active performance in the media sphere, which creates a suitable ground for political changes through a political coup.

## **5. The coup**

The coup represents a predominantly violent change of power, mainly by people in the lateral structures of power (army, police, security services, hidden centers of power) who also re-compose the holders of political authority by removing one and bringing in other political or military figures. Even with this form of violent and illegal change of power, the existing constitutional order (as a common rule) remains the same or with minimalistic, cosmetic changes. Also, authors define a coup as “an extremely militant form of coup d'état carried out exclusively by the national armed forces, not mercenary or interventionist groups. After the execution of the putsch (overthrow, coup), military personnel exercise power alone (junta) or predominantly participate in its exercise within the framework of mixed military-civilian governments” (D. Simeuno-

vić, 1989: 75). “The actors of the coup are active military personnel, most often from the ranks of higher, middle, and lower levels of command structures, who after the change of state leadership exercise power independently in the form of a “junta” or within the framework of mixed military-civilian governments, with civilians as members of such governments most often under strong pressure and influence of the military, that is, strictly controlled and often forced to fulfill all the demands of the putschists unquestioningly” (M. Parezanović, 2013: 157).

During a coup d'état or a putsch, there is usually no change in the political obligation because the citizens do not question themselves in such acts of violent change, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the intention of the actors of such violent events is not a fundamental change of the existing political and legal order, but a change of personal bearers government, and most often the executive branch of government, i.e. the president of the state or the head of the government, depending on the type of political system of government (presidential or parliamentary).

Political revolutionaries typically find contentment in pursuits associated with gaining control over the mechanisms and authority within a political system. They are generally less inclined towards alterations like political obligations, viewing such changes as intricate and demanding tasks that they often prefer to avoid.

Revolutions, on the other hand, would be such forms of political upheavals that aim to change the social and not only the political form of government and state organization, and therefore, in their agenda of vio-



lent action, they must have a change in political obligation imposed by political violence and the spread of social fear through the generated existential insecurity of citizens. In such circumstances, they are happy to agree to new forms of socio-political relations or, due to the delusional action of “revolutionaries”, they join them and accept the proclaimed changes as their own.

## 6. Power

The concept of power is one of the most significant concepts in political science in general and contemporary international relations.

Many theoretical endeavors exist to define power, grasp its fundamental nature, identify its manifestations, and comprehend the contextual dynamics that influence its operation. According to Joseph Nye, context is essential in determining the character, form, essence, and form of the effect of power, especially in the world arena. What further complicates the understanding of the nature of power and its use by state and non-state actors is contextual intelligence (the ability to understand the circumstances that make up and determine the surrounding reality) and power resources (information systems, media, cyberspace, networks, new technologies) which, like a medium, increase, accelerate or mask its effects and make the entire research process complicated.

Outside the context of the state itself, therefore, from a purely sociological point of view, power means the ability of individuals or groups to influence the be-

havior and judgment of other social groups or individuals to achieve their goals and realize their interests. “That's why, in my opinion, every power is essentially social, both in terms of the place and manner of its origin and manifestation, as well as in its nature and effects” (V. Pavlović, 2012: 339).

Political power represents the possession of the capacity (resources) to implement one's will within a society despite resistance. Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Therefore, it does not always have to be imposed by force or coercion. That is why we distinguish different types of power, for example, legitimate power (when individuals willingly subject themselves to influence), reference power (as observed in situations akin to Stockholm syndrome, which involves influence gained through rewards or identification), expert power (which is acquired by knowledge), information power, and financial power.

Realpolitik defines several functions of power in its context:

1. the power of action – which includes all types of activities aimed at changing the factual situation;
2. decision-making power – which implies the ability to make binding decisions;
3. power of mobilization – the ability to mobilize people using other means, such as the market, voters, and media;
4. power of disposal – refers to the use of things and resources that are available, whether of a private or social nature;
5. defining power – refers to the ability to determine the public discourse imposing its thematic spec-

trum and the interpretation of political, social, and cultural reality, often coded as political correctness.

The famous British philosopher Bertrand Russell compared power to energy. What the concept of energy means for physics is the concept of power for social sciences. Russell suggests that, much like energy transforming from one form to another, power can undergo similar transformations. However, the analogy between energy and power has its limitations. Energy is indestructible, maintaining a constant existence as it cannot be created or destroyed. But, social circumstances generate, concentrate, transform, dissipate, or cause the loss of power. It is the essential difference between these concepts. Russell says that man's anthropological characteristic is the power impulse, accompanied by the love of power. However, since prehistoric times, there has been an inequality in the distribution of power in societies, which means that access to resources from which it is possible to generate power is not equally available to all individuals, groups, or organizations. Power is largely socially determined by social stratification. But this does not mean no individuals or groups gained their power despite unfavorable social circumstances. "Bertrand Russell offers the determination of power intentionally. According to him, power can be defined as the production of intended effects" (V. Pavlović, 163). At the same time, differentiating power over people and power over things, as well as differentiating individual power from the power of organizations, Russell shows us the difference between tradi-

tional forms of power and newly acquired forms. He includes priestly and royal power in the traditional ones, while he classifies the newly acquired forms as naked power and revolutionary power, both accomplished through force or violence. For a revolutionary power, the application of violence is an almost inevitable way of social and political change, just as for a naked power, the application of the means of force is. In addition to the mentioned forms of power, Russell emphasized the economic form gained or lost in the context of economy and finance, and one of the most important is the power over opinion, which belongs to the forms of soft power. Soft power has especially gained strength and topicality with the development of media systems, the Internet, and other technological innovations based on communication and traffic control of mass in the context of a network society (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 123).

The most important scientific approach defines power as the ability to achieve the desired outcome for the power holders. Or to answer the questions: who gets, what gets, where does it get, when and how does it get? “Yale University political scientist Robert Dahl defines the first aspect or “face” of power. This facet of power centers on the ability to persuade others to act in ways contrary to their initial preferences and strategies. (Preferences and strategies are closely related. Preferences rank outcomes in a given environment, and strategy is an actor's effort to get as close as possible to the desired outcome in those circumstances.)” (J. Nye, 2012: 29). The most important scientific approach defines power as the ability to achieve the desired out-

come for the power holders. Or to answer the questions: who gets, what gets, where does it get, when and how does it get? “Yale University political scientist Robert Dahl defines the first aspect or 'face' of power. This facet of power centers on the ability to persuade others to act in ways contrary to their initial preferences and strategies. (Preferences and strategies are closely related. Preferences rank outcomes in a given environment, and strategy is an actor's effort to get as close as possible to the desired outcome in those circumstances.)” (J. Nye, 2012: 29). Criticizing Dahl, Nye complains that he did not consider the other two aspects or faces of power. The second face of power would be the ability (possession of resources) to frame and set the agenda. “In other words, it is possible to shape the preferences of others by influencing their expectations of what is legitimate or feasible.” And the so-called third face of power is the ability to define the structures of one's preferences. “If you can get others to want the same outcome as you, there is no need to overcome their original desires.” (J. Nye, 31).

For easier understanding, these three faces (aspects) of power suggested by Josef Nye are:

1. the first person of power (hard power) is based on coercion;
2. the second face of power (soft power) is based on attraction;
3. the third person of power (smart power) is based on identification (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin: 110).

Hence, integrating all three facets of power makes it easier to attain desired outcomes with more efficient utilization of resources and energy.

In the entire exertion of power, a pivotal stage involves implementing “smart power” within international relations. It involves a creative fusion of soft power manifestations, coupled with strategic planning and execution, to successfully realize predetermined goals and interests. Therefore, Joseph Nye condensedly concludes: “I have defined smart power as the ability to combine the resources of hard and soft power into effective strategies” (J. Nye, 42).

In his historical recapitulation of the understanding of political power, Vukašin Pavlović's famous book *Political Power* gives an extraordinary insight into the different positions of observation of political power by well-known social thinkers in the 19th and 20th centuries. Pavlović begins his theoretical discussions with a presentation of Marx's teaching on the class character of capitalist society and the political order based on it. He rightly points out the following views of Marx on the essence and character of political power:

“Marx was the first to approach the study of political power from the point of view of social, political, and ideological conflict in a community divided into opposing classes. Even in his early writings, Marx understood that power took different forms throughout history. According to his understanding, power is a social relationship whose form corresponds to a historically specific mode of production. Power is rooted in producing the goods necessary for people's survival.

The production of material life constrains political, social, and spiritual life.”

“The social division of labor leads to class divisions and causes conflicting class interests. The essence of ideological and political power is the effort and ability of certain classes to present their specific class interests as general interests and thus seize political power and the state.”

“Marx is primarily interested in social power, the basis of which he seeks and finds in the power constituted in the economic sphere of social reproduction.”

“For the concept of total reproduction, Marx in “Capital” uses the metaphor of a double mill, which constantly puts workers on the market as a seller of their labor power, and on the other hand, creates the possibility for capitalists to buy this power and thereby increase their capital. The capital capitalist acquires in this way is both a measure of his wealth and an expression of his social power.”

“Money can buy everything, so it has the power of universal appropriation. That divinity of money, according to Marx's insight, lies in its being as an alienated native being of man. Therefore, money is a perverting power, a perverted power, a form of general perversion of individuality. Money separates the value of things from their substance. The original purpose of money was to serve as the representative of all values. The nature of money expresses one of the most significant properties of capital – constantly expanding and increasing. It shows that money in the form of capital has the same quality as power, the quality of insatiability (*pleonexia*)” (V. Pavlović, 2012: 54-65).

In the historical overview of the nature and understanding of power, it is inevitable to mention Weber's definition often used in political sociology. "Power represents the prospects of implementing one's will within a social relationship despite resistance, regardless of the underlying foundations of these prospects." Professor V. Pavlović emphasizes that the central essence of power, in this definition, lies in the ability "to impose and implement one's will despite resistance" with the fact that he immediately makes a distinction concerning Weber's definition that "power is the prospect that certain persons will obey orders certain content. Therefore, the difference between power and authority is related to different situations: when it comes to power, one submits the will of the other by force; when it comes to government, there is a situation in which someone obeys an order because he believes that it has a legitimate form" (ibid., 146).

It is pertinent to highlight the repressive manifestations of tolerance within the framework of power relations. In this perspective, tolerance signifies a position of power endowed with the inherent capacity to decide between allowing tolerance or resorting to violent suppression. The one exercising tolerance chooses between permitting tolerance and opting for suppression. Only power can act on its own. Powerlessness cannot be a tolerated option, and it is disregarded or exploited. (Lj. Despotović; R. Stepanov, 2006: 223). In this context, a seemingly paradoxical example of tolerance is imposed on us as a form of power because the one who can exercise it assumes a position of power and chooses whether to use it or opt for violence. And that is politi-



cal violence as one means of acquiring or preserving power. Such a situation is often related to the context of multicultural societies and communities.

We can assert that Weber's conceptualization of power aligns with the category of action theories. In this framework, power is the ability to “dispose of the means of influencing the will of others,” essentially involving the imposition of one's will on those who resist, utilizing specific social conditions. As a result, there exists asymmetry in power relations, with some individuals holding power while others do not. The possession of power resources enables actions that give rise to power, leading to a dissymmetry of power. Ultimately, this process culminates in the intentional achievement of specific interests.

The understanding of power from T. Parson's perspective can be categorized as a systems theory, as the acquisition and imposition of power relations occur within the context of the social system. “Parsons defines power as the system's ability to ensure that its constituent parts implement valid decisions” (V. Pavlović, 2000). It implies that the social or political system can strategically and rationally deploy resources and institutions, leading to the actualization of stated collective decisions. Thus, he focuses on achieving the public interests of citizens, not solely on individual political or economic-financial actors seeking to advance their specific objectives through the systemic institutional framework. Jürgen Habermas classifies both Weber's and Parson's comprehension as teleological because, intrinsically, they have the achievement of some ultimate purposeful goal, the fulfillment of purpose as

such. The teleological understanding is related to any social action aimed at achieving a definite purpose or goal, not just the accumulation of power, which is often the case with certain social actors, especially in politics, economics, finance, and the media.

The response to the fundamental question in political metaphysics concerning the essence of political power revolves around political loyalty. Who knows the reasons for subjugation knows the inner nature of political power“ (M. Matić; M. Podunavac, 1994: 132).

However, the issue of political power was always primarily related to the state and its government because power increased manifold as soon as political power stood behind it. Hence, the main goal of the dominant people was, and remains, to control the country. Manuel Castells testifies to this when he says: “Power is imposed by coercion (monopoly over violence, legitimate or illegitimate, through control exercised by the state) and/or by creating meaning in human minds, mechanisms of symbolic manipulation.” Every institutional system mirrors power dynamics and their constraints, all negotiated through the ongoing historical process of conflict and bargaining. This continuous interaction between power and its counterbalance conditions the configuration of the state and other institutions that regulate people's lives.” (M. Castells, 2018: 24).

## 7. Dominance/ authority

The political connotation of the term authority derives its origin from the Latin word *auctoritas*, which has several levels of meaning. It translates as a guaranty, role model, credibility, importance, will, order, commandment, reputation, and dignity, that is, as *potestas*, *dignitas*, or *iura*, and tends towards the order of power or the legal order as such. Hence, within political science, this term has consistently been associated with the phenomenology of government and power, including its intrinsic attributes of legality and legitimacy. One of the meanings is the determination of authority as a term that expresses the property of some authority that its decisions are respected and accepted “without external and normative threat” because it is an active authority. Hence, in discussions about authority, the phrase “power without authority or authority without power” is frequently invoked. It's important not to conflate the terms authoritative and authoritarian, as they represent a relational dynamic wherein the association between power and authority is reevaluated based on the notion that authority should be a more enduring and universal term. “Hannah Arendt, delving into the emergence of authority, concluded that its primary characteristic is the unquestioning recognition by those expected to obey, within which no coercion or any form of influence is deemed necessary. We conclude that authority always corresponds to respect. There is no authority without respect – it is the main difference between power and authority” (M. Đorić, 2014: 99).

Academicians consistently characterize power as primarily political, while they consider the term authority as moral. However, both terms inherently presuppose the presence of society as a fundamental context without which they cannot exist. As an essentially moral concept, authority implies a relational connection with freedom and social balance. These conditions are vital for individual autonomy and the voluntary acceptance of authority. In this defined context of sociability and autonomy, authority is the capacity to elicit the consent of others. In other words, “authority implies obedience in which people retain their freedom, as a way of having one freedom for the sake of another freedom, because authority is an exercised freedom” (R. Stepanov, 64).

According to form, origin, and content, we categorized authority.

a. By form, authority can be divided into:

Church authority derives from its acceptance and grounding in the power as a religious institution. This authority primarily relies on the clergy's influence and the professed faith, emphasizing absolute and unquestionable adherence to teachings and church dogmas. Additionally, it hinges on the unwavering obedience of believers to God, viewing the church and the clergy as their exclusive representatives on earth, as determined by their self-perception. The church has primarily profiled itself as a religious institution more than a community of believers, which is what it should be, and as such insists on its a priori authority. It later acquires

other institutional attributes and has political, legal, social, psychological, and similar dimensions that should support and strengthen its primary religious authority.

Unlike the ecclesiastical hierarchical type, spiritual authority derives exclusively from the spiritual strength of its bearer and the spiritual values he inherits. The goal of spiritual authority is truth, and the means freedom. It is indeed accepted freely as a self-conscious act of identification with a higher spiritual principle of value while preserving one's freedom and personality.

These are the highest values of a free man that he unmistakably recognizes when they appear as his choice: goodness, justice, peace, tranquility, truthfulness, spiritual beauty, blessedness, unobtrusiveness, and gentleness. That is why the true example of unadulterated spiritual authority among Serbs during his lifetime was their blessed Patriarch Pavle, a true bearer of goodness, gentleness, and spiritual beauty, which every believer recognized without need for explanation or institutional mediation. The patriarch demonstrated his commitment to the Christian faith through a pure life, deriving spiritual strength from the genuine love he harbored for every earthly being.

Hierarchical authority is primarily related to the institution and organization. Hierarchical order rests on the authority of institutional power to determine rewards or punishments for non-compliance. It can be fake or real, rational or irrational, democratic or undemocratic, all depending on the needs of the institution or organization implementing it. "The power of a higher or highest position in a hierarchical structure

legitimizes hierarchical authority.” Church and hierarchical authorities are external and directed authorities” (R. Stepanov, 65). Both are based on subjugation and are contrary to the freedom of the individual to choose and create his relationship with the institution or organization he often enters by the act of his birth and which was decided by others. Alternatively, through social inertia, it represents a compulsory relationship not formed by a voluntary decision on his part.

Political authority is acquired in the field of concentrated political power and under the institutional order of government. This type of authority expresses the power of an institution, organization, leadership, group, or individual, whereby the established order builds an authoritative position of dominance.

b. By origin, we can divide the authority into:

External, that emanates from the outer layers of organizations or institutions. Authoritarian in nature and being enforced through orders. It signifies submission, closely resembling hierarchical, political, and ecclesiastical supremacy. Its character manifests as an external element in the relationship, demanding obedience.

Internal, which emanates from the personal duty of the individual and his autonomy to oppose external authority in defense of his own identity. The individual thereby defends the values of freedom, personality, and voluntary choice, regardless of institutional pressure or organizational authority that tries to undermine his inner integrity from the outside.

Traditional authority is a relationship of submission of the individual to the established order of power transmitted through hereditary rights, dominant myths, or living traditions. It is often part of a generationally established continuity. It is ongoing social inertia, a boring slumber, and a political comfort zone that does not want to change. Traditional authority does not necessarily carry a negative connotation when it safeguards the universal values of a society that faces threats from various innovations presented as inferior substitutes.

Democratic authority “is based on the power created during the democratic process and with the democratic procedure. This authority nurtures the analytical spirit, the superiority of critical thinking and tolerance” (R. Stepanov, 66). Over time, it tends to evolve into dogmatized relationships that, if its bearers remain in power for an extended period, can gradually transform into a position of political power.

Moral authority stems from the moral capacity of its bearer, so like spiritual authority, these capacities have the fundamental characteristic of being permanent, proven, and respectable. This type of authority gives rise to behavior that ought to be a rule or norm, safeguarding the value it represents and ensuring ethical conduct within the social community.

There are also assigned and acquired authorities. The first is derived from a structure rooted in position and entrusted functions, while the second is the type of authority developed over time. Hobbes contends it is the demonstrated and accumulated individual power to guarantee social peace under the concept of the naturally contracted theory.

c. Content – Based Authority:

Rational authority is gained through knowledge and reason, placing it in a perpetual state of validation and affirmation, particularly amid the ongoing evolution of knowledge and the competencies extrapolated from it. This concept involves engaging in rational social conduct rooted in the respect for mentally grounded behavioral norms that have been affirmed through good practices over time, showcasing their rationality and functionality.

Irrational authority derives from widely accepted understandings or attitudes despite the challenge of pinpointing a rational basis for it. This form of authority often exhibits a durable and enduring foundation due to its inherent nature. “Its sustainability relies on the display of power as dominance.” Characterized by authoritarianism and expressed through irrational means, it frequently involves charismatic leadership and an unwarranted faith in the bearer's supernatural capabilities. In political history, such authority has predominantly manifested in dominant figures, particularly within totalitarian and autocratic power structures.

## **8. Legitimacy**

The term political legitimacy means that type of political authority capable of maintaining and developing such a system of political understandings and beliefs according to which the existing political and legal institutions are the most suitable for society. According



to Montesquieu, this term means the agreement of the political order with the way of thinking of the people, that is, its general acceptance. In a broader sense, this term relates to the understanding that individuals (citizens) accept the existing order and act under its requirements and laws. It requires a collective agreement on the foundational value system that forms the basis for constructing the framework of political and legal institutions and laws. This agreement involves recognizing a particular type of political authority. The term *legitimus* comes from the Roman legal tradition and primarily refers to the meaning that connotes legality as its main feature. This term is often used in the opposite pair of derived terms “legitimate power” (*legitima potestas*) and “illegitimate power” (*tiranica usurpatio*), which first of all suggests acceptance of the first and non-acceptance of the second by the citizens.

Our concept of legitimacy concerns how a government operates and its commitment to respecting the electoral mandate of citizens, particularly in the consistent implementation of the election program endorsed by the majority in the electorate. For a government to be deemed legitimate, it must satisfy two crucial conditions. Firstly, it must be a political authority that consistently upholds the rule of law as a governing principle, respects democratic procedures, and maintains transparency in decision-making processes grounded in constitutional and legal adherence. The second condition necessitates that the political authority derives legitimacy from the unwavering implementation of the political program that garnered majority support in the elections. Political power is legitimate only when it

fulfills both conditions. Merely being elected through free and general elections indicates legality, not necessarily legitimacy. Whether a government attains legitimacy hinges on its adherence to these defined conditions. Simultaneously, a politically authoritative body that consistently embraces transparency in its political practices effectively distances itself from the secretive dimensions and cryptic processes often associated with politics.

The acceptance of the political order by citizens in a broader context is an enduring characteristic of the order itself, not necessarily of every political authority formed after the election. Therefore, it becomes essential for a new or re-elected political government to govern in a manner that reaffirms its legitimacy with the citizens, who constitute the electoral body that elected it. Simultaneously, this electoral body has chosen a political program that the government must consistently implement. It is often a problematic practice when political authorities ignore the electoral will of citizens and, during their exercise of authority, act as if they are not committed to their pre-election program, which should serve as the fundamental framework for their political endeavors. In this context, the political program is a pre-election plan that clearly outlines the implementation of public policies in specific segments of the post-election cycle, aimed at consistently serving the public interest of citizens. Therefore, replacing the notion that a government is legitimate merely because it garnered majority support from citizens is futile. Its unquestionable legality does not automatically encompass the crucial principle of legitimacy. Legitimacy

primarily hinges on the quality of the government itself and the steadfast implementation of policies confirmed in the elections, intended to safeguard the public interest of citizens while upholding the principles of the rule of law.

The basic typologies of legitimacy are:

A) Max Weber's typology of legitimacy:

1. A traditional type manifested through the belief that it is an order inherited from the ancestors, which has confirmed its validity through several generations and is therefore considered sacred.
2. Charismatic type – manifested through the relationship of affective (emotional) acceptance of the personality of the political leader, that is, the ruler, as well as his divine properties and attributes by the majority of subjects.
3. Rational type – respect for a government doesn't stem from its perceived divine attributes, the traditionally established order, or sheer power. Instead, it primarily relies on the willing acceptance of political values and derived rules from them, as expressed by the degree of obedience of citizens to their rational principles and purposeful practice as part of the common good.

B) Contemporary typologies of legitimacy:

1. The neoliberal theory of legitimacy – is based on the postulates of liberalism adapted to modern power structures, mainly of the economic-financial type, thereby legitimizing the existing

relations of domination. It splits into a procedural conception of legitimacy, which insists on respecting the formal and procedural aspects of the functioning of modern political systems, and a structural standpoint based on inherent economic structures and the so-called theories about absolute rights, whose most significant theorists are Robert Dahl, Jürgen Habermas, and Robert Nozick.

2. The systemic theory of legitimacy – is based on the management components of politics, technologies, and techniques of the very functioning of political power within the political system. Its outstanding theoretical representative is Niklas Luhmann.

Contemporary political theory and political sociology understand legitimacy as a fluid, unstable, and constantly questionable political phenomenon gained or lost in the political process. Hence, the following political terms are in use, which describe various changing conditions in political practice:

- a) The concept of illegitimacy refers to the situation in political relations when the existing state of the political structure does not coincide with the normative political structure of society, when there is a large discrepancy between the two components of contemporary politics, then when the existing state is contrary to the proclaimed values of a political order marked by force, terror and various forms of repression against political oppo-

nents or citizens, as a dominant feature of a government.

- b) The concept of quasi-legitimacy shares similarities with the attributes of illegitimacy. The key distinction lies in the presence of a political vacuum (chaos) in political reality, a condition historically described by terms such as anomie or pleonexia since ancient times. It is a typical form of politics dominated by chaos, turmoil, and political changes without a plan and a clear goal, with a rather large dose of political violence. We are talking about a state in which there is no respect for the law or rights, but also for the person, in which everything is in a kind of provisionality, without a clear plan for getting out of the deep crisis of lawlessness and disrespect for the proclaimed institutional order.
- c) The pre-legitimacy is associated with situations wherein significant and transformative political events occur, resulting in a comprehensive shift in values, structure, or institution framework of governance. It is a situation close to revolutionary events when the form of the previous type of legitimacy is fundamentally changed, and it is accompanied by dangerous and often violent changes in political power and the way of understanding and gaining legitimacy. Most often in political history, this situation referred to the so-called revolutionary upheavals, which, along with the abundance of political violence, also brought about a radical change in the social order and state organization, and thus a change in the type

and manner of political legitimation, justifying their violent rise to power through ideology and in the face of history. The best-known examples of such radical political change were the French Revolution in 1789 (abolition of the monarchy and establishment of a bourgeois-type republic) and the October Revolution of 1917 (abolition of the monarchy as a state system and establishment of the Soviet-Bolshevik dictatorship). Its violent nature makes political obligation an integral component of the overarching transformation of the order and its prevailing values.

## **9. Political capital**

Political capital is a specific form of social capital that manifests itself in political relations and is a relatively new concept in political science. It came to us from the disciplinary divergence of political sociology derived from the conception of social capital. Francis Fukuyama defines social capital as a concrete set of informal values and norms that are valid among members of a group or society, which enable them to cooperate and act with each other. Part of the values that inevitably constitute a network of positively understood social capital are trust, honesty, reciprocity, solidarity, and willingness to cooperate. However, having the same values and norms does not necessarily imply positive social capital. As a negative implication, traditional, regional, or religious forms may contribute to its adverse effects, diminishing social capital within the

community. According to Fukuyama, norms and values can be wrong, in which case we have a situation of shortage of social capital, which in turn creates undesirable relationships in society and organizations that use it as their fuel: mafia, racists, and sexists. “Southern Italy, for example, belongs to a region of the world where social capital and widespread trust are perceived to be in short supply, even though there are strict social norms” (F. Fukuyama, 2004: 172).

Only those norms that contain virtues contribute to positive social capital, similar to the way formulated by Max Weber in the case of the Protestant religion values influence on shaping the spirit of modern capitalism. It is not surprising that a source of social capital can often be found in the family, especially the patriarchal type. Family is a central value and core virtue passed on to younger members, influencing their internalization and adoption.

Destruction of the old and the formation of the modern type of family significantly weakened this primary source of positive social capital. “The family is an important source of social capital everywhere” (ibid.: 173). It confirms the reciprocal relationship between family and civil society, mediated by social capital. For neo-Tocquevilleans, especially Robert Putnam, this is more than an obvious fact. An elaborate network of social interaction leads to the strengthening of trust and the increase of social capital. This results in the strengthening of civil society, and without a robust civil society, there is no successful democratic government, which is the ultimate objective. “A strong society leads to a strong state” (K. Whittington, 2004: 33). This, for

the neo-Tocquevilles, obvious correlation did not remain without critical observations, especially in that part of the American professional public that indicates that a seemingly logical and obvious connection does not always have to be confirmed. There have been instances where a robust civil society, exerting excessive influence towards destabilization, poses a potential threat to democratic political institutions and their proper functioning. Because “a well-functioning democracy depends not only on social relations but also on political institutions and the constitutional order that structures the relations between them” (ibid., 34).

Destabilization of political institutions and the constitutional order can come from the sphere of civil society and is aimed at reducing the degree of loyalty and functionality of political institutions because the associations that make up the branched network of civil society can substitute the work of political institutions and their importance. “As the credible representation of the will of the people contains criterion of political legitimacy in a democracy, government officials are especially vulnerable due to challenges from voluntary associations that can come forward with their demands regarding the exercise of the function of popular representation.” As modern analysts have noted in the context of American politics, interest groups gain power over elected officials precisely because of their representative authority. Civil society was not only the basis for a democratic government, but also it was potentially a destructive force, subversive of the legitimate order. Hence comes the threat that the democratic order will turn into mere anarchy” (ibid.: 37). “There are many



ways to utilize social capital, and that often means in ways that collide with social order and democratic aspirations. Successful state institutions are necessary to stop social conflicts and keep the natural tendencies of civil society under control” (ibid., 46).

Social capital and its role in civil society and its interaction with the political order is inseparable from the manner of its formation and political use. Without a well-balanced role of social capital in value environment formation and political goals and interests of the civil sector, its mission can smoothly turn from a positive to a negative field of political activity against other members of society or the public interest of the state community. In such situations, the role of the political and legal order institutions in establishing the proper functioning of democracy is irreplaceable. (Lj. Despotović, 2014: 43-45).

Robert Putnam defines social capital, refracted through the prism of political relations (political capital), in three of its forms:

- as a moral obligation of citizens and political norms that influence the overall political obligation on which the political community rests;
- as a source of social values producing trust in political institutions and political order;
- as social networks of civil and political organizations.

“Social networks, where horizontal ties between actors of equivalent status and power are crucial, are an important form of social capital, and the denser these networks are in a community, the more likely citizens

will cooperate for mutual benefit. Networks positively influence (strengthen) norms of reciprocity” (Z. Stojilković, 2014: 273). Social capital, therefore, always goes as part of a triad of concepts: social capital – financial capital – symbolic capital.

## **10. Political modernization**

The Classical Social Development Theories (Evolutionism, Historicism, Cyclicity, Marxism) significantly influenced the Theory of Modernization. Their essence is related to social changes directly in the existing social structure. Therefore, not every social change and social development is modernization, but only that which leads to a change in the actual social structure (most often pre-modern) and the birth of new social relations and the structure of society. Social changes are political, socioeconomic, and cultural. Therefore, modernization is a social change at the global level of society that includes the change of all such major subsystems. In sociological literature, modernization is linked to industrialization because it facilitated the fundamental changes in social relations and the structural transformation of pre-modern societies into modern ones.

“Political modernization is a part of the contemporary civil theory, which owes its foundation to the functionalist-structuralist direction of the theory of modernization and the political system.” There are several ways to define the complex concept of political modernization. We will single out five, in our opinion, cru-

cial definitions of this concept. First, modernization is the adaptation of the system to achieve economic and political goals; secondly, it indicates the processes of expanding the capacity to perform public functions; third, especially important for us, the definition sees political modernization as a process of transformation of a traditional into a modern society; the fourth, also significant, definition understands political modernization as the process of establishing a nation-state, and the fifth definition is the one that sees political modernization as the democratic development of society. From a distinctly political point of view, modernization can also be defined as a process of increasing complexity in the sphere of political action so that the main problems focusing on the area of consensus, the effectiveness of the political system, political communication, the sphere of interest of political parties and political development. Political modernization is a specific type of modernization that means the political, social, and cultural transformation of the political system, but also the political mentality of a nation from a traditional to a modern type of political organization” (Lj. Despotović, 2020: 27).

Therefore, political modernization is a type of social change that has the true potential and power to modernize society, as well as the power to transform it into a modern political order. Political modernization is primarily a type of modernization that leads to the construction of a democratic society and a changing political culture from patriarchal, collectivist, and authoritarian to a modern political culture based on individualism, political socialization of democratic values, and

civil order of government based on respect for the rule of law.

When modernization processes occur within a pre-modern society in an authoritarian manner, we label this political modernization as tutelary. This form of modernization is inherently partial, addressing only a specific segment of society and the state, and it unfolds under the authority of a single government or its leader. The political sphere suffers minor democratic changes, with minimal social reforms that would have a democratic character. Despite its undeniable authoritarian character, this type of modernization nevertheless produces partial positive effects (reforms) in terms of other segments of society (for example, in the development of infrastructure, education, science, and culture) that can be the basis for political changes and democratization processes in the long term.

## VI POLITICAL PARTIES, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, INTEREST AND LOBBY GROUPS

### 1. Political parties

The origin of the term “political party” can be traced back to the Latin word *pars* (part), suggesting that it is a political entity that represents a segment of the political ideas or ideologies within a society. This term entered linguistic usage at the end of the 18th century and denotes a specific form of political organization and identification with some grouping of interest options of a political community. Simultaneously, it suggests an ideological differentiation among political parties and the particularities that set them apart from other political entities or similar social groups.

Political parties are social organizations (organized social groups) that have political goals, permanently organize relations among their members, and determine and proclaim the methods of work and action in the political field connecting the broad political and social environment. These political organizations formalize their membership, clearly define programs and ideology, and openly compete to transform social power into

political. They turn their newly acquired political power into power if they get into such a position through elections and in a legal way.

### **1.1. Roles/functions of political parties**

Political parties fulfill distinct political and social functions within the community. These roles can be categorized as follows:

- political organization of citizens;
- recruitment and creation of political elites;
- determination of policy objectives;
- articulation of political ideas and ideologies;
- aggregation of citizens' political interests;
- mobilization of one's electorate;
- political socialization of voters/citizens;
- political representation of citizens' interests and attitudes, especially in legislative bodies;
- participation in elections, that is, the struggle to win power;
- organization of government for those political parties or coalitions that win power in free and democratic elections;
- The nomination and election of power holders (populating institutions with party members within the legislative and executive branches, spanning both the horizontal and vertical levels of government organization);
- the formulation of public policy, that is, the adoption of concrete public policy programs for each segment of the realization of the public interest of citizens defined by law and the constitution;

- respect for the rule of law and protection of the principles of constitutionality and legality;
- assuming full political and legal responsibility for the exercise of political power.

Of all the mentioned functions of political parties, we consider some extremely important for the political functioning of the party system, and we will explain them separately.

- a) One of the crucial roles of political parties is the articulation of political ideas and ideologies. It is paramount since, as a general rule, citizens may lack awareness of the content, value systems, and symbols associated with these ideologies. Consequently, individuals may find it challenging to comprehend and embrace them as their own worldview.

The significance of political parties lies precisely in their role of articulation – effectively conveying and clarifying their messages to the electorate. It is crucial for representing social interests and establishing specific political positions, highlighting the importance of political parties in bridging the gap between their messages and public understanding.

A clear articulation facilitates a more precise understanding of the diverse political ideas available in the political arena. It, in turn, empowers citizens to more readily choose ideas and ideologies aligned with their political experiences and desired social relations. Without the crucial role

- played by political parties, citizens would struggle to define and characterize their political and ideological perspectives autonomously.
- b) Following the political interests articulation, the subsequent step is their aggregation – consolidating, grouping, or summarizing them. Political interest aggregation is also an essential function of political parties. It becomes particularly vital during the election process when political grouping within specific segments of the electorate, i.e., target groups addressed by parties, is necessary. Therefore, political interest aggregation is a crucial step in political party activities.
  - c) The mobilization of the electorate stands as a paramount phase in the activities of political parties, especially during the pre-election process following the completion of functions such as articulation and aggregation. Additionally, mobilization plays a crucial role during specific periods when addressing numerous political challenges within the political system of a community becomes necessary. This function becomes particularly essential when the existing political institutions lack the capacity or competence to resolve accumulated problems alone. In such instances, mobilizing citizens becomes imperative, serving as a form of political pressure on government structures, often employed as an effective tool by the opposition.
  - d) Political representation of citizens' interests is a significant political function of parties. It represents their original as well as electoral obligation,



especially for that part of political parties that participated in the parliamentary life of a country. Political representation has become the dominant form of political representation since modern societies became mass and when the ancient pattern of personal representation of individuals entered political history (even in the functioning of local self-government). Therefore, political representation implies the obligation of consistent and continuous representation of the views and interests of the electorate, that is, citizens as the original bearers of sovereignty in the modern circumstances of today's societies. It also implies the obligation of political parties to represent those interests at all levels of government and perform their authentic interpretation.

Failure to implement these crucial functions/roles of political parties results in their presence within the party system shrinking to a mere power struggle, a common occurrence in societies with underdeveloped democratic relations. This situation is particularly evident in semi-peripheral communities with inadequate civil society development, a lack of respect for democratic procedures, and violations of human rights and freedoms, and in societies where unclear political structures give way to the dominance of crypto-political processes.

The relationship between political parties and the environment is directed mainly in three directions:

1. within the party system of a country (the relationship between parties);

2. within the state (political) system of which parties are a significant part;
3. relations within society as a whole.

The conflictual character of political parties manifests itself in several political dimensions:

- They are political entities that, based on the nature of their activities, concentrate on engaging in political strife and contention with parties holding divergent perspectives on society and politics, that is, interests and ideology;
- The inherent characteristic of parties is to engage in struggle, specifically political conflicts that unfold within the political arena.
- The goals and interests of one party are generally opposed to the goals and interests of other parties;
- Parties clash over gaining political trust and legitimacy among citizens, that is, the electorate.

## **1.2. Pathological deviations in the functioning of political parties**

Frequently observed, particularly in the latter half of the 20th century and persisting into the present day, these deviations coincide with the processes of de-democratization in modern societies and the swift erosion of ideological consensus.

- a) *Malignant alteration* represents pathological behavior within political parties, indicating distortions in their effort to gain or maintain power. When heightened party struggles escape social control, they transform into perpetual conflicts

and political hostilities, threatening social stability and leading to a constant social crisis. In such pathological circumstances, the social and institutional domains are at risk, hindering the legal system's constitutionally-based functioning. Illegitimate actions and non-democratic political organizations characterize authoritarian societies, leading to pathological and vice versa. It is especially evident in the actions of parties and coalitions seeking to retain power at any cost. The reactive response to such policies by opposition parties further exacerbates the situation, as they strive to employ all available means, including non-democratic ones, to challenge the ruling regime and assume power. Even when a change of government occurs, malignant alteration, representing a harmful transformation of political struggle into a state of open hostility, continues to dominate the party system. Undemocratic forms of political party activity tend to become persistent features with limited prospects for overcoming strained political relations through democratic means.

- b) *Chubby degeneration* represents a pathological condition within political parties wherein there is a distortion of their ideological identity despite maintaining a principled program and distinct political stance. This situation often arises from prolonged periods of power or ideological convergence, exemplified by the ideological blending that Western societies have undergone in recent decades. The phenomenon of political parties los-

ing their distinct profiles and recognition among voters despite their principled positioning on the political spectrum of a country has become widespread. In such circumstances, parties transform into entities resembling “profit enterprises,” aiming to maximize political gains and substantial economic and financial profits, pursuing other power-related interests. It is achieved by exploiting the state apparatus of power and taking advantage of numerous benefits and privileges from political authority.

- c) *Habituation* represents the weakening of the ideological engagement of political parties and their gradual abandonment of the proclaimed profile and program. Habituation means that political parties slowly and imperceptibly give up the crucial function of political representation of their electorate and representation of their interests through the institutions of the government system. It means prioritizing the interests of the party's leadership and immediate leadership. As a result of notable processes of de-democratization, alienation of political elites from their electoral base, and declining interest of voters to go to the polls in such conditions (electoral abstinence), this phenomenon has been present in recent decades in modern Western-type societies. The indicated processes intensify the state of political apathy and economic hopelessness in which society is falling progressively due to the harsh processes of globalization and the neoliberal economic model.

### 1.3. Types of Political Parties

Political parties can be categorized based on various criteria, leading to numerous typologies. Here, we will highlight some of the most significant classifications:

*Civil and labor parties* – for this type of party classification, the main criterion was class-ideological affiliation, which interest group or social stratum political parties address, whose interests they try to represent in the political field, articulate and mobilize as political ideas. It is a traditional division of parties with two main political variations. The first represents the interests of the civil layers of society, particularly its higher parts, values, and interests. The second variation represents the interests of the working classes, with an emphasized class vision of politics;

*Parties of the left and the right* constitute a traditional division primarily mirroring class-ideological distinctions within society. Comparable to civil and labor parties, these differences seek political expression in the parliamentary life and party system. In contrast to labor parties, those on the left encompass a broader spectrum of leftist ideas and worldviews. They are moving towards a more diverse political representation, including the lower middle class and left-leaning intellectuals. Parties on the right politically advocate for conservative social structures. Their objective is to challenge the pace and direction of social re-

forms and political changes and preserve traditional societal values and the existing political order;

*Mass and cadre parties.* Mass parties gather a large number of political members, so they have a solid organization, clearly expressed hierarchy, and party discipline intending to include as much as the possible mass of the electorate, while cadre parties, as their name suggests, are organized around a narrow number of their supporters and tight inner circle members, are individualistically and elitist oriented and represent the upper layers of society;

*Representative and mobilization parties.* Representative parties organize themselves to consistently represent the interests of their sympathizers in the political landscape and try to programmatically follow the political movements in the electoral populous on which they rely while mobilizing parties focus on the mobilization of their members and sympathizers, their active participation in the political field, and especially in the pre-election cycle phase;

*Comprehensive and cartel parties.* Comprehensive parties pursue a massive social orientation to attain optimal political outcomes. Termed “Catch-All-Parties” in political literature, they seek to appeal to diverse segments of society, providing political representation for varied interests and pledging to foster the most robust social consensus possible. By doing so, they are trying to

achieve the effect of a comprehensive party that has substantially eased its ideological profile and directed its main political struggle toward maximizing political profit. These parties aim to mobilize the broadest sections of society, similar to mass political parties in size and reach. The main difference between them is that the membership of comprehensive parties is less formalized than that of mass parties, and the need to attract as many interest groups and social movements as possible to their political front is more pronounced. A cartel party is a professional political organization that seeks to gather a part of the political elite, prepare them well for participation in political power, and represent the interests of a specific political, professional, or economic-financial group. Efforts are underway to create a political environment that fosters tolerance between parties and reduces inter-party competence to efficient political management;

*Clientelistic and leadership parties.* Clientelistic parties were created as a feature of the contemporary phase of party organization to offer their political services, above all services of political representation, to specific social strata, professional associations, economic organizations, and other subjects who, especially in the phase of transition processes, feel the need for effective political representation in institutions and authorities. These parties primarily provide “selective advantages in the form of patronage jobs – preferential treat-

ment in the distribution of social subsidies (funds), government contracts” (S. Orlović, 2002: 81). Leadership parties are political parties where the political leader has a dominant role in decision-making and overall control of the party. The leader has a centralized authority with a focus on accumulating power. As a result, the leader's influence is pervasive throughout the party, and their decisions carry significant weight. A political organization makes the most of the leader's charisma with his electorate and eventual political popularity as his main political trump card. This type of party and membership is authoritative and appeals to the electorate already having a strong need for political leadership.

The presented typology of parties is only one of the possible ones. Despite variations in categorization, many political parties exhibit multiple characteristics and can belong to different groups. This complexity arises from the inherent imperfections in classifications and the intricate nature of political life. Often, political reality surpasses our inclination to simplify it, necessitating a recognition of its intricacies beyond the constraints of available concepts, classifications, and theories.

#### **1.4. Lines of social cleavages and political divisions**

In the political science literature, there is a high degree of agreement regarding the position that the struc-



ture of a society, and especially the line of social cleavages and divisions, firmly influence the configuration of political relations in the political field as an area of concentrated political power, and consequently also the formation of the party system and its dynamics, regardless of the type of social cleavages we are considering. "The field of politics is formed, with all its specificities, on the basic lines of social cleavages. Social cleavages do not encompass any social differences; rather, they specifically represent the deepest, structural lines that organize systemic and permanent divisions." (Z. Stojiljković, 2006: 159)." (Z. Stojiljković, 2006: 159). Political scientists Stein Rokkan and Seymour Lipset formulate a clear position that the current political divisions are, in fact, a reflection of frozen social cleavages that are partially synchronous with the beginning of industrial, religious, and national revolutions that occurred in modern times. Social and political relations took shape along cleavages that follow binary pairs: state – church, center – periphery, village – city, and labor – capital. All later typologies of splits will modify their division or supplement it with other peculiarities, such as political ideologies or characteristics related to national and civil movements, that is, the differences between them. Therefore, social cleavages are relatively permanent features of the social configuration of a political community, and their action produces visible influences on the dynamics and character of relations in a party system. The deeper the social cleavages, the stronger their influence on political divisions. Similarly, Klaus Bayme makes his classification of axes of social faults, giving a more complex typology of as many as

eight lines. He notes that the importance of the mentioned splits is not of the same conception and intensity in some social or political fields. According to Bayme, the binary pairs are labor – capital, center – periphery, city – village, secular – religious, centralism – decentralism, Westerners – nationalists, materialists – post-materialists, old regime – post-transformational regime.

Serbian authors Z. Slavujević, J. Komšić, and D. Pantić created a type of combined typology of social cleavage lines, considering them representative of political conditions in Serbia. Their typology is:

1. The socioeconomic cleavage line, which, in addition to other features, focuses specifically on the characteristics of transitional winners or losers;
2. Historical-ethnic line, which is horizontal in character and concerns divisions based on ethnic basis;
3. The cultural value line concentrated around the traditionalism – modernism – postmodernism axis;
4. The ideological-political line focuses on ideological, class, and economic features translated into forms of social organization. It is often perceived in the public through the division into the left, center, and right (G. Ivaničević, 117).

The significance of social cleavages and divisions is evident in their direct impact on the political system, particularly the dynamics of relations within the party system. This influence extends to the number and types of political parties, their ideologies, and their actions. The political profiling of parties primarily hinges on the

identified social cleavages and the parties' imperative to organize themselves in alignment with their assessments. This organization aims to politically represent specific options and interests that emerge along political fault lines.

## 2. Electoral systems

An electoral system is a set of rules and procedures that legally regulate when and how citizens (the people) can choose their representatives (individuals or parties) who will represent them in the highest representative body – the assembly or parliament. Therefore, “electoral systems represent a complex set of pre-defined rules (mechanisms, procedures, procedures) with the help of which it is possible to carry out elections in a functional sense, and therefore the functioning of party and political systems, as well as democracy in general” (G. Ivančević, 2020: 79).

J. Schumpeter, a political theorist, views elections as the fundamental core of democracy, an indispensable foundation upon which the entire political and party system relies. Elections are a means for significant political bodies to fill roles and positions for which they are elected by citizens, according to A. Heywood's functional perspective. According to G. Sartori, elections are a manipulative tool politicians use to shape a political community's party systems. He sees it as an impact on the selection and determination of political representation. Sartori holds a pessimistic view on elections, seeing them as the “most manipulative instrument

of politics.” Even more pessimistic authors, such as Ginzberg, believe that the purpose of election is to exercise political control over the population, leading to more peaceful, adaptable, and obedient citizens. Electoral bodies or other entities that these bodies exert considerable control over play a crucial role in actively shaping public opinion and reinforcing the positions of political elites during the election process. It highlights the extent of political influence in the electoral process, which demands scrutiny.

A. Lijphart, a Dutch-American political scientist, gives us a more precise definition of the typology of electoral systems using seven dominant characteristics: electoral formula, size of electoral unit, electoral threshold, total number of members in the elected body, influence of presidential election on legislative body election, maldistribution and electoral inter-party ties (ibid., 81). Political science distinguishes between three types of election systems: competitive, non-competitive, and semi-competitive. Individuals have the genuine opportunity to select from political choices exclusively during competitive elections. Such electoral systems are designed only in democratic societies, that is, political systems. The tenets underlying competitive electoral systems encompass various principles, including:

*Electoral Nomination*– Unfettered right to nominate candidates, consequently ensuring the freedom to participate in the electoral process;

*Political Competition of Candidates*– This involves fostering a competitive environment wherein di-

verse political ideas and programs vie for public support;

*Equal Opportunities*– This principle necessitates intrinsically the same conditions for candidacy, enabling the fair presentation of distinct political alternatives;

*Freedom of Choice*– Ensuring the secrecy of voting guarantees the electorate the freedom to make choices without fear of external influence;

*Guaranteed Election Conditions*– Ensuring a fair and equal opportunity for all participants by consistently upholding election regulations and maintaining a level playing field;

*Temporal Considerations*– This encompasses a well-defined mandate cycle for elections, delineating the duration of elected mandates and the periodicity of re-elections.

Only competitive elections – electoral systems ensure the “legitimacy of the political and constitutional system. They have a normative character in every liberal-pluralist democracy” (R. Stepanov, 128). In the field of political science, elections serve four dominant purposes:

- a. Upward functions: which involve recruitment, representation, and education of government.
- b. Downward functions: which establish legitimacy, public opinion, and political elites.
- c. Formal functions: which refer to the compliance with legal election procedures and the post-election constitution of the elected government.

- d. Material and political functions: expressed through actual or apparent political competition. When evaluating potential candidates for election, it is imperative to consider their capacity to effectively address specific societal issues during their pre-election campaigns and their political credibility with the electorate (Ibid., 129)

Therefore, observed and determined through the category of power, electoral functions should reflect the distribution of political power as realistically as possible, that is, be an appropriate mechanism for various types of social power transfer into legitimate political power. As a common rule, this “electoral alchemy” occurs only through free, secret, general, and undisturbed elections. In any other case, achieving a result is not a legitimate power but its more or less pathological derivatives.

When delineating the functions and classifications of electoral systems, it is crucial to emphasize the right to vote, as it serves as the foundation for constituting a representative body and engaging citizens in the political process. “The legal, political, and civilizational characteristics of the right to vote are generality, equality, immediacy, and secrecy. *Generality* implies general suffrage, the right for all citizens of a country to have active and passive suffrage, that is, to vote or to be elected. And all this by the very act of citizenship, regardless of possible differences related to gender, race, language, profession, or religion. *Equality* of voting rights implies the principle that the importance of each voter's vote is the same, regardless of any possible

enumerated differences. *The immediacy* of the electoral right means the voters determine the mandate holders, unlike the indirect form when someone mediates between them as an intermediary, for example, electors during elections in the USA. *Secrecy* of the right to vote means no other person or body can follow the voter's decision when voting" (ibid., 131).

## **2.1. Majoritarian electoral systems**

According to G. Sartori, the goal of an election is not only to choose a parliament but also to form a government. Majoritarian electoral systems, therefore, aim to create a majority and accept the disproportion of votes. Empirically, majoritarian electoral systems appear as an absolute majority system (where the candidate wins the seat with an absolute majority in the multi-district voting cycle), a system with a relative majority (on the principle of winning the seat with the highest number of votes), and a combined system (which is, in fact, a combination of the previous two systems, with two-round voting). Majoritarian systems of the English type are systems of relative majority with one round of voting, the main goal of which is the efficient selection of candidates who will represent citizens in an electoral unit.

## **2.2. Proportional electoral systems (proportional representation)**

In contrast to majoritarian electoral systems, the proportional electoral system aims to achieve parlia-

mentary representation for political parties that corresponds proportionally to their presence in the electoral body. The number of votes received reliably determines this alignment.

“Theorists state that the most frequently applied formulas for calculating votes are: the method of the highest average, the so-called D’Hondt’s method; the method of the largest remainder and Saint-Laguë’s formula” (G. Ivančević, 84). That is why the effect of disproportionality in the proportional electoral system is small, and it should better represent the representation of different political options in the electorate. “This system tries to give the minority factor a chance to get its representatives in the parliament (representative body)” (R. Stepanov, 134).

### **2.3. Mixed electoral systems**

Mixed or combined electoral systems seek to combine majoritarian and proportional electoral systems to get the best of both systems. They are usually used in territorially complex states (for example, the Federal Republic of Namibia) or in parts of simple, unitary states that have their regional specificities (for example, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Serbia from 1990 to 2012). Thus, deputies are usually elected to parliament according to the proportional electoral system for the best possible representation of political options in the electorate because it is about the political representation of citizens. In majority systems, representatives are elected based on the territorial principle



to ensure that they represent specific territorial units as subjects of the vertical hierarchy within a political system.

### **3. Social movements**

Social movements constitute a form of social organization and collective behavior predominantly reliant on the involvement and commitment of their members. The impetus for their initiatives emanates from the membership and their perspectives on a particular social issue in search of resolution. Generally characterized by a loose, unstable structure and lacking a robust hierarchy, social movements operate through spontaneous assembly, strong motivation, and pronounced political and civil activism. Individuals engage in social movements with the intent to contribute to the resolution of a perceived significant social problem. Simultaneously, they harbor reservations about having their activism co-opted by political party affiliations or compromising their autonomy in decision-making and work, a consequence of aligning with a party's organizational framework and hierarchy. "The basic elements of identifying a social movement are collective action, voluntariness and openness (for the inclusion of others in the movement), mass, formed attitude towards social change, expression of social conflict, interest basis of gathering, unsatisfied needs, publicity of action, spontaneity, diffusion, and elasticity, as well as the social relevance of the problem" (R. Stepanov, 82). Professor Vukašin Pavlović points out that, from the point of

view of social development, “social movements represent important actors of social dynamics and the most important social subjects of social changes.” In movements, the scattered social energy of the masses condense and articulate into more or less precisely formulated demands for specific changes” (V. Pavlović, 1987: 7).

Characterized by their initiatives and forms of action, it consistently directed toward the political order, particularly to the centers of concentrated political power and decision-making. The ultimate goal of these movements is to exert civic pressure on these centers. Within the framework of contemporary political sociology, it is possible to find several typologies or classifications of social movements. In addition to the classic ones, which arose in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (labor movements, religious, feminist movements), there are also new, alternative movements, such as environmental movements, student movements, countercultural movements, neo-feminist movements, peace movements, anti-nuclear movements, movements for alternative technology and alternative energy, movements for an alternative economy, movements for autonomy, civil movements, new urban movements, neo-religious movements, new age movement” (V. Pavlović, 2003: 106).

#### **4. Interest and lobby groups**

- a) Interest groups commonly act when there is a pronounced need for mediation between citizens

and political authorities to solve notable social problems. Interest groups represent one of the most important links between government and citizens. “They are associations representing a powerful instrument of action in the modern political system. The emergence of interest groups is related to increasingly complex divisions in modern industrial society. An interest group is a more or less organized association whose goal is to influence politics or the actions of the government” (R. Stepanov, 80).

Interest groups, unlike political parties, act from the outside, outside the political system itself, but direct their action towards it, as a concentrated field of political power where decisions are made or influence the pace of their implementation, for which interest groups act as representatives, particularly interested citizens. “To achieve their interests, these groups use various tactics, starting from serving in public bodies and helping government programs, to organizing campaigns of civil disobedience and popular protests” (ibid.: 80). They are part of a broad front of civil organization, an active agent of civil society and part of the process of political participation as a segment of political influence on the government and its institutions. Achieving a specific interest in the political system is the motivational goal of an interest group.

- b) Lobby groups are the organizations they represent a form of interest group for putting pressure on authorities (or its representatives) to achieve a

specific political goal or satisfy the social or political interests of those parts of society on whose behalf they act. Lobbyists work to influence the government and its decision-making processes. They use various methods to pressure individuals in power whom they believe can make decisions that align with their client's interests. They represent their clients to the government and advocate for their concerns throughout the decision-making process. So, lobby groups are clientelistic organizations whose purpose is non-transparent action in favor of their clients. That's why they function "away from public eyes," as mentioned, within the corridors or lobbies of political institutions (lobbying). "To facilitate lobbying, a lobbying fund is established (in areas like agriculture, healthcare, military, or oil). The operational methods of lobby groups vary widely; their activities range from subtle approaches such as discussions, persuasion, and consensus-building to economic pressures, coercion, and corruption. Additionally, they extend to political pressures exerted through public means." (ibid., 81). Lobby organizations are well aware that the era of dislocation of political power has arrived, so they direct the focus of their actions in the direction of new centers of power, not only political institutions, which they have traditionally done until now and found ways to achieve the most favorable position for the clientele whose needs they serve. They serve as a link between decision-making centers and political institutions where

decisions are verified and implemented. Repeatedly, lobby groups and lobbying act as a front for systemic corruption, a practice legalized by the legal regulations governing lobbying. It is precisely how this type of political activity conceals corruption.

## VII CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is a remarkable accomplishment of modernity in freely organized social structures and the autonomy of social endeavors. The Latin phrase *societas civilis* is a comprehensive term encompassing social interactions, connections, institutions, and values that center around the individual as a citizen, emphasizing the imperative to safeguard their freedom, rights, and interests. In essence, civil society constitutes a community of citizens and their affiliations, wherein individuals simultaneously manifest themselves as persons with distinct personalities and proprietors with ownership extending beyond mere property to encompass rights, freedom, and private life. This concept unifies civil rights, civil associations, and the public within a shared domain. Modern civil society is the equivalent of legality (civil law, civil, political, and social equality, and rights), plurality (autonomous, self-organized, and voluntary associations), and public (spaces of communication, public participation, emergence, conflict, reflection and accumulation of political will and social norms” (R. Stepanov, 85).

Civil society constitutes an independent realm of both public and private activities, operating beyond the control of the state and maintaining an uncompromising stance in this regard. Independence is crucial for the functioning of democracy and citizens' freedom preservation. As a space for non-institutional self-governance by citizens, it upholds the rule of law as a fundamental principle in political functioning, fosters social tolerance, and facilitates social mobility. "According to David Held, contemporary citizenship is full membership in the community, which includes the right to participate actively in determining the conditions of the community and ensuring the equal status of individuals and groups through the interdependence of rights and duties, powers and limitations, powers and responsibilities, and that in a general way, both towards the state and towards other members of the political community, members of civil society" (V. Pavlović 2004: 85).

Civil society is defined as a space of plural organized social life that is self-regulating and, in the political sense, autonomous from the structures of the state government. The distinguishing signs of such a society are strong and independent groups and associations in counterbalance to concentrated political power. At the center of the concept of civil society are the values of constitutional freedom, plurality, and democratic legitimacy. Hence, the task of civil society is doubly complex: in its defensive-constitutional role, it sets constitutional limits to political power and organizes itself around the concept of the so-called negative freedom, therefore, acts protectively. In an offensive-participatory role, the sector of civil initiatives pene-

trates the field of ruling politics, organizing around the concept of positively understood freedom directed to decision-making and implementation for citizens. In both its roles, the civil sector must insist on civic education and self-education, which encourages a liberal political culture, an integral sphere of privacy, and a rationalized field of political life. According to Tocqueville's warning, where pre-modern types of autonomies have not prevailed and transformed into the forms of modern civil life, there is a great danger of the creation of new tyrannies, small or large. (Lj. Despotović, 2014: 57).

Civil society always works to build and preserve the democratic political culture of citizens as a condition for democratic political order functioning. Without it, democracy remains incapacitated, regardless of the formal establishment of its political and legal institutions within the political and legal system.

### **1. The core principles of civil society**

“Positive principles on which the concept of civil society rests, among others, are:

- a) autonomy (concerning politics and the state),
- b) associativity (non-political association and organization),
- c) contractually (which has two levels: the global idea of the social contract as the basis not only of political authority but also of social order, and the concrete level of contractual relations in commercial and other social traffic among citizens as individuals),



- d) pluralism (social and interest),
- e) individuality and self-initiative,
- f) solidarity,
- g) self-organization and voluntariness,
- h) the public,
- i) humanity and humanitarianism,
- j) self-help.” (V. Pavlović, 80).

The importance of civil society for modern society is manifold:

- civil society creates prerequisites for the rule of law, the system of division of power and the proper functioning of the overall institutional order of the state;
- civil society essentially limits political power and legitimizes its authority if the principles and standards of functioning of the rule of law are respected;
- civil society establishes a wide field of its own autonomous action as the total civil freedom of the individual;
- civil society influences the pluralization of civil society in many forms of civil initiatives;
- a developed civil society is a safe path to the so-called open society, which is based on new activism and individualism as principles of cooperation and free exchange;
- civil society is the sublimation of the civil public as a partner of the government, as well as the space for the induction of public discourses as a form of autonomous communication, both be-

tween civil actors themselves and towards authorities from politics and the political system.

## **2. Civil strategy**

“Civil strategy represents such civic action that goes from the base of society (social and political system) to its top. That is why it is called bottom/up strategy. The main and basic actors of the civil strategy are citizens. The fundamental concept of the civil strategy is to involve a large number of citizens in managing public affairs. A citizen is an integral part of the political system and the state and has the inherent right to shape and manage the political community. The constitutional and private law guarantees the rights of citizens. A citizen is a holder of civil rights and civil privileges; he shapes legally and politically that formation which is designated as a legal and constitutional state” (R. Stepanov, 89).

A citizen is, in essence, a politically subjectivized individual aware of his rights, freedoms, and autonomy, but also his responsibility towards society, other members of the community, and the functioning of good order and democracy. So we may say authoritarianism, arbitrariness, personal power, and lack of freedom reign where citizens are not politically subjectivized individuals.

## VIII POLITICAL CULTURE

Political culture is a concept that came from the field of political sociology and became one of the most important in the field of political science. It belongs to the Polity dimension of politics, as Radivoj Stepanov correctly notes. It indicates or defines the orientation of citizens towards politics, their perception of political legitimacy, tradition, political ideas, and options. In a word, political culture as a term expresses the majority views of citizens on the corpus of political values and norms that define politics and configure political relations in a political community.

“Political culture can be briefly defined as the total sum of actions and thoughts or as the way of life of a nation. Political culture encompasses the shared beliefs, values, behaviors, and practices that shape society's political system functioning. It determines the orientation of society towards political actions and embodies a set of meanings and goals that define a political system. Political culture includes not only the rules and norms of political governance but also the types of social and political actions, as well as the processes that prepare

individuals for social participation, such as political socialization, formation of social character, symbolization, and rituals that express accepted types of belief and ideology, and dominant mentality.” (R. Stepanov, 92). “Under the most general definitions, political culture would be that part of the general culture of a society that includes values, beliefs, attitudes, symbols, tendencies, and patterns of behavior concerning politics and political issues, as well as those issues related to the general conditions of everyday life into one society and to the choice of directions and goals of overall social development (development management)” (M. Matić; M. Podunavac, 1984: 348).

## **1. Types of political culture**

Political scientists Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba highlighted three types of political culture as types of political orientation towards the political system:

- A parochial political culture, potentially constrained within a regional or local context characterized by a similar political-value orientation. This type is characterized by a static and localized approach to politics, traditionally focused on the institutional environment closer to it, which is quite far from the central government structures;
- A submissive type of political culture marked by a strong inclination toward central authorities, unwavering respect for them, and a form of submission. It is about the lack of civic awareness

among supporters of this orientation and the traditional experience of politics, in which the central government is everything, and the subject is obliged to obey it. It is usually present in societies of a semi-peripheral or peripheral character, where democratic traditions are modest and where the autocratic way of ruling dominates;

- A participatory political culture is evident among citizens constantly seeking to fulfill their political needs and interests. This culture thrives in developed civil society with people aware of their rights and freedoms. They actively interact with central, regional, or local authorities, demonstrating a commitment and consistency to public interest implementation.

Politics and culture classification from Arendt Lipphart's perspective centers on the conventional sociological framework of elite and mass dynamics. Then he recognizes the political culture of the elite, which is the appearance of the harmfulness and orientation of the destructive elite of the premodern political, those of the political culture of the mass of the Veinian affairs in the social structure of the modern destructive forces and their orientations of the premodern political.

## **2. Formative factors of political culture**

When we examine the formative factors of political culture, we refer to the work of my colleague Milan Podunavac. He believes that these are political traditions and political socialization.

- a) Political tradition, a formative factor of political culture, is represented mainly in pre-modern political communities with strict legal tradition, active action of political authority, their dominant patterns of behavior, and severe rules as a social code. "It is often an expression of the long-term vulnerability of the community and the need to preserve identity, culture, and common life, and vulnerability comes as an external threat." For the type of political tradition that arises in a society, the forms and content of conflicts that emerged in that society in the past divided or united that society over various issues are of great importance" (ibid., 355).
- b) Political socialization, as an element of political culture, involves particular political values adoption. Recognizable are the spontaneous and subconscious processes of political socialization and identification. "There is a whole scale of factors involved, starting from the process of unconscious and spontaneous socialization and identification to political myths, rituals and symbols, and their influence on the formation of attitudes of future citizens." Of course, this includes direct forms of socialization in the form of civic training, participation in political life, as well as the analysis of all social and group variables of importance for the political identity of individuals and groups (religious affiliation, social status, regional affiliation, major political events, and experiences )" (ibid., 357).

Nenad Kecmanović also emphasizes the significant role of political socialization in the dominant pattern formation of political culture. “Socialization, as well as political socialization, means, among other things, the transmission of traditions from older generations to younger generations in the form of value systems, social norms, ways of thinking, patterns of behavior, meaning of symbols, lifestyle.” (N. Kecmanović, 2011 : 290). The initiation of political socialization commences within the framework of education and upbringing, with the family playing an irreplaceable role. After this, social institutions, especially state institutions, direct individuals to adopt values and norms. Ultimately, this contributes to prevailing manifestations of political culture within the political community.

## IX POLITICAL SYSTEM

For the term or phrase political system, there is a need to theoretically determine its distribution in the complex disciplinary level of political science. The English term “Political system” is more recent in modern political science, taken from sociology as a social science, and theoretically specified after the Second World War with the emergence and development of cybernetics. In the basic sense of its meaning, the political system investigates state and constitutional systems, political institutions, forms of government, party and electoral systems, political culture, and political values. Before establishing its theoretical and conceptual relevance, traditional political science for similar political phenomenology used concepts that converge towards the theory of the state, constitutional order, political institutions, and normative order of government.

According to some contemporary political scientists, the political system is a subsystem of the global society that reflects its relatively independent entities and organizations responsible for solving some signifi-



cant social problems. Hence, it adopts a systemic perspective that views various components or entities as functional subsystems within the overarching social community. “In this context, the political system serves as the fundamental and broadest idea in politics and political science, endeavoring to rationalize and integrate the elements of a whole on the most abstract level.” (M. Matic; M. Podunavac, 132).

“The political system is an institutionalized form and how the relationship between public authority and society is determined and regulated. In more precise and detailed terms, by the political system, we mean, on the one hand, the system of institutionalized holders of political power in a social community, the manner of their constitution, organization, and action, and, on the other hand, a set of those institutions and relationships through which an organized connection is established between power holders and social forces in whose name they rule” (R. Stepanov, 144). Thus, the political system investigates the set of all institutions that make up a government, the relations between the government and society understood as a political community, the processes of exercising power, and the feedback influence of citizens on political institutions as representatives of their public interest.

### **1. Theories of the political system**

As in other disciplinary fields of political science, in the area of the political system, several theories explain its essence and significance.

### 1.1.

Talcott Parsons, the American sociologist, formulated his *Theory of the social system* within the field of sociology, as outlined in his renowned work, *The Social System*. Parsons' theory rests on the so-called AGIL schemes. The scheme presents an acronym of several crucial terms that elucidate the essence of the social system ((Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration, Latency). Adaptation, as the first topic, referred to the mechanisms of adaptation to the existing social environment, primarily to the economic subsystem. Achieving the purpose/goal was related to the political subsystem. Integration refers to the normative aspects of politics, legal norms, and social control. Latent cause consolidation refers to cultural and motivational ties that structure social relations. Thus, Parsons' theory of the social system as a “goal satisfaction function” is realized through the political system, its institutions, functions, and relationships.

### 1.2.

In the context of cybernetic theory, scholars developed political cybernetics as a theory that views activities related to system management as a form of autonomous governance relying on the principles of self-regulation and self-control. “*Cybernetic system theory* directs attention towards communication and control-management processes as two neuralgic points of government functioning” (ibid., 146).

The cybernetic theory of systems rests on three crucial processes of self-control of a system:

- The first rests on the process of self-control and constitutes the ability or the possibility of finding

goals within the political field, their precise selection and marking;

- The second implies knowledge about changes within the system that seem necessary for its smooth functioning and self-regulation;
- The third process emphasizes the significance of the system's capability to verify, select, and generate data, highlighting this as essential secondary information imbued with the property of “consciousness” within the system as a self-regulating mechanism.

The three mentioned processes, which encompass behavior within the political system, establish the critical principle of information feedback. Without this, the proper system functioning and the self-maintenance and preservation of the continuity of system function becomes impossible.

### 1.3.

In his famous book *System Analysis of Political Life*, David Easton presents the *Theory of authoritative value allocation*. Easton perceives the political system as a system and process of deciding on the distribution of total social goods. “This distribution occurs authoritatively, requiring respect, and the system is prepared to impose sanctions on those who refuse to adhere to decisions made at the system levels.” Political science refers to understanding how authoritative decisions are made and executed. Easton defines the political system as a complex set of procedures through which inputs from the given environment of the system enter/penetrate the political system” (ibid.: 147). There-

fore, Easton sees the political system as a place for making valid, authoritative decisions, which perform the notable function of political institutions to distribute or redistribute the existing fund of social goods, making a more or less fair and just allocation of socially created values/goods/resources.

#### 1.4.

*The structural-functional model* of the political system is attributed to the American political scientist Gabriel Almond, as presented in his work, *Development of the Political System*. He continues and builds on Easton's theoretical model by creating some noteworthy additions concerning the input and output functions of the political system. According to Almodo, the essential functions in the input phase of the functioning of the political system are:

- political socialization and recruitment, which refers to functions of political socialization and recruitment of individuals for the needs of performing specific roles in the political system;
- interest articulation, which refers to the manifestation of interests in the political system and the expression of demands for effective political action;
- interest aggregation, whose function is to connect and group interests and turn them into alternative public policies;
- political communication, which enables the formation of public opinion and an active electorate, as noteworthy segments of the efficient functioning of the political system.

Gabriel Almond believes that the capacity of input is always much higher than the capacity of output within the framework of the political system because the state and political institutions have limited capacity to process the multitude of input interests and turn them into the result of the effective operation of the political system. With all the systemic or institutional limitations, according to Almond, the political system still has several notable functional capabilities:

- extractive capacity, understood as the ability of the political system to extract material and human resources from the given environment (natural environment, economy);
- regulatory capacity means, in fact, the system's control capacity in terms of regulating the behavior of individuals or other social actors, as well as establishing standards, intensity, and even limits of political tolerance;
- distributive capacity primarily refers to the possession of capacities and institutions that will deal with the distribution of goods and services;
- symbolic ability refers to the manifestation of political unity, dignity, loyalty, and similar symbolic values;
- the ability to respond, that is, the ability of the political system itself to establish a balance between input and output factors.

## 2. Classifications of Political Systems

In modern political science literature, there are numerous and diverse classifications and typologies of political systems, of which we will mention only a few:

- a. Carl Friedrich's classification. He, as a German constitutionalist, classified twelve types/types of political systems: anarchy, tribal rule, despotic monarchy, an oligarchy of the nobility, theocracy – priestly oligarchy, direct democracy, bureaucratic rule, parliamentary-cabinet rule, democracy, presidential rule, military dictatorship, and totalitarian dictatorship;
- b. Tom Bottomore's classification. This British sociologist distinguishes primitive societies, city-states, Asian states, and nation-states.
- c. The classification of S. N. Eisenstadt, to whom conceptually align Pitirim Sorokin, S. M. Lipset, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, and other historians of similar perspectives, is characterized by the identification of primitive systems, patrimonial empires, city-states, feudal systems, centralized bureaucratic empires, and modern systems. These classifications recognize democratic, autocratic, totalitarian, and developing systems. (*ibid.*: 153).

## X VARIETIES OF POLITICAL REGIMES

In political history, scholars commonly categorize political regimes as either autocratic or democratic. Autocratic regimes feature the concentration of power in one person, limited authority, and insufficient legitimacy. On the other hand, division of power, mutual inspection of those in power, and their political legitimacy are characteristic of democratic regimes.

### 1. Autocracy

Autocracy constitutes a political regime where one person governs authoritatively, wielding substantial power and asserting dominance. In this form of governance, legitimacy within the government is either minimal or entirely lacking, occasionally facing challenges to its fundamental legality. It essentially captures the authenticity and fundamentals of autocracy, characterized by the prevalence and usurpation of actions within the institutions of the political system, even when the distribution of power formally exists. In the history of

political regimes, scholars commonly classify autocracies as either traditional or modern.

Political history distinguishes old forms of autocracy as either despotism or tyranny and as a unique variant, the ancient dictatorship may also emerge. It's important to note that if a dictatorship assumes an oligarchic character, it ceases to be considered part of autocracy. Dictatorship is invariably associated with a restricted period, a practice commonly observed in ancient Greece. So, it is characteristic of despotism and tyranny to rule without restrictions, arbitrarily, brutally trampling every form of law. It is a reckless and immoral usurpation of the political order by one ruler. At the top of the pyramid of power stands only an individual who tyrannizes the mass of oppressed and humiliated subjects. These personal government regimes have ancient origins, to the earliest periods of well-established civilizations in Asia, North Africa, the Middle East, and the European world.

Modern forms of autocracy are dictatorship, Caesarism, and totalitarianism.

Dictatorship represents the epitome of autocracy, involving the usurpation of all rights from those under its rule. It entails the fundamental monopolization of state power and its political and legal framework. In modern political history, there is a link between dictatorship and revolutionary circumstances within a political community, for example, the October Revolution. In these cases, the guise of dictatorship, as seen in the dictatorship of the proletariat, conceals the true nature of autocratic rule, as exemplified by Lenin and later Stalin. "In contemporary political literature, the concept



of dictatorship is politically expanded. Namely, modern dictatorships include unlimited powers concentrated in the hands of one person or one group that came to power illegitimately (by a coup d'état), suspension of earlier (acquired) constitutional and political rights, manipulation of the collective feelings of subjects (by spreading fear, general suspicion and suspicion of everyone and everything, creating enemies of the regime, enemies of the people or the state, abolishing pluralism of opinion, any form of public and tolerant dialogue)" (R. Stepanov, 172).

Caesarism, manifested as a personal rule form, aims to preserve power at any cost. Caesarism may also take the form of plebiscitary Caesarism, wherein a substantial number of individuals endorse the usurper's Caesarist style of governance during a specific period or even vote for such a leader of personal power in elections. In the Balkans, an example of this type of government is the initial period of Slobodan Milošević's rule, when he had the majority support of the electorate in the first half of the nineties of the last century, which he would gradually lose.

Totalitarianism is a form of political regime that means the gradual expansion of absolute power to all segments of the state and society, including the sphere of citizens' privacy and their views on the world.

The president is the dominant personality heading the mass party. The membership of the party, as well as the electorate that follows the president, perceives him as an undisputed leader. Operating under the *fürher principle*, the president consolidates all party power in their hands, using the party as an unwavering machine

to carry out their directives. This form of governance is coupled with political violence, often involving terror orchestrated by the secret police within the intelligence and security sector, leveraging their power along with the repressive apparatus of the state. Absolute control of the country's media sphere and utilization to sustain the government, manage the opposition, and regulate citizens are evident. The economic levers of power are integral to the overarching structure, their possession exploited to perpetuate the government's totalitarian order. In this context, everything becomes a commodity traded within the constrained environment of impoverished citizens, as poverty and underdevelopment typically accompany totalitarianism.

## **2. Democracy**

Democracy, as a political concept and practice, has existed in various forms since antiquity and is relevant nowadays. It is one of the most contested political orders, often criticized by individuals and groups who may not fully grasp its essence and the underlying political values. Simultaneously, it has been a political ideal for which people have shed blood for centuries, making significant sacrifices in its name. Our stance is unequivocal: democracy may not be the perfect political order, but it is undeniably the least flawed among those established and practiced throughout the political history of humanity. We will outline its most commendable values and characteristics.

The term “democracy” is derived from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratos* (to rule), ultimately giving rise to the concept that, at its most basic level, signifies the rule of the people. However, one should refrain from interpreting it literally; instead, the people function as bearers of sovereign will and actively govern through their elected representatives. Democracies, fundamentally, are polyarchic, meaning that governance involves the participation of many, thereby precluding the existence of any monopolies. Moreover, democracy constitutes a system of political relations grounded in what is known as democratic deontology. It involves a correct understanding of the government's duty to protect the public interests of citizens, coupled with the citizens' responsibility to uphold the law, institutions, and especially the system of democratic values that are indispensable for a democratic order existence.

“It is interesting to point out that Slobodan Jovanović attached great importance to the democratic and libertarian spirit of a people in the constitution and development of the political system. He knew very well that, although difficult to grasp and vague for science, the concept of the spirit of the people in real political life has a decisive influence on the direction and means that a nation chooses on its historical path to democracy. Similar to the Danish humanist Hal Koch, he knew that democracy is not a ready-made thing or a mere system but a living and active relationship to social reality, mediated by interests, above all by the rights and freedoms of man as an individual” (Lj. Despotović, 2001: 54 ).

“Democracy is not a static achievement but an ongoing task that requires constant attention. Importantly, it is not an easily taught doctrine immediately embraced. Rather, it is a mindset, a way of life that permeates one's existence, extending from private interactions with family and neighbors to relations with other nations. The guarantee of it is elusive precisely because it's not a fixed system but a lifestyle to achieve. It is a mindset that transmits to each successive generation. These characteristics underscore why the core of democracy lies in enlightening and educating the people.” (H. Koch, 1994: 15).

Norberto Bobbio defines democracy as the antithesis of all forms of autocratic regimes, describing it as a collection of primary and fundamental rules governing the process of making collective decisions and applying procedures. According to H. Linz and A. Stepan, democracy represents a method for managing the state and a contemporary system of governance grounded in free and active citizenship. It constitutes a political system that upholds the rule of law and ensures political freedoms and the exercise of citizens' rights. A. Heywood describes liberal democracy as an indirect and representative, where individuals secure political positions through success in regular elections, upholding the formal political equality of citizens. In this democratic model, a distinct boundary exists between the state and civil society, emphasizing the principles of political pluralism and the political competence of diverse political alternatives.

Professor Vučina Vasović rationally and essentially defines democracy: “It as a form of political system and

life that enables the people or the broadest strata of society to indirectly or directly participate in the process of authoritative management of social affairs, that is, influence on the exercise of public authority, and in which management and public authority are carried out in the interest of the people, social majority while guaranteeing the basic rights and freedoms of man and citizen, especially minority groups. The democratic system includes the state structure and its activity and the more or less institutionalized and complex set of relationships and channels through which society influences the exercise of state power” (V. Vasović, 2006: 49).

## **2.1. Classification of democracy**

In the conventional categorization of democracy, we observe its subdivision into three historical manifestations: direct democracy, representative democracy, and plebiscitary democracy.

- a. Immediate or direct democracy involves a type of political representation and decision-making that excludes any intermediaries. It is concrete and straightforward in how free citizens express and practice it. Smaller political communities, such as the ancient polis, were historically associated with this form of democracy. Today, the closest resemblance to this model is seen in local self-government, serving as a way for citizens to participate politically at the local level. However, as society has developed, centralized, and grown in scale, this historical democratic model has gradually faded.

- b. Mediated democracy is a modern and representative democracy, that is, a parliamentary democracy. Historically, it occurred in large political communities where direct political representation was no longer possible. That's why they introduced mediation. Citizens no longer directly elected representatives to the legislative power of the political community. This type of political representation provides to elect political representatives of citizens (political representation) and political representatives of territorial units in complex forms of the state (territorial representation).
- c. The plebiscite form of democracy functions as a sort of intermediate expression by citizens. In political science literature, it is referred to as referendum democracy, as citizens choose political solutions through a referendum declaration when there is a political need. In addition to the indicated forms of democracy, the political literature also mentions the so-called social democracy.
- d. A. Tocqueville affirmed social democracy in political science in his renowned work "Democracy in America." He discussed a societal state that Europe had not yet experienced in his time. Tocqueville believed it to be a form of American democracy characterized by sociological equality of conditions and a robust egalitarian spirit among American citizens. That is the horizontal structure of social relations that arose as an opponent of the aristocratic regime and the vertical structure of society characteristic of it. Thus, social democ-

racy refers to a society in which the democratic ethos requires citizens to look at each other and treat others as socially equal beings. It is a collection of small primary communities and voluntary associations, a multigroup society that governs itself. Such an order represents the infrastructure of “micro-democracy” as the foundation of the entire political community that builds macro-democracy. The recognition of democratic government involves acknowledging three types of political values translated into a political form, a mandate essential for its authentic designation as such. First, the political component of democracy presupposes the existence of legal-political equality in the community; second, the social component of democracy inevitably insists on the equality of social statuses; and third, the economic component of equality, which tends to equalize the extremes of poverty and wealth in society.

## **2.2. Origins of Democracy**

History knows several significant sources of democracy that decisively influenced the emergence of democracy as a political order:

a. Ancient democracy – the ancient understanding of democracy carries within it the idea of a political order in which the sovereign people have the right to govern themselves and to dispose of all the resources and institutions necessary for such an order realization. Ancient democracy carries within itself a vision of immediately shaping the will of the people as sovereign,

which builds democratic institutions and practices. It brings the idea that democracy as a political order must rest on some equality of free citizens. The Athenians approached it from two perspectives: firstly, recognizing the equal right of all free citizens to speak in the assembly where they made decisions, and secondly, acknowledging the equality of all citizens before the law. In the Greek understanding of democracy, a citizen is a complete person actively involved in politics as a natural social activity, seamlessly integrated with the life of the political community. In this view, the institutions are not distant and inaccessible entities. Political life represents the harmonious engagement of individuals on the plane of their sociability as they step beyond the sphere of privacy, away from the *oikos*. Political life is a harmonious continuation of social values such as virtue, happiness, justice, fairness, and common good. Since it was meant only for free citizens, democracy was an exclusive and not an inclusive community. Freedom was an attribute of belonging to a particular city and not to the human race, so it did not extend beyond the boundaries of the political community itself and the *polis* as its state explication.

b. Republican tradition – as another significant historical source of democracy, rests on the Greek idea of man as a political being, who by his nature is *zoon politikon*, therefore, the being of a free political community. A good man must also be a good citizen, and the association of good citizens is a good state community. A good state organization promotes the virtue of its citizens. Republicans believe that the condition of such a community is in significant aspects of human



equality. They also emphasize that the separation of powers is implicit and that the primary constitutional role is maintaining the proper balance among the three powers (the legislative, the executive concerning things dependent on the law of nations, and the executive regarding matters that depend on civil law). Essential to the republican tradition is the absolute equality of all citizens, particularly in the election of political functions, and time limitation or definiteness of hereditary rights in political life are and cannot be guaranteed. Man is born as a free being, and the political order must ensure him the full enjoyment of it.

c. Representative government – as a democratic institution, represents that part of the political tradition that inherits the attitude of combining the democratic idea of the rule of the people with the practice of political representation. That new political formula offered an innovative solution, especially for large political communities. Citizens accepted this system because it eliminated the former constraints imposed by the size and extent of states (city-polis), which were otherwise diminishing quickly. Representative government is a political representation model aligned seamlessly with the expansive national states that emerged in 19th-century Europe. It is how to achieve the ideal of popular rule, but in conditions of global society and on a large national territory.

d. The principle of political equality expresses the ideals of natural law theory and the social contract, asserting that individuals are inherently equal by nature and before God. Consequently, they possess the right to equality within their political community, a responsibil-

ity entrusted to the state through its laws as their free and sovereign will embodiment. In modern democratic legitimacy, the claim is that people inherently share equal rights, and social disparities cannot justify violating political equality and the inherent rights of being part of the human race. Therefore, it is crucial to differentiate the political concept of *polites*, representing a community of equal citizens, from the concept of *politeia*, which encompasses all citizens irrespective of their status.

### **2. 3. Types of democracy**

Democratic political theory categorizes forms of democracy into two main groups. The first one encompasses Athenian, protective, developmental, and direct democracy. The second group includes competitive elitism, technocratic conceptualizations of democracy, pluralist democracy, new right-wing democracy, participatory democracy (new left democracy), and the combined model of democracy. Clarification of the most significant forms follows.

Protective democracy assumes an autonomous civil society and a competitive market economy. It is a form of democracy based on the protective function of civil society but also the function of the rule of law. It is a form of democracy of an economically developed national state and representative representation, which implies general and free elections at all levels of government, competition of political elites but also political programs, democratic constitutionalism, and the rule of law as its essential explication. The concept of protec-

tive democracy hinges on the explicit absence of arbitrary governmental decision-making and the safeguarding of citizens' privacy.

Developmental democracy, in its radical version, emerged under the auspices of the political teachings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It implies the division of power, direct participation of citizens in politics, public political work, desirable unanimity in decision-making, executive power in the hands of administrators as executors of the political will of citizens, distinguishing the concept of the general will, as a political expression of the intelligence and rationality of the community, from the will of all, as a mere aggregate of many opinions, realization of equality in society and not its fictitious or formal existence. John Stuart Mill represented the more moderate variant as a democratic concept, emphasizing the postulate of popular sovereignty, universal suffrage, proportional distribution of votes, and elected representative government. Mill believed that there is no democracy without a precisely defined constitutional framework of government, promotion of individualism, civil rights, and strong participation of citizens in all phases of political life. He reinforced the principles of public debate on community political issues, advocated for the empowerment of local self-government, and openly supported the concept of the plural vote in elections.

Direct democracy, advocated by Karl Marx as its ideological representative, delves deeply into the economic underpinnings of politics, necessitating the inevitable elimination of all forms of capitalist exploitation. It implies the literal implementation of political

and economic equality, the abolition of the bourgeoisie and private property, the construction of a new society based on the concept of a planned instead of a market economy, the abolition of the existing forms of division of labor, the development of the productive forces, the ideological monopoly of communism and the political monopoly of the labor party. It also entails the abolition of the state as a class creation and the initiation of a continuous world revolution that should persist until the realization of communism, serving as the ultimate political objective.

Competitive elitism, as outlined by Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter, manifests as competition among political elites. The competitive selection of the political elite occurs within a developed industrial society and a permissive political culture. Robust executive power, the prevalence of party politics, and the pivotal role of political leadership doctrinally define this democratic form. As is characteristic of a developed industrial society, this concept entails a well-trained, efficient, and competent bureaucracy.

Pluralist democracy implies power distribution among different social groups and draws it from distinct sources (financial, social, and symbolic capital). It rests on a value consensus, respect for a solid political procedure, and several alternatives on the political scene. In the domain of institutional powers and competencies, pluralistic democracy insists on limiting the political sphere. There is a strong insistence on the political legitimacy of actors in the field of politics, as well as on active citizenship. The autonomy of the civil sector, the active engagement of pressure groups, and

the oversight of corporate interests bear significant expectations.

The legal democracy of the new right-wing belongs to the neoliberal model advocated by F. Hayek and R. Nozick. They insist on the dominance of the private sector in all segments of the functioning of society and politics. They re-actualize the concept of a minimal state and the privatization of everything that can, even parts of state property such as elementary schools. They advocate for the deregulation of regulations and the reduction of taxes, especially for large-cap companies. They plead for effective political leadership, which is, in effect, a doctrine for the dominance of corporate and financial power structures. They persistently insist on reducing the role and rights of trade unions and simultaneously demand a strictly protected sphere of privacy for the richest in society. They ideologically advocate for the legality of the free market only until the most powerful economic and financial entities' interests are not at risk. When risk occurs, they unscrupulously call for direct financial support from the state, either by drawing from the budget funded by all taxpayers or through a substantial primary issuance of money.

Participatory democracy of the new left-wing doctrinally insists on the direct participation of citizens in all domains of politics and at all levels of government. He advocates the regionalization of the party system and the openness of government institutions to civil initiatives. For them, the most important in politics is the expressed political will of the citizens, which should retain dominance throughout all stages of political and institutional implementation. They heartily in-

sist on the political responsibility of the government but also of political parties in the electorate and that this responsibility must be practical, direct, and concrete. This form of democracy tries to at least doctrinally reactualize some of the political values of the left wing and incorporate them into the actual functioning of the political system.

#### **2.4. Key Features of Democracy**

A political system must have political features, democratic standards, and defining principles for it to be deemed democratic:

- that it rests on the principle of transparency, that is, providence of the entire political process, and especially of the political decision-making system;
- that the political sphere is limited in its scope of decision-making and that it respects the independence of the economic or cultural sphere of activity of social subjects;
- that it rests on the principle of respect and enforcement of the rule of law, that law limits the state, and that the rule of good laws and not bad people dominate the political community;
- on absolute and unconditional respect for human rights and freedoms;
- to implement the principle of political equality and a reasonable framework of social equality;
- that it rests on the principle of respect for the responsibility of power holders and the responsible work of political institutions;

- that political pluralism in society is a form of political organization of citizens with different political options;
- that in the political system of the state and the executive power, whenever possible, the principle of dispersion and deconcentration of power, that is, the principle of subsidiarity, is respected;
- that the political system functions on the principle of competitiveness of political elites and counterbalancing of political power;
- that the principle of electability of bodies of political power is respected;
- that there is freedom of the media space and the action of the democratic public;
- implementation of the principle of minimal, rational, and legal repression against violators of the legal order when performing the functions of the legal state and its coercive bodies;
- the existence of pluralism of property relations;
- respect for the democratic process: conflict – consensus – democracy;
- clearly expressed public interest, its legal protection, and strict respect by the holders of political power, presented through public policies in related segments of society.

### **3. Models of democracy**

Classifying the model of democracy involves crystallizing several models or forms using theoretical and empirical-normative criteria. These include the liberal

model of democracy, with its three subtypes or historical phases (classical, modern, and neoliberal model), polyarchy as a model of democracy, consociative model, discursive model, participatory model, cosmopolitan democracy, multicultural citizenship model, combined or eclectic model, and the supervisory democracy model.

### **3.1. Liberal democracy**

Vučina Vasović argued that the liberal model of democracy, encompassing all three of its historical and modular specificities, is characterized by a “heterogeneous set of ideas about the nature and form of integration of liberalism and democracy.” He primarily relied on the concept of possessive individualism, representing the proprietary constants of liberalism as a political ideology organized around the values of political freedom. Liberalism, as a political ideology, was fundamentally shaped by freedom's values, sidelining other values of the French bourgeois revolution. The development of another ideology, communism, was later centered around equality, especially social equality, while brotherhood remained marginalized in modern political history.

The classical liberal model is linked to Locke's understanding of democracy in counterpoint to Rousseau's “state of nature” as the starting point of the social contract. It centers on preserving property (private ownership) as a cornerstone of political freedom and a stronghold of civil autonomy concerning political power and state institutions. It gives rise to a distinctive



liberal political triad, serving as the foundational political values that build the entire political order and civil society. Essentially, it revolves around life, freedom, and property, representing the core values of liberalism. This liberal triad with representative democracy establishes the groundwork for the political structure in this classical model of democracy. It is characteristic of this model that it insists exclusively on political equality without referring to the much-needed concept of social or economic equality. "Neither in the project nor in the implementation of this model is there any provision of what could be called equality, social and economic rights, to an even fuller extent" (ibid.: 58). At this stage of development, the state is seen as a minimalist explanation of government and is often popularly referred to as the night guardian of civil order, the rights and freedoms of the citizen as an individual, that is, as *Homo Economicus*.

Modern liberal democracy places exclusive emphasis on individualism as a concept of social representation and political participation as a form of regional engagement in the political process or intermediary representation at the parliamentary level, serving as both a legislative authority and a representative of the political will of citizens. Professor Vasović notes a significant inclination toward voluntarism as a form and content of political participation, evident across all its facets, including the personal phase of recruiting the political elite. It involves a combination of civil and territorial representation principles, executed through free elections and the majority electoral system.

The model emphasizes political competition among entities and advocates for their equal representation to the electorate. It supports fortifying the role of the national state through the concept of robust national institutions and a well-developed economic base serving as its foundation. Similar to the previous model (historical phase), there is a notable indifference toward social inequalities and the distribution and allocation of diverse political and economic interests.

The neoliberal model of democracy is a part of globalization expansion. Its fundamental characteristic is to challenge almost all the crucial values and principles of democracy established in its two preceding historical phases or models. During this phase, trade and production systems are globalizing, and new technologies are rapidly disseminating, bringing about technological innovations. At the supranational level, trade structures are emerging, operating independently of strict control by nation-states and governments. The model highlights notable regionalization processes and regional connectivity, making nation-state borders porous and transcending them to new regional institutions and initiatives. This phase involves a significant dismantling of the concept of the nation-state and the dissolution of its institutional framework, accelerating the perception of existential insecurity among broad segments of citizens and intensifying their sense of hopelessness. Concurrently, the development of communication systems and their control function is accelerating, extending the model of mass culture and the “reality show” of life.

### **3.2. Polyarchy**

Polyarchy arose as an expression of Robert Dahl's political authorship. Dahl saw all the weaknesses of modern democratic societies, notable processes of de-democratization, and contestation of the fundamental achievements of democracy that arose because of globalization and neoliberalism, so he reaffirmed some of the basic principles and postulates of modern liberalism and democracy. He advocates for the restoration of political participation, but also participation as a social relationship, and insists on the principle of majority decision-making and original parliamentarianism. He endorses political competition of actors in the political arena, respect for the electoral will of citizens, and especially a return to the values of free elections and representative democracy. "In its shortest version, this model emphasizes the two main features of democracy: participation and competition," emphasizes Professor V. Vasović interpreting Dahl's intentions toward the polyarchic values of democracy restoration. Although somewhat classic, the model still has its specific weight in the theories of democracy as a cornerstone of building a democratic government order. All the models that come later represent a kind of upgrade and creative addition to this basic model of democracy by Robert Dahl.

### **3.3. Consociational democracy**

Arend Lijphart theoretically devised the consociative model of democracy as a form of consensual democracy based on the harmonization and agreement

among democratic elites. This model is primarily tailored for multi-ethnic and multi-confessional societies, given that mono-national communities are rare in the modern world. In this democratic model, there is a strong emphasis on the negotiation or reconciliation process among political elites directed to a final agreement in resolving social problems or crises. Each party involved in the negotiation process has a guaranteed Veto power, enabling them to halt decision-making in cases where the decision or solution is unacceptable to any party in the negotiation process.

This model of democracy excludes majority decision-making, any form of majoritarianism, and dissatisfaction with the solutions reached or decisions based on the quantitative principle of majority dominance. Since it requires the full consent of political and social elites representing certain interest groups, it is also called the consensual model in the theory of democracy. “In other words, decision-making in the consociation is possible only with the full consent of the elite” (ibid.: 60).

### **3.4. A discursive model of democracy**

This model emerged as a collaboration between J. Habermas and T. Dryzek, conceived as an alternative to an omnipotent state and liberal democracy. Jürgen Habermas believes that the egoistic “Homo Economicus” should be replaced by homo civicus, civil citizen as a true representative of civil society. This model is more deliberative (liberating) than aggregative (concentration of interests) and more republican than liberal in the classical sense. He strongly resists economic rationality

and pleads for communicative rationality. In other words, he insists on a rational approach to politics that brings the most in negotiation or discussion to solve social and political problems.

Politics, therefore, focuses on a decision-making process based on discussion and conversation. This approach requires a strongly developed public sphere and a focus on the public good as the common good of the entire community. Hence, democracy finds its primary expression in public discourse rather than in the concentration of diverse interests (aggregation). “This practically means that the discourse is the focal point of the political decision-making process.” Politics is a process of decision-making through discussion. It demands an ongoing definition of the public sphere and a public good rather than accepting them as predetermined entities. Democracy is, in fact, a discourse rather than an aggregation of preferences and, according to Dryzek, presupposes increasingly indeterminate and porous borders across and within state territories” (ibid., 61).

### **3.5. Participatory model of democracy**

The participatory model of democracy belongs to the radical models of democracy, and its creator is Karl Pateman. He does not locate the essence of politics in big promises and goals, which is a frequent political practice, but in the decision-making process itself. It implies the direct participation of citizens in the system of political decision-making at all levels, from local self-government to the level of central authorities.

Pateman presupposes an increased engagement of citizens – an active civil society. With its standards and solutions, the participatory model opposes liberal, elitist, and corporate democracy forms. It is based on various forms of direct democracy and direct decision-making by citizens, even in the working domain.

It implies a higher level of social and economic equality among citizens, particularly advocating for the deprofessionalization of politics. For Pateman, the most important are the principles of civic activism, self-development, and self-expression as constitutive parts of the new governance policy. “The participatory model of democracy seeks to design and develop a system of democracy that will enable direct participation and influence of citizens in the political decision-making process at all levels of the political organization that require their engagement and loyalty.” This model of democracy presupposes the existence of ability and rationality of ordinary people in the process of decision-making and management of socio-political affairs” (ibid: 61).

### **3.6. Cosmopolitan democracy**

Cosmopolitan democracy as a model of democracy originated in the works of David Held. He seeks to expand the framework of democracy to meet the globalist currents of the reorganization of society and the state. Held tries to rationally understand the integration of the national level of the state into the globalist level of organization. He advocates for gradual and measured integration of the nation-state into the global commu-

nity, emphasizing the retention of functional mechanisms to enable continued political problem-solving while cautioning against reducing the national state to a mere servant of globalism. He opposes the calls for its total dissolution in favor of a Global State and World Government, a proposition advocated by globalizing elites. Held's cosmopolitan democracy is somewhat reminiscent of a multi-story building, a construction in which the floors of a democratic organization are well connected and integrated. With these views, David Held tried to fit his model of democracy into the globalized structure of the world that is being built without conflict while sacrificing as few of the good features of the nation-state as possible. "He understands well not only the interactions but also the integration of the nation-state level and the global level of organization" (ibid.: 62).

### **3.7. Multicultural citizenship as a model of democracy**

Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka designed a model of democracy for multicultural societies and minority cultural communities, primarily on the North American continent. Kimlicka seeks to incorporate minority rights into the existing standards of liberal theory. According to his model of democracy, in the corrected model, he insists on the standardization of three groups of minority rights:

- the right to distinct treatment, understood as the literal right to recognition of minority identity;

- the right to self-management in the area of the minority community and identity thus defined;
- the right of political representation of the minority identity in the bodies of political representation of the state.

All the enumerated rights protect minority groups from the economic and political pressures of the majority. With this designed model of democracy, Kimlika defends the concept of differentiated citizenship against universal citizenship as dominant. He believes that only group-differentiated rights provide liberal aspirations and democratic ideals.

Therefore, he insists on collective rights as a means of positive discrimination to safeguard minority identities that may not receive adequate protection under the universalist notion of individual rights.

Will Kymlicka firmly emphasizes societal culture as the sole appropriate social context for preserving minority identity and safeguarding minority rights. This perspective is a response to the perceived threat posed by the dominant concept of mass culture within the majority community. “In other words, societal culture provides a context within which meaningful choice is possible.” In this light, access to social culture is a fundamental interest of a human being as a primary good. Kimlicka argues that fairness requires that we strive to ensure that all national groups have the opportunity to maintain themselves as distinct cultures if they firmly choose to do so” (ibid., 63).



### **3.8. A mixed model of democracy**

The mixed model of democracy represents an amalgamation of preceding democratic models. Theoretically, it intricately combines discursive-polyarchic and liberal-social constructions of democracy, though we won't delve further into its intricacies. This model integrates specific properties from previously mentioned democratic models.

### **3.9. Supervising democracy**

Supervisory democracy is an innovative model of democracy created as a theoretical statement by John Keen and represents a “direct response to classical models” to overcome their shortcomings. “Kine starts from the assumption that liberal models based on representative democracy can no longer describe the real situation in which the world finds itself. Supervisory democracy represents a model of post-representative democracy, with the idea of directly opposing Samuel Huntington's thesis on the third wave” (N. Kecmanović, 2011: 63). The thesis itself, the formulation “third wave” emphasizes the period of alleged expansion and constitution of democratic states in the phase of post-authoritarian orders that precedes it. Keen believes that the time has come for people, instead of transferring their power and sovereignty to political authorities, to take over its “prerogatives” themselves. Exercising them in everyday life and public discourse, they question the existing forms of institutionalized political power. He believes that the taking over of democratic

levers into the hands of the citizens is a done deal, which displaces the decision-making process from the formal power centers of the institutional order. It transforms the showcased form of democracy into a supervisory model, wherein citizens, through public oversight, exert extra-parliamentary control, functioning as a constituted body outside of the parliamentary structure.

“For Keen, the public eye, in addition to the people, is certainly represented by the media, domestic NGOs, socially engaged public figures, such as actors, singers, athletes, and others, but also international organizations and groups for monitoring democratic processes” (ibid., 65 ). Keane points out that because of its character, the looming democracy represents an attack on the sovereignty of the national parliament and the nation-state itself. Colleague N. Kecmanović believes that Keen's conception builds on Hebermas' model of discursive democracy, insisting on the crucial role of the democratic and critical public in political decision-making processes. The main objection to Keen's model of supervisory democracy would refer to his intention to abolish the achievements and standards of representative democracy, which would destroy the achievements of a free society and its values that we consider irreplaceable.

### **3.10. Hyper-democracy**

Hyper-democracy, as a model, emerged from the pen of Jacques Attali, a French globalist, banker, and futurologist, who, in his anticipations of future social and political development in the book “A Brief History

of the Future”, announced the emergence of this model of democracy, calling it hyper-democracy. Jacques Atali, one of the leading intellectuals-globalists, believes that the future development of civilization (the projection is only in the next few decades) will go in a direction that, in addition to other problems and changes (hyper-empires and hyper-conflicts), as part of a possible resolution will produce hyper-democracy as a political solution in the context of the cohabitation of the market and democracy. In the masked form of the future, he sees hyper-democracy as the dominant political system of the global order and one world government as the central level of governance, with many more regional and local transmissions.

Before that, transhumanism and relational enterprises will prevail in the economy and social life as a basic assumption of this global political government order. At the same time, he defines transhumanism as a movement of altruists and nomadic citizens who adhere to collective intelligence and planetary institutions. Transhumanism will form the so-called creative class, the only ones who will have the opportunity for self-realization through (creative) work, others ending up, more or less, in senseless leisure that hides dangerous existential threats for all of us. Atali presents relational enterprises as new forms of economic activity for which profit will supposedly no longer be a forced goal but a kind of common good (very reminiscent of Marxist ideological ideas about the communist future). Dominance should be evident in various facets such as education, health, nutrition, social reintegration, women's protection, environmental care, and supervision

of supervisors, which echo the well-known Marxist concept of educating educators, raising the question of who educates educators.

In the context of the globalized world, the next characteristics follow hyper-democracy:

- collective planetary institutions;
- a community of local, national, continental, and world organizations;
- the city (megapolis) is a space of residence and business;
- self-management at the level of city districts or districts;
- a subcontinental grouping of market democracy into a union modeled on the EU;
- the formation of a planetary government;
- one central world bank that takes care of the stability of the main currencies;
- the dominance of microcredit as a form of the banking system;
- globalized and regulated market;
- unified management of the security sector (fight against crime, drugs, terrorism);
- The prevalence of collective intelligence, functioning as a utilitarian intellect derived from the amalgamation of universal intelligence, epitomizes the core principles of the common good and humanism as conceptualized by globalists.

The culmination of these elements intends to facilitate the transcendence of *Homo sapiens*, giving rise to a novel form of humanity characterized as a collective entity endowed with a distinct hyperintelligence. This

transformative shift entails a departure from previous individual-centric motives, extending towards a commitment to the well-being of the global community and the overarching existential balance of the entire planetary framework. The optimistic vision of a future world and hyper-democracy embraced by globalists as a model for global governance presents a potentially menacing outlook on the trajectory of politics and life in general. The realization of this vision, particularly in the current abundance and under the guise of transhumanism and hyper-democracy, could carry profound and unpredictable consequences for humanity.

### **3.11. Dedemocratization processes**

Under the influence of the forces driving the globalization process and the implementation of globalist ideology, there has been a systematic challenge to the foundational principles of democratic order established over centuries. The pervasive indicators of de-democratization highlight an effort to nullify the significant achievements of the democratic system, particularly those cultivated during the prominence of social and welfare state models in the latter half of the twentieth century. This process, notably successful in Western European countries, was initiated with the policies of Thatcherism and Reaganism. Propelled by intellectual backing from the Chicago School and emerging figures in neoliberalism, these movements aim to dismantle the Keynesian economic paradigm that had previously brought positive transformations to Western societies within decades.

Important indicators of that process are:

- the increasingly strong presence of classical liberalism in public and academic discourse, and the denial and challenge of democracy and its values through the discourse on the need to return to the fundamental values of early liberalism, tax reduction, the alleged operation of market laws, the reduction of social, educational and cultural benefits, the privatization of everything, deregulation of regulations, growing existential insecurity;
- reduction of state regulation, especially in the domain of economic and financial relations, and the relief of corporate capital from those legal “constraints” that would hinder their transnational expansion and development;
- the drastic reduction of wages and salaries to mere survival and the massive introduction of citizens into the zone of constant financial and existential scarcity. Such processes deepen the already wide scale of poverty, nationally and globally. Of course, as a reverse influence and not by chance, it produces the strengthening of a narrow stratum of the rich and their ever-increasing dominance in the world;
- the rapid increase in the power of banking, insurance, and other financial organizations and institutions, as well as their increasingly successful transcendence beyond the borders of national states;
- the discrediting of the national level of politics, increasing destruction and dysfunctionality, and rapid substitution of those functions with various

forms of management generated by crises and the constant production of general insecurity of citizens;

- a constriction in public choice, a diminishing level of political competition, and a decline in citizen political participation. In contrast, there is a bolstering of intermediary entities and the ascendancy of international power structures that are increasingly beyond effective control at the national political level;
- making it difficult for the vulnerable majority to gather to control the privileged minority and strive for complete control of the social and political life of citizens;
- the increasingly dominant functioning of the network society, social networks, and cyber-space through forms of hybrid warfare and absolute control of the Internet;
- declining voter turnout, the spread of political apathy, and general abstinence of citizens, with increasingly intense refusal to take part in contaminated processes of control of high politics that persistently refuses to do anything that would benefit citizens;
- displacement of the decision-making process from the institutional framework of the democratic state and its dislocation into power centers that are constituted far from the institutions of the system, into “darkened corridors of power” and the increasingly dominant action of the content of crypto-politics;

- powerful intervention in the social, health, educational, and cultural functions of the state, and open predominance of service forms of private company structures;
- accelerated disintegration of the state security functions and increasing dominance of private forms of security, with unfathomable consequences for national and individual security sectors. These events have thrust us deep into what Ulrich Beck aptly identified and labeled as the risk society. Beck's observations accurately capture the contemporary landscape characterized by heightened risks and uncertainties resulting from the ongoing political, economic, and social transformations.

#### **4. Modern constitutionalism – The Rule of Law**

People frequently include the concept of the rule of law within the framework of the legal state, referred to as “Rechtsstaat” in German, despite the distinctions between them. Both terms, integral to modern constitutionalism, bear the imprints of their unique legal and political traditions, with the term “Rechtsstaat” being a specific German linguistic and legal coinage, not widely used in the Anglo-American cultural context, as noted by Ljubomir Tadić. It is crucial to note that these terms cannot be considered synonymous due to the influences of their respective traditions. In a broader sense, it reflects the creation of the German liberal bourgeoisie in the fight against the absolutism of the



police state” of the nineteenth century. Due to its organicist orientation, German legal science understood the state as an organic unity that cannot tolerate any particular and unassimilated elements next to it. In this sense, it strove to create cells and organs of the state body from individuals and groups (Lj. Despotović, 2001: 58). The state worked energetically to preserve state sovereignty at the expense of the people's sovereignty, which caused the reduction of the individual to the status of a subject. The right to vote and choose is an obligation imposed by the state rather than an inherent subjective right of each individual. Consequently, organicism found support within statism, affirming the conservative stance of the German legal school. The German theoreticians' concept of the rule of law indicates the limited aspirations of the liberal bourgeoisie of that era. It symbolized an incomplete effort in their political and class emancipation, falling short of facilitating the comprehensive democratization of German society. In their confrontation with the “police state,” liberals were content with exerting legal control rather than genuinely democratizing it. According to Neumann, for theorists of the German legal state, neither the origin nor goals were significant; the state achieved legality simply through the structure of general law (Ibid.: 58).

The concept of the rule of law is a purely English invention, says Lj. Tadic. Before A. V. Dicey articulated it in the late nineteenth century, the concept of the rule of law had a constitutional-legal history spanning two hundred years. The essence of the rule of law lies in the “concept of constitutionalism, as a theory and

practice of limited power (rule or supremacy of law). The fundamental issues of the constitution revolve around the freedoms and rights of the individual, safeguarded before the court.” This principle aims to provide maximum protection for the freedom and rights of the individual against potential government abuses, particularly by administrative authorities and their representatives.

Tadić emphasizes that the rule of law opposes the discretionary authority of the administration and the crown prerogatives. It is founded on complete legal equality among citizens, disallowing any special privileges for individuals involved in public affairs.

The principle of the rule of law also implies independence of the judicial authority, especially with the administrative authority. Although it incorporated the legal tradition of common laws, the principle of the rule of law emphasizes the primacy of statutory law, which is the product of the legislative activity of the parliament. According to Neumann, this means that the principle of the rule of law contains two essential postulates: first, that the parliament has a monopoly of legislative power (democratic legitimization of political power), and that the legislation must be under the liberal legal system and its democratic constitution. The rule of law thus means “a democratically established, legally limited and controlled political authority in which rights and freedoms act as key elements of democratic legitimacy.” Contrary to the German theory of the rule of law, which is strongly positivist oriented, “the principle and theory of the rule of law are fundamentally anti-positivist, even when the rule of law is

the rule of positive law, that is, law.” In Dicey's interpretation, the content of the rule of law consists of three elements: the absence of arbitrary decision-making by the authorities, which also includes the discretionary rights of the authorities, the principle of complete legal equality, and legal certainty. British and American rule of law doctrines belong to the same Anglo-Saxon legal-political tradition. “The American understanding of government under law, due process of law, is the same as the rule of law conceived meta-legally” (Lj. Despotović, 62).

Hence, we can infer that the German notion of the rule of law leans towards a constitutionally liberal perspective, and the Anglo-Saxon understanding of the rule of law aligns with a liberal-democratic constitutional approach. The former doesn't scrutinize the inherent quality of the law as long as it effectively constrains the ruler's authority. The latter explicitly emphasizes the necessity for good laws to safeguard the freedom and rights of every individual against potential abuse of state power. It paradoxically led to some German legal theorists dubbing Hitler's Nazi state as a legal state.

## **XI**

### **FORMS OF GOVERNMENT**

When considering the form of government as a classification parameter in modern political systems, a dichotomous categorization emerges, distinguishing between monarchies and republics. This classification primarily hinges on identifying the personal holder of power and the organizational structure surrounding that position. Professor R. Stepanov highlights that the overall framework addresses crucial questions related to the acquisition of power, the dynamic between the government and the ruler concerning citizens, and the distinctive features of the government itself.

#### **1. Monarchy**

Monarchy is a form of government in which the organization of state power consists of a crowned person, the head of state, who is also the bearer and executor of the highest state power. “The monarch is not legally responsible, he is sovereign and above the law, he is not subject to legal sanctions, and his position, thanks to the privileges he enjoys, is fundamentally different

from other citizens and puts him above them” (R. Stepanov, 177). Political history distinguishes unlimited (absolute) and limited monarchies.

In absolute monarchies, the ruler is not subject to state authority, defining their characteristic feature. Monarchs perform all tasks in the domain of judicial, executive, legislative, and administrative power. They are the managers of the subjects and the entire state apparatus, all state services, and officials who belong to it.

Limited monarchies involve legal and substantive constraints on the ruler's power. These constraints arise through collaboration with other political bodies, typically exercised jointly. Throughout history, class assemblies often played this role, and parliaments commonly serve this function nowadays. So, this form of government is often called a constitutional or parliamentary monarchy. In this setup, the monarch assumes a ruling position but refrains from direct involvement in governance. Their role is often symbolic, representing the unity of the nation and the state, lacking substantial executive functions. In such circumstances, he approves the laws, dissolves the parliament, declares a mandate for the composition of the government (under the rule of a parliamentarian), confirms the appointments of ambassadors, and is mostly formally the head of the army but does not command it.

## **2. Republic**

A republic stands in stark contrast to a monarchy in various aspects, with the most notable distinction being

the method of appointing those in authority. Unlike a monarchy, where power is inherited, a republic has elected officials, and their power is legally limited to a limited period. The president or head of state, chosen by the citizens, assumes office as a natural person without special privileges, governing strictly under the law and assigned government functions.

Modern political systems recognize different types of republics, including those with parliamentary, semi-presidential, and presidential systems. In parliamentary republics, power is decentralized, counterbalanced, and united under the political sway of the assembly. On the other hand, in presidential republics, the president serves as the dual-headed holder of the divided executive power, simultaneously acting as the head of state and head of government.

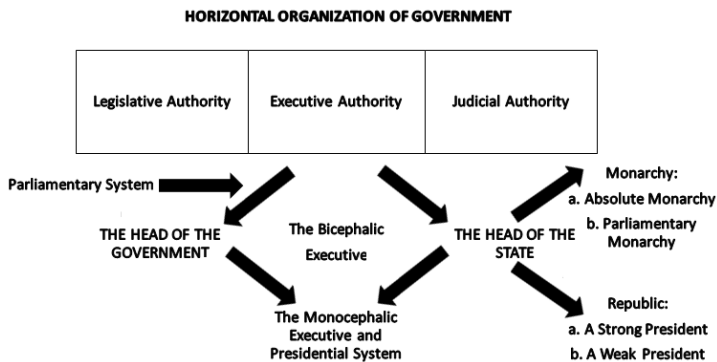
### **3. Forms of state authorities**

In modern political systems, we know the horizontal organization of authority and the vertical or territorial organization of authority.

The horizontal organization of government refers to the distribution of different government functions and their interrelations at the same organizational level. It manifests as three divisions: legislative, executive, and judicial authority. Legislative authority enacts the constitution, laws, and regulations, serving as the highest representative body; Executive authority, as a rule, takes care of the implementation and enforcement of laws and regulations, and it can pass its legal regula-

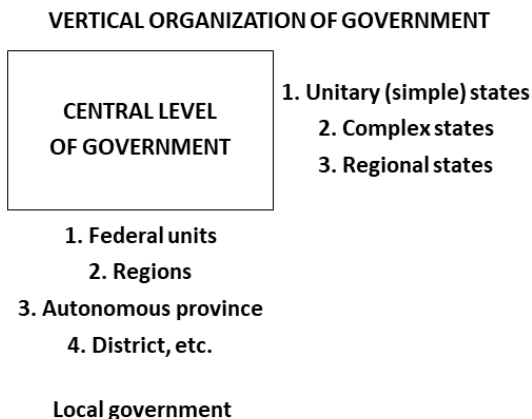
tions or decrees with legal force, altering or filling legal gaps until a subsequent law officially regulates it post-festum; Judicial authority settles disputes and punishes those violating the country's legal order. The horizontal organization of authority can take the form of both division and unity within a system.

Figure 1:



The vertical or territorial organization of authority delineates how various levels structure authority, adhering to the territorial principle. This concept outlines the relationship between central and non-central forms of authority, typically adhering to the territorial principle as its defining feature in modern political systems. Essentially, the vertical organization of authority highlights the internal structure of the state, revealing the number of authority levels existing between the central authority and local self-governance.

Figure 2:



### 3.1. Separation of authority system

Modern political systems recognize three forms of authority division in horizontal organization: parliamentary, presidential, and a hybrid parliamentary or convention system. Both parliamentary and presidential systems fall under the classification of the separation of authority system.

The presidential is a model of strict separation of authority. Within it, a mechanism ensures the absence of influence of one branch of authority on another, allowing independence for each branch. The presidential system features a monocephalic executive; the president simultaneously serves as the head of state and head of government, combining both functions. A clear division of duties, with judicial authority belonging to



the courts, exercising it following the principles of autonomy and independence, is characteristic of the presidential system. It operates on the principle of checks and balances, ensuring that various branches monitor and balance each other.

The semi-presidential system is referred to in the literature as parliamentary-presidential or presidential-parliamentary. This system is commonly known as the French continental parliamentarian, given its frequent application in France. This system of authority is somewhere between the parliamentary and presidential. It is parliamentary because the national assembly can replace the government, and the president can dissolve the assembly. But it is also presidential because the president is unreplaceable until the end of his mandate.

The parliamentary system of authority implies a soft or flexible division of authority. The government is accountable to the parliament since it elects it. The parliament oversees and controls the government through parliamentary questions, interpellation, and votes of confidence. Additionally, parliamentary history recognizes the vote on the budget as a significant form of control. Within it, there are three forms of organization of the executive authority itself: parliamentary government, chancellery government, and cabinet government.

### **3.2. Unity of authority**

The parliamentary or convention system is of authority unity. The assembly is in a central position as a

representative body. All other government bodies are organizationally and functionally subordinate to the assembly. The assembly elects and delegates the exercise of judicial and executive authority to competent bodies accountable to the assembly. It survived as a form of authority only in Switzerland.

#### **4. Structures of government**

The structure of the vertical organization of the state government defines forms of state organization, so we distinguish between a unitary and a complex state.

A federation is a complex state. Federalism, the guiding principle, signifies that individual federation members (federal units) maintain internal independence while forming a unified federal state with overarching state competencies. The federal state adheres to the principle of the federation's supremacy, signifying that it alone holds sovereignty both externally and internally subjects, with exclusive control over certain state functions like defense, currency, and foreign policy. Simultaneously, the principle of the autonomy of federal units prevails, granting them independence in performing state functions within the bounds set by the federal constitution or federal laws.

A regional state is a modern state form that emerged after the Second World War, with the first instance being in Italy in 1948, followed by the formation of another regional state in Spain in 1978. This regional state model represents an intermediate solution that moves between the unitary and federal state mod-

els, combining the best solutions of both forms of vertical government organization. The models of government organization in these two regional states differ. In Italy, regional autonomy operates on a two-level system with varying degrees of autonomous rights and functions, thus referred to as an asymmetrical model. In contrast, Spain follows a symmetrical model of regional autonomy. The constitution of both regional states establishes the degree of regional autonomy and the precise division of power between central and non-central authorities. Regions are a constitutional category, and any alteration to their autonomy requires a constitutional change. They have the right to self-government in their administrative territory, but they do not have the elements of statehood. Constitutional solutions that challenge the existence of an independently organized judicial authority provide it. The creation of regional states arose from the necessity to address specific regional peculiarities, encompassing territorial, political, cultural, identity, economic, religious, and other differences. This approach aimed to resolve existing tensions and attain an acceptable social consensus.

## XII POLITICAL MARKETING

Political marketing occurs in the context of political communication between political parties and politicians with the public, which consists of citizens as the electorate. Political marketing is a specific form of political communication that emphasizes the competitive dimension of politics and the competition of political organizations and subjects for public favor. As a means of modern political communication, subjects of political communication use mass media and their available or leased capacities. Political marketing systematizes and connects different experiences, techniques, and procedures, especially commercial marketing, and addresses the potential electorate to gain the attention and possible affection of the civil public. Therefore, political marketing, campaigns, means, and procedures adapt to the rules of the so-called political market. It is a set of techniques and actions aimed at a political entity gaining attention and increasing its electoral potential or political image in the public, especially in the massive part of its target group. The goal is to achieve the maximum possible result using as few resources as pos-

sible. So, it is an analogy between the political and economic fields of inquiry.

A political candidate or program assumes the role of a product within the political offer, whereas the voter assumes the role of a traditional customer consumer. The currency is no longer money but the vote of the voters, the desired prize for which all political pretenders in the market are fighting.

Therefore, political marketing is:

- a commercial adaptation of political propaganda;
- directed towards attaining specific political objectives within the political market;
- Articulation of political initiatives targeting the end consumer through publicity or paid advertisements, predominantly utilizing existing media systems, essentially addressing the electorate as a component of the broader political public in the competition for their favor.

## **1. Elements of Political Marketing**

The elements of political marketing are: political market, political goods, consumer or customer, offered goods or products, sales, and achieved political profit.

The political market is, in a broader sense, the entire political public, and in a narrower sense, the electoral clientele, the target group, that is the electoral body.

Political goods consist of political parties, political candidates, political ideas, and programs adapted to the

user's tastes and needs, that is, the electorate, which acts as a political market.

The voter, a targeted individual or as part of a specific group, acts as the buyer or consumer of the offered political goods for whom the offer is pre-designed. Voters purchase promised or projected "values," position, status, economic, cultural, or expected political improvement with their vote.

Positioning political products is a process of intensive demarcation of the elements of a marketing-shaped political product when clearly emphasizing the specific value and difference compared to the products of political competition and the advantages of one's political goods on the market.

The sale of products is a phase of intensive accustoming of the public to the offered products, the contents of the goods, the quality of the development projects, and the mandatory provision of as much political support as possible.

The profit in political marketing would consist of the realized profit on the political market of the party that was a political bidder and its active participant. Profit measure is the number of votes received, the number of political mandates secured, and the increase in popularity and influence within the electorate for a specific political option.

## **2. Types of Political Marketing**

Political marketing, a commercial version of political propaganda, concentrates on short-term political

objectives utilizing publicity management mechanisms or paid advertising. We distinguish the following:

- a. electoral political marketing, which is significant for parliamentary or presidential elections, but also all marketing activities related to them;
- b. non-political election marketing, which deals with elections in the trade union sector and other non-political organizations and associations;
- c. permanent political marketing, the duration of which is not related to specific elections or election campaigns;
- d. marketing of the leader's image is marketing that is carried out directly for the needs of a specific political figure, that is, the leader;
- e. social marketing, which is carried out for the general good of the community and implies, as a goal, a change in behavior or attitudes regarding social issues or problems;
- f. voter marketing is exclusively concerned with influencing the behavior and choices of voters.

### **3. Public (Rational) Choice Theory in Political Marketing**

The theory of public or rational choice in political marketing came from economic science. It was, of course, adapted for the needs of political marketing but retained all the methodological indications and approaches of classical economic science, only now applied to political phenomena. The methodological approach concerns the analysis of decision-making. The

theory of rational choice has shown that political actors are just as motivated by personal interests as economic actors and that there are no distinctive differences. The identical principles apply to both the economic and political markets. The motives and interests of political entities, much like those in the market, yield comparable outcomes. Individuals express a personal drive to enhance or alter their position and achieve maximal political profit, while normatively established public interest, considered primary and crucial, was relegated to a distinctly secondary position in the political market. This scenario involves a noticeable level of political mimicry and simultaneous hypocrisy. The public interest is employed as a facade, concealing the vigorous pursuit of personal or group interests by political actors in the political market.

At its core, this theory begins with the anthropological premise that humans are rational beings, and we would add egoistic beings. It suggests that individuals pursue their interests not only when deciding for themselves but also when acting on behalf of a broader social or political community:

- methodological individualism (therefore, a classical liberal principle);
- masculinization of interests in the political market (extracting the maximum from the existing market situation and the political goods offered);
- the rationality of individuals (as political actors) in choosing between existing or offered options.



The basic principles of behavior within the theory of rational choice are as follows:

- rational ignoring (voting disinterest or apathy);
- the effect of short-sightedness (focusing on current interests and neglecting long-term interests);
- the existence of special interests (the profit of a small organized group versus an unorganized larger one).

“The public choice theory situates individual preferences at the center of political decision-making, portraying the state as a conduit through which individuals make decisions collectively binding. In the unique context of the political market, this behavior is entirely typical, indicating that political actors aim to maximize political interests akin to their own” (Lj. Despotović, 2011: 147).

## **XIII POLITICAL COMMUNICATION**

Political communication, a distinct form within the political sphere, operates across various channels. It involves communication between political entities (individuals and organizations) and diverse audiences such as the public, voters, target groups, and political and social institutions. Additionally, it encompasses mutual communication among political entities and engagement with the broader environment.

### **1. Political communication mediated by media systems**

Political communication mediated by media systems has the following characteristics:

- the participants in party elections are paying more and more attention to the strategies and tactics of their own media appearance;
- the activities of most political subjects (parties, movements, interests, and lobby groups) are directed toward the media;

- political entities spend more and more resources (organizational, financial, personnel) on media promotions;
- political activities are, to a considerable extent, profiled and directed towards political figures who are skilled in political communication and media appearances;
- the role of the media is increasingly important, including reporting the conditions, rules of conduct, culture, and standards of mutual communication between political subjects;
- there is a frequent practice of violating set standards by political subjects, including the increase in conflicts with journalists as media workers;
- Communication pathologies are increasing due to the increased public dissemination of negative messages, escalating political confrontations, and a surge in verbal political violence. (Lj. Despotović, 2011: 159).

## **2. Communication paradigms**

**The People's Choice communication paradigm** originated in the United States in 1944 through the work “The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign” by P. Lazarsfeld, B. Berelson, and H. Godet. The authors demonstrated that the media's impact on voters was minor, if not negligible. To substantiate this, they showed the data that the media influenced the decisions of only 8% of the respondents regarding election candidates. The study

also established a high level of party identification in the electorate when deciding which candidate to vote for. Voters mostly voted according to their traditional party affiliations, Republican (conservative) or Democratic. Commonly, family tradition guided them, based on party identification, to choose a candidate aligned with the same political option they endorsed. For nearly three decades, this study fostered the belief in the USA that the media played a minimal role in the election cycle and in shaping voters' final political decisions. Scientific studies during the sixties and seventies of the last century confirm that attitude.

Media researchers and theorists advocating **The Hypodermic Paradigm** asserted the opposite of the “people's choice” paradigm. So, as early as the thirties of the last century, they emphasized that the influence of the media on voters is huge and homogenizing and that persuasive media power is crucial for potential users and consumers of media content. The media influence is concrete, direct, and uniform, leading to the metaphorical designation of this communication paradigm as a hypodermic needle. The authors of this qualification interpreted it quite literally, envisioning it as an actual “media needle” that penetrates beneath the skin with programmed content determined by the political client. Content designed in this way acts instantly and effectively, unexpectedly changing the consumer's consciousness, political attitudes, and worldview without the “victim” of the process being aware of it. It is a particularly effective procedure for vast political individuals who do not have a developed political orientation or strong party identification. In theory, alongside

the “hypodermic needle” metaphor, the term “magic bullet” was employed, signifying an influence that directly affects the recipient's consciousness.

This paradigm is rooted in the behavioral school of psychology, a popular framework in the USA both then and now. It primarily relies on the “cause-effect” or “stimulus-response” concept, a fundamental aspect of propaganda theory. The presented aligns with the sociological theory of mass society, incorporating terms such as mass society, mass audience, mass communication, mass media, and socially isolated individuals. However, this paradigm tends to overlook or inadequately consider the interpersonal, historical, or social context for contextual analysis, especially disregarding facts that don't align with a biological and empirical observation perspective. According to this communication paradigm, the media engage with a homogenous and relatively helpless audience primarily driven by emotions and impulses in their behavior. As a result, individuals become the concept of so-called serial units, and well-packaged media propaganda can shape their behavior. It's unsurprising, then, that political authorities are keen on leveraging the “persuasive powers” of the media for their needs, goals, and interests. This entire paradigm emerged when there was an uncritical belief in the almost boundless media commercial and persuasive capacities (Lj. Despotović, 2011: 92).

**The Paradigm of Limited Effects** is based on the criticism of the previous theoretical paradigm, refuting its positions. New and more realistic empirical research showed that people are not “media addicts” unable to differentiate between their interests and those suggested

to them through the media. Citizens, as consumers, do not uniformly interpret media content and messages contrary to the assertion of the preceding paradigm. The distinction lies in the concept of freedom in selecting media, their content, and the manner of response. It pertains to the possession of specific capabilities by media consumers, enabling them to choose the attention they allocate to particular content and how they perceive it.

It becomes especially apparent with the proliferation of diverse media types and content providing consumers the chance to align their choices with their interests or needs. It is essential to acknowledge that this scenario arises when there's a surge in a media company's number and variety, particularly media content. Unfortunately, today, we find ourselves in a situation akin to the early stages of mass media development. The paradox lies in that, despite a plurality of media content, genuine choice is limited because these contents are, to a greater or lesser extent, unified, controlled, and directed. Today, due to the segmentation of the audience, there are target groups that the media or political entities address through them, adapting messages to their needs and interests. However, despite everything, the manipulateness of media messages did not decrease because of this. On the contrary, it increased even more because in the context of the network society, social networks, and the Internet, the space for manipulation expanded, and the capacity to adapt and mask messages increased. Each target group receives tailored activation messages, yet ultimately, the cumulative effect is one of manipulation and steer-

ing towards the desired direction by globalist elites – who often serve as the covert owners of a significant portion of global media. (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 2021: 123).

**The Critical Paradigm** reverts political propaganda's basic parameters to the starting point. It underscores the media's significant role in shaping political public opinion. Instead of short-term effects on individuals, media increasingly directs its efforts towards indirect and long-term influences, fostering a collective understanding of social reality. The media constructs a comprehensive narrative, transcending partial representations to create a universal image of reality perceived collectively. In addition to conveying general messages to the collective, the media produces and transmits specific partial meanings to selected groups aligning with the overall interests of globalizing elites.

The critical paradigm views political communication as the production and exchange of meaning through various symbolic contents that are precisely structured and affect selected collectivities and broad cultural audiences. Inserted into the well-known chain of communicator-media-audience power is an important catalyst that directs the perception of the collective in the projected direction and the manner desired by the political elites. The primary emphasis now transitions from the individual micro-level to the societal macro-level, directing the influence of the media towards legitimizing political behavior and social control, mobilizing supporters, and notably, shaping an image of social reality that pretends the status of political realities.

J. Baudrillard would present such a process as part of the action of three essential components of social construction or artificial engineering: reality – simulation – and simulacrum, which significantly changes the position and role of the media. Therefore, media are not means of transmitting information but crucial institutions constructing the desired image of reality. This process reflects the dominant position of the ruling elites (globalizing elites) while simultaneously hiding them from the public eye. As a result, the media transforms into a mere institution whose purpose is to legitimize ruling interests, endorse prevailing attitudes, propagate authorized discourses, and defend the established power structure. It occurs at the local, regional, and global scales.

The power of the hegemonic discourse lies precisely in the fact that it is supported by a large part of the public (population), accepting it with common sense as part of universal values but without critical distance and elementary reflection. The media's influence is so potent that they broaden their role in garnering consent for current relations, serving as the primary intermediary link. It leaves no room for contention or public discourse, as seen in the dominance of the official narrative of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a notable absence of (any) opportunity for even the slightest public hearing or expert examination of its manipulative contents.

Thus, the social consensus, as an assumed agreement on the essential values of a community, inevitably turned into the ideological hegemony of globalism, whereby the role of the media became dishonorable and



reduced to a mere service of power. The reality of the partial interests of hegemony is presented as its own and unquestionable, giving a false image of universality. The communicative process of coding – recoding – decoding is motorized and under the absolute control of the globalizing elites. Gatekeepers in the media are just instruments of their control, obsession, and deception. The decoding or recoding of a coded message in public is only permissible under the directive of those in power. The gatekeepers within the media rigorously dictate who can communicate with the intended public and under what conditions. Therefore, what exists in the media also exists in reality. The reverse is hardly possible at all. (Lj. Despotović, 2011: 98).

### **3. Mass media and public discourse**

Both at the global and national levels in the sphere of the mass media, one can see a dangerous and malignant political game that is not spared the media with a national level of coverage. The role of public services, which have become part of obscure media systems intended to manipulate citizens, is particularly controversial. Thus, there was a break with the tradition and the role of the media, which were representatives and guardians of the public interest of citizens and a kind of service for them. Debate surrounds the contentious nature of the vital role that public whistleblowers play when significant interests are at risk. The media, over time, has played a facilitating and guiding role in the erosion of civil sovereignty, progressively transforming

into a tool of the globalizing elites. The entitlement to accurate information – meaning factually precise information – has receded into obscurity amidst the veiled maneuvers of pervasive manipulation and the grand narratives surrounding democratic principles. The formula for manipulating and controlling public discourse is straightforward: those absent from the media lack the opportunity to insert their perspective into the public sphere or counteract the influential narratives of the globalized industry of meaning. This industry effectively shapes our perceptions, directing our attention only towards what is deemed significant to its interests.

The ongoing process of dismantling the carefully constructed national identity and eroding the nation-state sovereignty has far-reaching consequences. As the individual becomes fragmented and estranged, losing a sense of belonging and self-awareness, they find themselves repeating established phrases of global politics (gender equality or same-sex unions), receiving collective identity. Even when the state government in a country, contrary to the opinion of linguistic science and linguists, passes disputed laws, the picture of manipulation and lawlessness is complete.<sup>4</sup> Within such

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<sup>4</sup> For example, speaking about the new laws concerning the position of the Serbian language in the Republic of Serbia, “in the opinion of Prof. Dr. Sreta Tanasić, the disputed law must be unconditionally repealed because it represents a consciously designed destruction of the Serbian language together with the culture built on it, while Prof. Dr. Zorica Nikitović points to numerous ‘legalized iniquities’ of our time that ‘suffocate freedom and attack the dignity of the person, among which is the newly created language’ similarly, Prof. Dr. Slobodan Antonić has no dilemma also – they want to force people and institutions to write and speak in a

soft totalitarianism disguised as globalism, which touts freedom, democracy, and human rights, it is evident that the nation-state and individuals' right to defend against the new order of power is under attack. For example, “the globalization trends in Serbia, particularly evident in the denationalization of the state and the disruption of its economic and financial order, further contribute to the erosion of state authority. The state faces forcible challenges of deterritorialization, de-sovereignization, and a blockade of its security sector.” (Lj. Despotović, 2019: 22). In the broader context, the impact of these globalization trends in Serbia aligns with the global order emerging from the remnants of the national state, resembling a pseudo-polis paradigm that regulates individual life. The accelerated destruction of rural areas in favor of urban settlements reflects the broader pattern of the globalized community's influence. Individuals, largely unaware of these ongoing processes, wholeheartedly seem to “consent” to the new forms of servitude within the globalized community that inexorably envelops us as human beings.

So, we are talking about the accelerated creation of an anti-human perspective of existence and a controlled life, according to which the Orwellian picture of the world is a simple children's joke (M. Brdar, 2015: 327). And behind everything stood and still stands the hidden structure of the hierarchy of hegemony, at the top of which are the globalizing elites, and below it are the political elites as their transmission, then the vassal

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 certain way with draconian fines. In itself, he concludes, this is a form of violence because many people will feel unsafe.” Večernje novosti, URL: <https://www.novosti.rs>. (5. 7. 2021.)

media and academic elites, the bureaucratic government apparatus, and at the very bottom of the pyramid of the cooperative masses (the poor *raja*) whose ignorance and endurance of suffering were always seriously counted on by the old and new masters. “Shaping the world according to new patterns is based on camouflaged ideas of political domination, military hegemony, and undisguised media arrogance towards everyone who thinks differently.” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 250). The terror of the architects of the new public discourse is so rigorous and constantly present in the media that almost everyone avoids fighting it, and even the most eminent employees of the nation's academic and intellectual life are unwilling to sacrifice and endure new forms of existential suffering.

Defining public discourse is one of the crucial aspects of social power that has been used abundantly in recent decades. For instance, “migration, an attention-grabbing social phenomenon, plays a role in shaping the media's portrayal of the world and might indicate whether the media is merely advancing a political agenda through biased reporting or applying inconsistent standards when the on-the-ground situation undergoes significant changes, making it impossible to conceal the actual reality. In this context, migrations, shaped by the influence of media propaganda, assume a dual role wherein their representation can either be conducive to global peace or serve as a catalyst for conflict. The discernment of such contribution, whether negative or positive, will undoubtedly manifest through a thorough analysis of the content once the requisite historical distance is established. The current essence of

the media query is distilled to a matter of conscience and professionalism, essentially encapsulating the ethical dimension.” (N. Vukčević, 2023: 149-150). And all because there is a functional connection between language and power realized through language, especially in public and media communication. Especially the geopolitical function of language because it is not “only a reflection of material power in society, but also a producing space of social relations meaning.” (P. Pavličević, 286). The relationship between space, politics, and language isn't merely symbolic at the geopolitical level. It goes beyond symbolism to involve a tangible spatial capture. In this process, space becomes a tool wielded by the globalizing elites to encode meaning in public discourse specifically targeted for spatial areas like regions or the entirety of global space. Philosopher Milan Brdar says about it: “Topological space works through discourse, and the discourse itself takes place, first of all, through exposition (speech) that mediates thought as an object of reflection, to interpret meaning, so that through these mediations the 'thing' that is the *telos* (purpose) of the discourse and within its framework the analogon to *topos*<sup>5</sup> of the reflective space or the equivalent of its theme” (M. Brdar, 2019: 162). Another crucial point is that the seemingly neutral concept of political correctness conceals more significant forms of social censorship. Behind the mask of political correctness, social and political censorship of everything in the public discourse that is not according to the criteria and standards of the globalizing elite is carried out in

.....  
<sup>5</sup> physical places, whether generalised, or they may be mental places

silence on a terrifying scale as clear proof of their overall power.

It's evident that a new information and communication establishment, as a subsystem of the broader power structure under construction, results in global media serving the interests of the globalizing elites rather than the citizens who fund these endeavors and for whom they should ostensibly work. At the national level, individuals tailor micro-opinions to the specifics of the local context, ensuring the protection of global interests in the process. But regardless of the spatial level – from global to local – everything is synchronized and directed towards the same goals. “The global media align themselves with the agenda of the new order, aiming to shape a prevailing consciousness that is subservient, submissive, and condescending. The initiation of a scientific battle for mind control is underway, integrating nanotechnology, biotechnology, information, and cognitive technology. This battle involves detailed planning of media projections by stimulating specific content, ideas, movements, and actions in advance. Despite not being openly discussed, a symbolic war is actively taking place: those responsible for producing, filtering, and processing information simultaneously wielding influence over global processes.” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 251).

In education and science, the indicated malignant processes achieved extraordinary efficiency. Abuse of this vital sub-system for every nation and taking control over it was the strategic goal of the globalizing elite and its local minions on the ground, who worked for the interests of their foreign masters either as part of the

education and science system itself or part of the state and institutional bureaucracy that should monitor the entire process and provides support services.

The prospect of events unfolding as described was forewarned by Allen Bloom in his renowned book, "The Twilight of the American Mind," towards the end of the 1980s. If, at that time, education in America was already facing significant challenges, particularly in higher education, it is not astonishing that the trajectory of decline has accelerated toward self-destruction. Given such circumstances, countries in the semi-periphery, like Serbia, may find little hope. Bloom had already asserted that education in America amounted to little more than propaganda. "Education and science, especially in Serbia, have been reduced to the lowest provincial level, with an increase in the rate of functional illiteracy. So far, only simulations of higher education reforms have been in place, placed within the narrow framework of the Bologna Declaration, whose purpose is to average and lower the quality of education. The baseless promises of mobile and efficient studying clumsily hide the lamentable process. While primarily designed as a model for semi-peripheral societies, Europe has not avoided its disastrous consequences. Regrettably, Serbian education has also incurred substantial harm. Scandals, various corrupt activities, and violence afflict the high school education system, while plagiarism plagues the academic system. The consistent trend of the continuous exodus of the highest quality educational and scientific staff persists." (Lj. Despotović, 2019: 24).

## **XIV POLITICAL PROPAGANDA**

Political propaganda encompasses a systematic and intentional endeavor to present, shape, and disseminate political content. Its objective is to garner public support for particular political subjects, policies, individuals' careers, or the content they present to the political public.

### **1. Functions of political propaganda**

- the interpretive function puts in the foreground the spread of ideas and beliefs about someone or something as part of the active creation of a desirable opinion
- the formative function emphasizes the role of propaganda as a form that is immersed in politics, as its content creates and shapes
- the mobilizing function contains two dimensions: to broadcast messages, form attitudes or change them, as well as to direct the behavior of the target group to whom



## 2. Types of political propaganda

- a) Diffuse political propaganda involves using a variety of non-political content types to accomplish political objectives. Direct propaganda involves conveying explicitly expressed political messages directly to the public.
- b) According to the character and goals of political propaganda, we distinguish between strategic and tactical propaganda. Strategic propaganda deals with the general line and long-term political goals, while tactical propaganda aims to achieve specific propaganda effects and short-term political effects.
- c) According to the connotation of the propaganda content, we distinguish between positive and negative propaganda. Positive propaganda involves a supportive attitude toward the subject or cause. It aims to create a positive image, evoke favorable emotions, and garner support for a particular idea, individual, group, or cause. Positive propaganda often emphasizes achievements, virtues, and positive aspects to influence public perception. Negative propaganda involves a critical and disparaging attitude toward a subject or cause. Its purpose is to create a negative image, arouse unfavorable emotions, and undermine support for a specific idea, individual, group, or cause. Negative propaganda may involve discrediting opponents, highlighting perceived flaws, or portraying them negatively.

- d) If we use the relationship between the political leadership and the audience as a criterion, we distinguish between the propaganda of participation and the propaganda of the division of roles. Participation propaganda is characterized by strengthening the homogeneity of the group and encouraging community and participation. “Role division” propaganda establishes a clear-cut separation of roles between the political leadership and the audience. The audience is encouraged to accept and passively agree with the proposed policy without actively participating in its formulation or decision-making.
- e) Political propaganda, categorized based on the political system, is bifurcated into integration and agitation propaganda. Integration propaganda affirms integration into the system and acceptance of its institutions and encourages adaptation and political socialization. Agitation propaganda encourages opposition to the system and engagement for its change or destruction (revolution), demanding sacrifice for the sake of the higher goals of an ideology that raises rebellion and similar activities and actions. It can be offensive or defensive, open or covert, peacetime or wartime, visible or subversive.

As we conclude our exploration of political propaganda, let's delve further into the nuanced realms of public relations and publicity.

Public relations constitutes a strategic and sustained effort, carefully planned for the long term. Favorable

public perception regarding an organization or public figure is a primary objective. It involves a thoughtful and systematic approach, with activities designed to shape public attitudes over time. Public relations is akin to a carefully crafted narrative fostering positive sentiments.

Contrastingly, publicity involves a perpetual dance with the public. It is an ongoing endeavor characterized by a relentless pursuit of influence, heightened popularity, or building a positive image. This pursuit is predominantly conducted through various mass media channels, ensuring a continuous presence in the public eye. Publicity, therefore, encapsulates the dynamic and evolving nature of engagement with the public, marked by a constant effort to influence perceptions and maintain a positive resonance in the collective consciousness.

## XV POLITICAL VIOLENCE

In theoretical discourse, we can define political violence as the institutionalization of social relations involving external coercion and manipulation to subjugate consciousness, will, productive forces, property, and citizens' freedom to the interests of a specific group or individuals. The purpose is to either seize power or preserve it. (R. Željki, 2018: 47). Colleague D. Simeunović believes that political violence is the direct or indirect application of force over consciousness, life, or material goods towards actual or presumed political opponents. “Force is a means of realizing and maintaining power, and violence is a way of expressing and implementing power.” Colleague M. Đorić, following Simeunović's views on violence, concludes that force is a static category and violence is a dynamic category. “While in Serbian, the words force, power, and authority can have both positive and negative meanings, depending on the circumstances, in contrast to them, violence is a phenomenon that is always perceived negatively for the reason that it leads to the destruction and destruction of someone or something anyhow” (M. Đorić, 2014: 89).

Therefore, we could briefly define political violence as a specific application of violence used by political organizations, institutions, groups, or individuals related to politics to achieve specific political goals and interests. It is violence used as a tool to achieve political goals or the realization of interests that have a direct connection with politics, although these are often not visible. In this relation, violence is defined only as a means that is not a final goal but serves to achieve some other political goal or interest.

## **1. Forms of political violence**

### **1.1. Theories of violence**

A) Innateness Theories hold the view that violence is an innate human behavior and that when he commits violence, he acts instinctively. Sigmund Freud, the renowned founder of psychoanalysis and the psychological school of thought, originated this theory. His framework, centered on the predominance of the sexual drive as a motivator for various human behaviors, categorized the driving forces within an individual into Eros, representing birth and life, and Thanatos, signifying destructive energy referred to as the “death drive.”

“Freud believes in the genetic predisposition of man to destroy himself (auto-aggression) or others (aggression) driven by certain instincts” (M. Đorić, 2014: 108).

Another well-known thinker of this theory about the origin of violence is A. Adler. He also talks about the biological basis as the source of violence, but he corrects it with the Nietzschean notion of the “will to power” as the main driver. Adler believes that Freud overemphasizes the sexual drive. He identifies the craving for personal power as the primary driving force, considering it the foremost malevolent aspect of human nature, which can be partially controlled by strengthening the sense of sociality, that is, by socialization (education) and care for the social community.

Konrad Lorenz, influenced by recent studies on animal behavior, emphasizes that humans display violence as a behavior associated with aggression toward their species. He attributes the motives for this conduct to a struggle for territory (as a living space) and as an expression of the sexual drive linked to the protection of offspring. In this context, fear emerges as the most potent drive for combat.

B) Frustration-Aggression Theory starts from the position that an unrealized or fulfilled desire gives rise to frustration released through acts of violence. According to proponents of this theory, the built-up aggression is inherently directed towards the “most accessible targets of violence” because its expression serves as a mechanism to alleviate the frustration of individuals. Consequently, frustration inevitably gives rise to aggressive behavior. This school of thought notably

maintains that individuals can unleash aggression or violence even when the primary target is not present. In these instances, they direct acts of aggression toward whatever is readily accessible. Ted Gurr, introducing the concept of relative deprivation, argues that groups or individuals may resort to violence when they perceive a lack of something they believe they are entitled to. The feeling of deprivation serves as a trigger for violence against society and its members.

- C) Social Learning Theories insist on the social conditioning of violence. Therefore, the source of non-violence is social rather than biological, acquired during the process of growth and socialization within society. This perspective extends to patterns of violence recognition in certain external elements such as weather and the environment (air pollution, high temperature, noise, overpopulation). Erich Fromm aimed to transcend the narrow viewpoints of instinctivists and behaviorists by categorizing violence into two types: benign and malignant. In his view, benign violence is defensive and serves a protective purpose, while malignant violence is destructive and indicates a specific social predisposition. Fromm underscores the distinction between human and animal violence, asserting that, unlike animals, humans are genuine killers. “In addition, unlike animals, humans can enjoy inflicting pain on others (sadism)” (M. Đorić, 111).
- D) Theories of Collective Violence draw inspiration from Charles Darwin and his principle of the

struggle for survival. According to this theory, individuals come together and engage in violence because of self-defense against perceived threats. As a result, violence is a coordinated and collective effort with the specific goal of safeguarding oneself or the group. This interpretation is consistent with teleological teachings that ascribe human behavior and actions to predetermined purposes. Advocates of this theory support their assertions by pointing to the behavior of certain biological species that unite for more effective defense.

- E) The World Health Organization's theory utilizes an ecological model to shed light on the origins of violence, incorporating a synthesis of biological and individual factors. It outlines four potential types of explanations:
- a) Factors such as age, gender, and education are identified as influencing the level of an individual's aggressiveness.
  - b) The theory considers the relationships between the individual and their family, friends, and intimate partners as factors contributing to violence.
  - c) The external environment in which an individual grows up is included, acknowledging its role in shaping behavior.
  - d) A broader array of potential causes, collectively constituting specific social factors, is considered within the framework of this theory.



## 1.2. Types of violence

Theorist Johan Galtung distinguishes violence into direct, structural, and cultural. He claims that conflict is the basis of all violence and that “if violence is fire, then conflict is smoke.” According to him, direct violence is easily observable, and structural violence is related to various social and political structures that occasionally use it as a means or instrument in achieving a goal. For Galtung, unequal opportunities for education, unfair distribution of wealth, and other social injustices are also forms of structural violence. He later added cultural violence to his classification because he believed that through the abuse of culture and its instrumentalization for some political goals, it is also possible to carry out various forms of structural violence.

The World Health Organization gave its categorization of violence, which listed the following forms: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence.

Social violence includes various forms of violence, among which the most common are domestic violence, peer violence (bullying), violence at work and similar forms of mobbing, and violence at sports events (hooliganism).

Political theory categorizes political violence as the direct or indirect application of force within the broader political sphere. John Keane, while generally viewing political violence as inadvisable in a democratic context, acknowledges instances where it can be expedient.

He asserts that political violence becomes acceptable and justified if it contributes to a stable civil society. (M. Đorić, 120). However, we disagree with Keane's assertion, maintaining that violence, especially political violence, cannot be considered a legitimate tool in any political context. Violence is only justifiable in a defensive capacity, serving as a means of protection against aggression from individuals, groups, or states defending themselves from such aggression.

The typology of violence is as follows:

- a. Content-based typology distinguishes between physical and psychological violence.
- b. Method-based typology distinguishes between direct and indirect violence.
- c. Bearer-based typology distinguishes between individual and collective violence.
- d. Prevalence-based typology indicates mass and punctual violence.
- e. Duration-based typology indicates immediate and long-term violence.
- f. Rationality, as a criterion, leads to a division into rational and irrational violence.
- g. Severity-based or quality-based division classifies violence into simple and complex forms (M. Đorić, 121).

## **2. Political extremism and its forms**

Extremism in political science refers to phenomena characterized by a “vigilant, formally protective attitude towards one's group” and excessiveness in finding

enemies, a visible emphasis on intolerance, hatred, and aggressiveness towards a real or imagined enemy. Most often manifested through undertaking activities or actions to mobilize a group to protect it from “threatening” danger or the presence of danger, clearly crossing the boundaries of socially acceptable behavior, or violating legal regulations, all with the justification of wanting to preserve the safety, value system or symbols of the group that considered endangered.

Albert Breton defines political extremism as specific behavior that manifests in four well-known forms: first, as asymmetry of political power (asymmetry always goes with the notion of dissymmetry when it focuses on power relations); second, through dominant political leadership; third, through the tensions of opposing social groups; and fourth, through the process of mandatory compliance with the decisions of the political leader. “If extremists have much less power than their political opponents, then the real lack of political power will be replaced by violence” (M. Đorić, 2016: 20).

According to his precise insights, Roger Scruton believes that political extremism always implies three crucial features:

1. a tendency towards extreme ideas in politics, with a tendency to eliminate them in politics
2. intolerance towards other political options;
3. the use of political means that do not respect life, freedom, and human rights

Therefore, political extremism is the most undesirable political phenomenon because it destabilizes a

political order, endangers accepted social values, and uses violent means and actions to realize goals and interests. In this sense, we can classify the following types of political extremism:

- a. vigilantist extremism, which includes those organizations that protect, according to their understanding, the endangered value system of a nation, race, or some group. Some also include ecological organizations and organizations for animal protection in this group;
- b. rebellious or dissident extremism expresses a strong protest against the state and its authority;
- c. transnational extremism is that which transcends touches the borders of a nation-state and spreads internationally;
- d. state extremism occurs in situations where the state uses violence as a method of eliminating its political opponents (ibid.: 23).

Marija Đorić, as an expert on extremism, proposes the following classification of political extremism:

- a. ideologically motivated extremism, which belongs to left-wing and right-wing extremism due to their ideological views;
- b. ethnonational extremism, which refers to extremist forms of behavior behind ethnonational identity, groups, or organizations with overemphasized national optics (for example, the Kosovo Liberation Army in Serbia);
- c. religious extremism refers to those interpretations of major religions that have led to theological fundamentalism combined with violence or ter-

rorism as the most extreme form of political violence, for example, “Islamic State” and “Boko Haram” (M. Đorić, 2021: 60 ).

Political violence, therefore, has biological, social, and anthropological roots. Long-standing studies have shown that people are prepared for the worst violence if they accept the authority of the one who does it.

“In a series of experiments conducted at this university in the summer of 1961, Stanley Milgram tested obedience to authority. These experiments involved several hundred individuals of various ages and educational backgrounds, including high school and college students. Milgram published the research results in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* in 1963. In his work *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, published in 1974, he notes that these studies examine voluntary obedience, characterized by an atmosphere of cooperation, to which individuals willingly agree.”<sup>6</sup>

“It was – and still is – probably the most notorious experiment in post-war psychology. Yale professor Stanley Milgram proved that ordinary people, under the direct request of authority, will obey any order, even if it involves extreme torture. His findings not only contributed to the field of science but were also employed in war crimes trials, complementing Hannah Arendt's *Theory of the Banality of Evil*.”(Ibid.)

“The results of a series of experiments revealed a remarkably high willingness among otherwise seem-

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<sup>6</sup> Internet edition of the newspaper Pravda, September 30, 2021.

ingly ordinary people to comply with the requests of an authority figure, even if it involved inhumane acting contrary to moral norms. The studies demonstrated that individuals, solely out of obedience and without any anticipation of personal gain or aggressive intentions, would behave against their conscience and jeopardize the well-being of another person.” (Ibid.)

Thus, the implementation of violence in politics received terrible psychological support in the behavior of ordinary people who are not capable of opposing it. That's why the Nobel laureate Ivo Andrić was right when he wrote, among other things, that the spirit of the Balkan peoples “is forever poisoned and that they may never be able to do anything other than one thing: to suffer violence or to commit it.” We would complement the Serbian Nobel laureate in only one thing: psychological science has confirmed through experiments, as we have seen, that this is a psychological (anthropological) feature of people as beings and that it is not unique to the man from the Balkans. What creates such an impression among some observers is the fact that the frequency of the use of violence and its disproportionate amount. It is a kind of teleology of violence, as long ago asserted by the Serbian philosopher Milan Kovačević in his books *Ontological Triptych* and *Transformations of Practice*.

## XVI POLITICS AS SUBVERSION

Political activity often appears as a type of subversive activity, a subversion that has multiple dimensions of appearance. Dragan Simeunović defines it as the realization of strategic and tactical goals to penetrate and maximize global, ideological, economic, cultural, and other patterns that seek to effect a partial or complete change in the way of life and political and social directions of a society (D. Simeunović, 1989: 134). It also appears as crypto-politics, which conceals its dimension of decision-making and the centers of power on which all government rests. Then, as conspirology, today's still insufficiently established political science discipline that should investigate not only the practical consequences of conspiracies but also all other forms of political activity deeply hidden from the eyes of the democratic public, Miša Đurković called "dark corridors of power."

We increasingly observe a specialized form of subversion, identified as public diplomacy, which entails non-intelligence spying conducted by the second echelon of intelligence action against a country's interests and its citizens. Public diplomacy is "exercised" as a

form of subversive activity mainly by persons and institutions that have given their consent to political struggle against the ruling policy of a country and carry it out through controlled media, connoted content of public discourses, (mis)use of the academic or intellectual public. “Means of communication are the fastest and easiest way to change the mental fabric of a nation, feelings, culture, tradition, history.” Don't have the illusion that communication is without restriction, surveillance, and control. Concealed Public Affairs Officers are crouching at the crossroads of information, whose job is to control the media model of information” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 2019: 265).

Therefore, the main contractors who act in public diplomacy belong to the group of so-called agents of influence. It is the second echelon of subversive actions of intelligence agencies against a country, which follows immediately after the primary form of classic agency intelligence work. It has a malignant effect on society because they are its integral part. Agents of influence knowingly engage in subversive activities against their own country at the expense of foreign employers and mentors. It doesn't matter if they do it out of “conviction” or if they sold themselves for “ridiculous” monetary fees. We observe them every day in the media that have national coverage, and in most cases, doing their professional work, they carry out this malignant propaganda activity. Manuel Castells believes it is because there is a struggle to build meaning in society and people's minds. After all, experience has shown that it is easier to effectively shape people's minds through quiet infiltration and media manipulation than to carry out bare political violence and terror. The tasks



of the “second echelon” are changing the value orientation of citizens, civilizational conversion, changing geopolitical identity, challenging religious-confessional affiliation, anti-national propaganda, popularizing foreign culture, promoting auto-chauvinism, destroying family values, making patriotism meaningless, glorifying fanaticism through the legalization of all kinds of pathology, the collapse of national institutions and traditional culture, the dismantling of the state, especially its security sector (army, police, intelligence services), and many other systemic activities to recode the values and worldview of the citizens of a country (Lj. Despotović; V. Glishin, 2021: 117). “The driving force for overthrowing the government, as a rule, is part of the political, administrative, military, information and creative elite dissatisfied with the existing system of government and with an effort, due to various circumstances, to destroy the system.”

It comprises several groups:

- Public opinion leaders who deny the current political system, history, and identity of the state and population, consciously ready to hand it over to the hybrid aggressor;
- Corrupt careerists dissatisfied with their position in the power structure through an effort to occupy a higher position;
- Predators who set themselves the goal of property redistribution;
- Agents of influence working on behalf of Western intelligence services.
- Compradors focused on the aggressor rather than the development of their state.

These groups, actively defending their interests, join forces with the aggressor to intentionally create and finance field structures responsible for executing the plan to disrupt state administration. They include:

- Parties and public organizations that discredit statehood and impose Western values;
- Engaged media and network structures that spread false information that discredits the state and authorities;
- A network of foreign non-profit organizations;
- Groups of provocateurs and militants for organizing riots.

The social basis for supporting a hybrid attack that imitates the character of a mass popular protest can be ideological opponents of the existing system, citizens misled by propaganda and eager for change, layers of society dissatisfied with their economic and social situation, youth and different ethnic groups, paid provocateurs and all kinds of wrongdoing people.<sup>7</sup>

## **1. Network society, social networks and the Internet**

### **1.1. Network society as a form of subversive organization**

Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells introduced the term network society to the academic discourse in the

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<sup>7</sup> Yuri Mikhailovich Afukhtin, Internet portal Web Tribune, 1.10. 2021.

early 1990s. The new sociological concept was supposed to explain the essence of the changes in the structural part of the “new” society that was emerging before our eyes and which, to a considerable extent, acquired a different character we knew decades before. Its appearance was made possible by the achieved technical and technological changes, especially in the part of breakthroughs on the informational level and the increasingly prevalent forms of communication via the Internet, its platforms, and other forms related to social networks and increasingly dispersed and dispersed network structures. “In our society, which I conceptualized as a network society, power is multidimensional and organized around networks programmed in every domain of human activity according to the interests and values of actors who have power.” Networks of power exert their power by influencing the human mind predominantly (but not exclusively) through multidimensional networks of mass communication. Hence, communication networks serve as critical power generators.” (M. Castells, 2018: 25).

The fundamental characteristic of this societal model lies in organizing individuals by creating diverse networks that are subsequently interlinked or mutually connected. These networks can encompass various categories such as commercial, intelligence, religious, informational, media, political, civil, and military. Importantly, they collectively serve a unified purpose – networking, structuring, and synchronizing to control users, their content, and functions, irrespective of whether they are participants or end consumers. “All of them are hierarchically connected, controlled, and syn-

chronized depending on the needs of network leaders, that is, persons trained in network warfare.” (Lj. Despotović, V. Glišin, 123).

The web is ubiquitous, yet it remains unseen. No hubs reveal themselves as points of intersection, marking neither its commencement nor conclusion. Similarly concealed are its upper, middle, or lower echelons, prominent Russian geopolitical analysts Alexander Dugin and Leonid Savin would note. Much of the network's workings remain imperceptible, operating in the background without our conscious awareness. It intricately links to every exerting control element essential for shaping our preferences and interests, predetermined by those overseeing online interactions. The network is a conduit for everything: information, capital, knowledge, ideas, ideologies, goods, services, money, emotions, prejudices, and falsehoods – all coursing through its interconnected channels. According to Dugin, the network represents a perfect blend of entropy and hierarchy. We would further emphasize the deliberately induced appearance of chaos and concealed centers of hierarchy – namely, invisible network leaders and even more clandestine network codes. Without these codes, decoding the seemingly “entropic” multitude of information becomes impossible, preventing an understanding of their meaning, symbolic and value systems, and especially the interests that construct, organize, and control the network.

Despite being a sublimation of organization, network control and structure operate imperceptibly. They remain entirely unseen by all participants, even if a few are aware of the existence of hierarchy and its control

over the process. Similar to rhizomorphic structures and subterranean potato roots, the network embodies organization while maintaining invisibility. “This rhizomorphic and subterranean manifestation of the network society is increasingly prevalent... In essence, network models have a direct correlation with the proliferation of destructive models that undermine the order of the state.” (A. Dugin & L. Savin, 65). And so the entire reality in which we live, especially in the last two decades, is structured according to the rules of the network societies determining our existence and building new forms of postmodern totalitarianism.

## **1.2. Basic characteristics of the network society**

- Synchronous ambivalence of the cyberspace in which most network activities take place, the simultaneous existence of its material facet and function (technological infrastructure without which the network could not function), and participants (users), but at the same time, existence of its virtual dimension, its invisibility, and secrecy (arcane properties of the network and its control mechanisms).
- The sublimation of organization remains a crucial attribute, even when the entire network structure appears chaotic, disordered, and random from the perspective of participants or users. Contrary to the apparent lack of organization, the network represents a refined form of organization, control, and purposeful perception aligned with precisely

defined preferences and values. At times, the fundamental meanings of certain concepts or systems elude us. Since the inception of the Internet by the US military several decades ago, its essence has persisted, characterized as a network within a network – a fusion of the English words “inter” and “net.” This amalgamation vividly elucidates the Internet's function: “to connect/establish communication between two or more computer networks.” (Predrag P. Pavličević, 267)

- The network society operates with a centrist and elastic nature, positioning itself as the focal point for all events, even though its core remains concealed. Networks exhibit organization, seamlessly adapting to various forms, contents, and participants within the entire process.
- Online wars manifest as ongoing conflicts of varying intensities, representing a continuous struggle for participants' attention, values, perceptions of events, and the outcomes of these “battles.” Describing these conflicts as network-centric wars delineates them as hybrid forms of warfare persistently unfolding within networks, particularly within the framework of the network society.

“In a classic war, the primary objective involves defeating the enemy, occupying their territory, and causing infrastructure destruction and mass casualties. In contrast, hybrid warfare represents a concealed conflict taking the shape of a comprehensive political, financial, economic, informational, cultural, and ideological struggle conducted through non-military meth-

ods. Simultaneously, a sophisticated hybrid system emerges, allowing external control over the state through concentrated pressure in the administrative-political, socio-economic, and informational-psychological domains. Information technologies target the state's economic, informational, and law enforcement structures without a formal declaration of war.”<sup>8</sup>

“Disorganization plagues the state administration, leading to the ascension of a puppet government. In the last phase, armed conflicts may develop, with the participation of local rebels and mercenaries, supported by personnel, weapons, and finances from abroad, and internal oligarchic, nationalist, and pseudo-religious structures. In some cases, military occupation may also begin. In hybrid wars, the conceptual civilizational confrontation occurs not in the ideological realm but in the cultural and value spheres. At the strategic level, operations in hybrid warfare encompass domestic and foreign policy, a nation's finances and economy, the information and communications sector, military strength, population morale, and other factors influencing a country's resistance capabilities. The main goal of such a war is to create chaos, defeat, and subjugate the enemy by non-military means.” (Ibid.)

- A rhizomorphic structure resembling an underground potato root eludes the awareness of most participants. In this organizational style, networks discreetly extend invisible roots, emerging unexpectedly in different places and constructing an

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<sup>8</sup> Yuri Mikhailovich Afukhtin, Internet portal Web Tribune, 1.10.2021.

above-ground tree of action. This dynamic growth reflects adaptability and resilience, emphasizing the capacity to thrive in diverse and unforeseen environments.

- Swarm tactics involve employing a dependable strategy to cause harm to designated targets through coordinated, simultaneous attacks by smaller units on a more formidable adversary. Attackers demonstrate a high level of coordination, often unaware of each other's existence except concerning the designated target. The targeted entity finds itself nearly defenseless due to attackers remaining invisible. The attackers, synchronized in their actions, only become discernible when the attacks become visible, notably during and after the completion of the target destruction process.
- The illusion of freedom and non-imposition of networks is a fiction of arbitrariness. The concealment of the control mechanism leads many online participants to believe they have complete freedom in their activities. It fosters the illusion that there is no control or coordination and that online actions stem from arbitrary choices and personal interests. Participants remain unaware of the network's existence, let alone their active and directed role. In other words, “torturing the body is less effective than shaping the mind” (M. Castells, 24).
- The network is the embodiment of the so-called non-violent infiltration, with a double character: firstly, an instrument of engineering artificial



emotions, desired patterns of behavior, and formatting ready-made images of its users; secondly, infiltration into the systemic parts of the state and society, their institutions, and taking control over its functions. Of course, this kind of globalizing elite activity is contrary to the laws of a country. But the network is invisible to most users, so it remains beyond the reach of the judicial system of government and criminal prosecution, only partially subject to countermeasures by the domicile security services.

- The fundamental characteristic of the network society is its organization into numerous interwoven, parallel, and synchronized network fields. Participants typically lack awareness of the entirety and quantity of these fields, having, at most, an understanding of engaging in one or two interconnected fields that drive them to execute programmed actions or activities.
- In the network society, the primary controlling mechanism is the code responsible for encoding, recording, and decoding the corresponding contents circulating within the networks. The network code is the key that locks or unlocks everything. It is secret to all but the network controllers who manage the network fields and participants; it goes without saying – without their knowledge and awareness that network codes exist at all.
- The dispersal of power and its transition to non-state actors, particularly globalist non-governmental organizations, media institutions, and terrorist organizations, aims to challenge the institu-

tional power of national states and advance the interests of the state system characterized by dislocated centers of globalist influence. “Those primarily engaged in public diplomacy typically fall under agents of influence. Networks play a pivotal role as the primary mechanism for disseminating and rapidly exchanging information. They guarantee nearly instantaneous availability, promote reciprocity, and facilitate the establishment of feedback links among participants. As a result, the network represents the postmodern reality of post-industrial civilization, surpassing both the sacred structures of traditional society and the rational structures of the modern era, including the state, government, political institutions, and production, within the context of contemporary discourse.” (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 124).

In a specific context, individuals frequently employ potent disinformation techniques as an effective strategy to manipulate public opinion and shape the attitudes of a considerable number of people. “Disinformation is not only found on websites (the classic manager of web information on the Internet) but also follows citizens “horizontally” along all the platforms they use, mainly on mobile devices: from certain groups on Telegram to users of microblogging networks (Twitter), even helping some citizens to “jump” information between different networks, transferring information from one to another (P. Pavličević, 176).

### 1.3. Social networks, Internet and cyberspace

The network society, a prevailing social context for several decades, saw the rise of social networks and Internet platforms like Google, Amazon, and Yahoo. These platforms, including the prominent ones today – Facebook, Twitter, Viber, Instagram, TikTok, and others – facilitate communication and structural networking among a diverse user base. The media, the Internet, and network activism work together to transcend geographical limitations, condensing space and bringing participants closer together.

Professor Zoran Jevtović, a recognized mediologist, meaningfully highlights the shift. He emphasizes that the focus has shifted from controlling space to controlling concepts. Our assertion aligns with this idea, stating that the control of space is now intricately tied to the control of concepts. However, this process is concealed and imperceptible to social network users – a novel aspect introduced by Internet communication. Examples of the destabilization of states and the overthrow of government coded through the term “Arab Spring” best confirm this (M. Castells, 2018).

Upon initial inspection, networks may not seem directly linked to strategic power centers, professional services, or intelligence communities. However, they are intricately connected as they play a role in subversive activities. The ultimate goal of these activities goes beyond the seemingly innocent facade of civilian character. “Shaping the world according to new patterns is based on camouflaged ideas of political domination, military hegemony, and undisguised arrogance towards

everyone who thinks differently” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 2019: 261). The well-known French sovereigntist and anti-globalist Herve Juvin also points this out very clearly when he says: “The Internet is the most general means of subjugating the gullible to the American order. The term hyperpower is nowhere more justified than online” (H. Juvin, 2019: 45). Consequently, the United States not only claimed cyberspace for its exclusive use, designating cyber power as its own, but also legally justified and issued military threats against anyone attempting to challenge the established monopoly.

Cyberspace encompasses various activities, forming a complex and multi-layered network of intersecting physical and virtual elements that are uniquely coordinated and managed. According to J. Nye, the geography of cyberspace is more volatile than other environments, where the ability to turn parts on or off is as simple as flipping a switch (Ibid., 154).

The creation of cyber power involves the projection, control, and management of this dynamic space. It emerges by utilizing resources to influence extensive networks encompassing IT platforms, the Internet, software, mobile networks, satellites, and space communication.

J. Nye defines cyber-power as the ability to attain specific outcomes by leveraging electronically interconnected information resources within the cyber domain (Ibid., 153). As a result, the analysis of cyberspace as a realm of power aligns with the concept of cyber geopolitics. Coined by Leonid Savin, this term is emerging as a unique subdiscipline within geopolitics. (L. Savin, 26-31).

In a structural context, three primary groups typically narrow down the array of actors engaged in cyberspace, vying for cyber power: governments, organizations characterized by highly structured networks, and individuals associated with lightly structured networks. Of course, the power game between them is unequal. Therefore, it is asymmetrical. He who controls the most formidable resources can also generate enormous power. But even less potent players, in terms of resources, are not without chances in this game. It is evidenced by the numerous cyber attacks from anonymous hackers, causing enormous damage to disproportionately more powerful structures such as governments, the military, banks, intelligence services, companies, and the media. Therefore, the US has repeatedly stated that the Internet is a state strategic space and that it will consider any threat to the security of the Internet as aggression. President Obama has even authorized military retaliation against public and private actors who violate (US) Internet security rules, threaten the US public interest, or act against the US national interest online (H. Juvin, 2019: 44).

Before the Internet and social networks emerged, hidden control embodied the creation of mass manipulation techniques through media that have existed for almost a century. The American Edward Bernays, a relative of Sigmund Freud, is considered the founder of the application of psychological techniques to achieve the so-called “liberating strategies” that model the minds of the public in general as a way of forming group opinion through which control and rule over the masses is established “without their awareness that they

are targets of propaganda influence.” (Lj. Despotović; Z. Jevtović, 238). In the fifties of the last century, Bernays became a well-known theoretician of mass persuasion techniques or, as we would say today, a creator of public opinion through the definition of public discourses. One of his famous techniques was the production of consent, as well as the transfer of meaning as part of a strategy to transform civil culture and position the USA as the center of global power in the construction of a new world order, producing a mass perception among the audience that the USA is the only guarantor of democracy, a symbol of freedom and its best protector on a global scale. Kurt Lewin built upon Bernay's projects of mass propaganda techniques in social psychology, introducing the famous theory of gatekeepers. Following this, David Manning White applied these concepts to the demands of mediaology. The essence of this theory, which has shown great usefulness and effectiveness, is contained in the concept of controlling ideas and content, uploading meaning, as well as personas that can be present in the public space through the media or in public discourse through the determination of the so-called agenda, as a significant aspect of soft power. Initially, the gatekeepers, representing the state and later transitioning to serve corporate capital, made decisions on who and what could be present in the public sphere. They implemented a system of “passes” and “does not pass,” regulating access and presence according to their determinations.

Editors in the media had a monopoly on making decisions by applying techniques created through agenda-setting theories, framing theories, and the field of semiological analysis of media messages. “In geopo-

litical architecture, it is easy to give some events, persons or processes more importance than they deserve, but also to make them invisible to the general public by not being mentioned.” Through semiological or semantic processing, ordinary information becomes a propaganda message, while the narrative in media covers the selection mechanism and masks the processing process. “The liberal concept has diverted information into a one-way street because when one or several media owners determine the agenda of the debate, it is clear that they directly create public opinion by influencing the work of the government, state bodies, and institutions. The four major Western agencies – United Press International (UPI), Associated Press (AP), Reuters, and Assange France Press (AFP) – contribute ninety percent of the international news published by the world press. It is not a new conspiracy theory, as well-paid publicists like to explain in the media or the academic field, but the current phase of media spin, which changes the value framework of perception for the global public and creates the illusion of freedom of thought with the help of ready-made images. Thus, at the end of the chain of mass manipulation, almost a century-long, we come to the absurd fact that those who advocate the freedom of the media the most (the gatekeepers) do the most to endanger it.

## **2. Conspiracy and cryptopolitics**

### **2.1. Cryptopolitics**

Cryptopolitics is one of the under-researched phenomena of politics. Observed as a phenomenon for

now, it could one day become a political science discipline. The main subject of its possible constitution as a political discipline would be dealing with the arcane structures of political processes that are not transparent enough for the public and remain secret in many segments of the functioning of politics. Due to the inherent difficulty of the research process, the elusive nature of hidden processes, and the scarcity of relevant documents, the disciplinary level of political science remained underdeveloped. It is contrary to the necessity for scientific observations in this field, which is crucial to objective social science.

On the ontic, but also the practical level, politics reveals to us as a secret topos of conspiracy, which only under forcible pressure from the democratic public sometimes opens up to some forms of civilian control or transparency. Without that public pressure, which weakens over time, the concentrated field of political power necessarily returns to its foundation being and the essence of politics, which was created as a secret activity, no matter how many of its leading protagonists wanted and sometimes managed to present it in public as an activity that primarily aimed at fulfilling the public interest of citizens and achieving their overall good and well-being. And that has been the basic meaning of every well-ordered political and legal order since ancient Greece.

Fellow academics have observed evidence about conspiracies and their participants among various scientific disciplines, with historiography being a primary repository for such information. These details emerge incidentally and, perhaps unintentionally, as byprod-



ucts. In their fragmented state, researchers often struggle to discern their relevance. The prevailing factor contributing to the persistence of conspiracies lies in the genuine concern among researchers. They fear that acknowledging or delving into conspiratorial structures might subject them to scrutiny within the academic community, branding them as charlatans and exposing them to the public as mere speculators lacking genuine knowledge and credibility.

All research on the conspiracy with theoretical pretensions should primarily come from politics and research into its arcane nature. Miloš Knežević quite correctly and disciplinedly situates it in the context of cryptopolitics because it is “primarily an ingredient of the world of practical politics, and not just a reflected theoretical intervention in its empirical flows.” Public policy can often be or is a consequence of the actions of crypto-interests, and “crypto-interests are compatible with crypto-processes and crypto-structures, and numerous components of the political phenomenon: ideas, ideologies, doctrines, programs, visions, norms, values, procedures, social layers, groups and movements, institutions, organizations, instruments, personnel and endlessly cutting actions can be expressed and perceived in two extreme ways: public and secret” (M. Knežević, 83). It is important to note that what is public or visible in politics is often the product of crypto processes and actions/decision-making hidden from the eyes of the public. It happens even when it comes to legal decisions of the institutional apparatus of the state and society because its holders do not want the presence of the public while the process is taking place. Their ideal is

to provide themselves with action in “a space of shaded political intimacy and undisturbed political comfort” (Lj. Despotović; V. Glišin, 86).

The development of a new scientific discipline of political science exploring cryptopolitics is yet to come. Despite the inherent challenges associated with this endeavor, it is crucial not to be dissuaded because, beyond the intricacies involved in adopting a politically nuanced approach to its subject matter, methodologies, and research perspectives, it inherently aligns with the study of conspiracy. Cryptopolitics would represent a distinctive branch of research focused on the practice and doctrines underlying conspiracy exploration.

## **2.2. Conspirology**

A nuanced and intricate discussion on conspiracy necessitates a multidisciplinary approach, drawing knowledge from various scientific, historical, political, and intelligence domains. This extensive research should span “from the philosophy of history to criminology, encompassing military sciences and arts, the history of espionage, propaganda, and secret diplomacy, as well as social and personal psychology. It should extend from the history of the church to the theory of the multinational economy, from secret societies and orders to publishing, covering esoteric doctrines and criminal law, political geography, catastrophology, politics, political science, archeology, and paleolinguistics. Additionally, it should encompass literature, court tales, heroic history, and elite theories (or mass theo-

ries), reaching into the history of ideologies and movements, theology, and metaphysics.” (B. Matić, 8) Lastly, within academic circles, this lesser-known discipline – degenerology. (G. Klimov).

The reasons for such behavior of the challengers of the conspiracy approach in political science are clear enough to any reasonable and independent intellectual. The mentioned methods of media harangue are employed to suppress any rational and reasoned discourse surrounding the practice of conspiracy – a longstanding political activity throughout history. The very methodology of defamation of serious conspiracists is well known. Investigators of this phenomenon face systematic discrediting, with detractors labeling them as mere pseudo-scientists and obscure figures discussing something supposedly absent from the annals of political history. Miloš Knežević underscores this perspective. “A pronounced “conspiracy theorist” runs the risk of being understood as a charlatan and mythomaniac, or a mystifier and paranoid. Hence, the “conspiracy theory” as an “incorrect” and “harmful” coin contains, therefore, an emotionally displaced, conspicuously overstimulated polyvalent potential of (de)legitimizing various phenomena in the world of politics” (M. Knežević, 2013: 52).

Alexander Dugin, a well-known Russian geopolitician, in his book *Conspirology*, emphasizes a similar feature of conspiracy theory debates, clearly marking their sometimes almost caricatured feature in the public eye. “The argument most often given by opponents of the conspirological approach to history consists in pointing out the grotesqueness of lay ‘Conspirology’,

whose maxims are truly picturesquely unsustainable and sometimes absurd” (A. Dugin, 2001: 5). The creators of the supposedly critical approach to conspirology intentionally make a *pars pro toto* logical error when they take a part of such obscure “conspirologists” as a whole because it suits them to make the complete conspiracy as a political science discipline meaningless, unacceptable and pointless. Despite the prevailing practice of discrediting, it is noteworthy that many reputable countries and educational systems actively engage in serious research on conspiracy. Top-tier academic institutions actively conduct specialized courses on this subject. “Conspiracy science” is studied and taught as a legitimate scientific (sub)discipline at several reputable world universities, under the names of conspirology, secret history, cryptopolitics... Professors from those departments are often guest lecturers at better police-intelligence academies, elite schools for diplomats, institutes for political studies...” (ibid., 9)

Let's briefly examine what language reveals about conspiracies. In Latin, *Conspirare*, which translates to conspiracy, literally means 'to blow in unison' into something and, in essence, 'to act together.' In French, *complot*, implying a secret agreement or connection, corresponds to conspiracy. In English, *conspire* denotes working together to achieve a common goal, and the term Conspiracy encompasses this meaning. In German, *verschwörung*, which also signifies secretly connecting with or against someone, is equivalent to conspiracy.

### **2.3. Politics as the primary context of the conspiracy**

In the realm of conspiracy, Miloš Knežević asserts with extreme precision that “politics is the primary reality,” placing it within its foundational praxeological context. Ancient thinkers like Plato and Aristotle recognized and delineated this enigmatic aspect of politics, as often underscored by academician Ljubomir Tadić in his renowned work, the *Science of Politics*. Despite its definition as a public service, politics frequently conceals, as rightly noted by my colleague Miša Đurković, within the obscured corridors of power. Unfortunately, these shadowed realms of political action stand out as prominent features in practice. The essence of politics lies in its tendency to significantly veil the processes and procedures leading to crucial decisions essential for upholding the public interest of citizens, particularly those who sidestep these interests. Therefore, in any democratically organized society, a fundamental principle directed at the sphere of concentrated political power and institutions is an imperative call for heightened transparency. The imperative arises from the inclination of some in power to conceal motives and interests that deviate from the constitution and laws, potentially contradicting the proclaimed public interest of citizens, a fact that requires no separate proof.

The same dynamic holds for non-state, non-institutional power holders who, utilizing political elites as their institutional conduits, systematically pursue the realization of self-serving interests. It is evident that, in numerous instances, these interests clash with the de-

mocratic governance order and the well-being of citizens. Their focus has perennially centered on the abuse of power across its diverse manifestations (V. Pavlović). This concern arises because, as a general rule, individuals frequently acquire power through methods that lack legal and legitimate foundations. Consequently, it must shroud itself in the opaque realm of the public eye, preventing revelation regarding the time and manner of its acquisition. Indeed, systemic corruption stands out as one of the paramount mechanisms steering the course of the world. Such a system tolerates corruption and deems it essential for ascending to power and, more crucially, for maintaining that power. In the realm of cutthroat interests, everything carries a price tag, and the significance and scale of those interests proportionally amplify the cost of their attainment and realization. Those yet to grasp this vital existential lesson are ill-suited for involvement in high politics. A system that corrupts cannot stand the rejection of corruption.

The distinguished Serbian political scientist Dragan Simeunović aptly highlights a reality concerning the connection between politics and conspiratorial practices. Simeunović states, “Conspiracy, in some forms and dimensions, is inextricably linked with politics. If we were to analyze it in percentage terms, politics primarily operates in secrecy rather than as a public activity.” A closer examination reveals that more than 80 percent of political activities are non-public; in other words, they are kept confidential. (D. Simeunović, “Prilog određenju naučnog pojma zavere” [Contribution to defining the scientific concept of conspiracy] in

Sve sfere zavere, 26). The esteemed Serbian political scientist Miroljub Jevtić agrees with this assessment, affirming that “denying the existence of a conspiracy is to be deaf, blind, or crazy. Or, perhaps, adequately compensated for 'tasks of denial. Every state policy is rooted in conspiracies. The methodology and means of that work, the nature of functioning, and most often the goals, inherently include conspiratorial elements, a conspiracy *par excellence*.” (M. Jevtić, “Istoriju pokreću interesi, zavera je jedan od metoda ostvarivanja” [Interests propel history, with conspiracy as one method of realization] in *Sve sfere zavere*, 73).

Throughout history, a fundamental motivation for engaging in politics has been to utilize institutional power, embodied in the authorities, to delve deeply into the public welfare of citizens – often in the form of budgetary funds – and surreptitiously transfer resources (such as finances, real estate, and state property) into their own pockets or the pockets of the entities that facilitated their rise to power. From such a perspective, they consider this approach more expedient, as they perceive the conventional paths to wealth, personal well-being, and status power as arduous and sluggish. Individuals and groups, driven by the sinister intention of appropriating what doesn't rightfully belong to them, consistently pursue these goals. This inclination is particularly pronounced in societies where vertical promotion channels are entirely clogged, allowing no room for patience among groups characterized by pathological ambition or insatiable material desires.

History repeatedly demonstrates that conspiracies have been and will continue in all societies. It is due to

the insatiable human greed and a relentless thirst for power, which are primary motives for actions within society and act as driving forces in politics. This nearly personalized approach to politics was frequently doctrinally justified, particularly within the liberal political paradigm. Paradoxically, the same paradigm that doctrinally celebrated its libertarianism often simultaneously fostered the brutal practice of oppressing others, called exploitation in the economics literature. Such systemic acts of robbery received ideological justification and legality in the context of liberalism (through the concept of possessive individualism) as a civilizational practice of Western capitalism.

#### **2.4. Attempts to determine the conspiracy**

In the scientific literature, there are scant attempts to define phenomenology, the essence of conspiracy and conspiracies. On this elusive terrain, few have ventured to conceptually objectify and theoretically define this, in many respects, “obscure” political phenomenon and practice. Colleague Dragan Simeunović has undertaken one of the more successful theoretical endeavors in this regard, proposing the following definition: “Conspiracy is an organized conspiratorial action which, to realize a secretly agreed and carefully prepared plan, is carried out secretly or publicly by selected and firmly connected conspiracy actors in a conspiratorial group or organization. According to a widespread belief, the goal of a conspiracy is to harm someone and to help oneself or one's loved ones. Conspiracy



is, therefore, a way (and primarily a way) of planning and acting, that is, acting to achieve the conspirator's goals and plans. Secrecy is an indispensable element.” (ibid., 23)

Following a brief political introduction, it is now time to present our definition of the practice of conspiracy. Any covertly organized political action undertaken by groups or individuals and directed against the public interest and the well-being of citizens, as guaranteed by the constitution and laws of a country or the generally accepted international institutional and legal order, can be characterized and treated as conspiratorial. This characterization is especially applicable because individuals or groups conduct such actions secretly, away from the public eye, to obtain illegal benefits or profits, whether material or non-material. Furthermore, the mentioned activity must be regarded as conspiratorial, as it typically operates through the institutional framework of the legal and political system of the state, even when the entire planning and decision-making process occurs outside or beyond it.

That's why M. Knežević is correct in asserting that political conspiracies represent the most expressive types of the overall phenomenology of conspiracies. It is understandable because the extent of illicit gains through politically orchestrated misappropriation of the public good, state, and social wealth is directly proportional to the influence of specific groups or individuals. Joseph Nye defines the public good of citizens as a good “from which all must benefit, and no one can be excluded” (J. Nye, 2012: 29). Their overall social strength, position, and role in the political system or

their capacity to influence it determine their success in achieving conspiratorial objectives. Of course, all in the pursuit of realizing financial, political, economic, media, and other interests to attain the highest possible level of social power and influence. Unlike typical criminal activities, which focus on stealing from individuals and their personal property, conspiratorial actions typically aim at the collective good of the community or a specific segment thereof. (Lj. Despotović, V. Glišin, 72).

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# CONTENTS

Author's Preface .....	5
I POLICY DEFINITION AND MEANING .....	9
II HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF POLICY .....	15
1. Ancient Political Thought .....	15
2. Concepts of Politics in the Middle Ages .....	24
3. Political Thought during Humanism and the Renaissance .....	30
3.1. Niccolo Machiavelli – One Understanding of Politics .....	33
4. Understanding Politics in Civil Society .....	40
4.1. Political ideas of emerging citizenship – creating the foundations of democracy .....	40
4.2. Liberalism as an Ideological Pillar in the Modern Civil Order .....	49
III EMERGENCE AND DISCIPLINARY DETERMINATION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE .....	55
1. Political Theory .....	59
2. Political Philosophy .....	62
3. Political Anthropology .....	63
4. Political Sociology .....	65
5. Political Systems .....	67
6. Political Ethics .....	68
7. World Politics .....	69
8. Globalism as an Ideology of the New World Order .....	75
9. Geopolitics .....	78
10. Political ecology .....	81

IV	STRUCTURE OF POLITICS	
	Polity, Politics, Policy .....	85
	1. Polity .....	86
	2. Politics .....	87
	3. Policy .....	88
V	FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS IN POLITICS AND POLICY .....	91
	1. State .....	91
	2. Authorities .....	106
	3. Political obligation .....	107
	4. Coup d'état .....	110
	5. The coup .....	111
	6. Power .....	113
	7. Dominance/ authority .....	123
	8. Legitimacy .....	128
	9. Political capital .....	134
	10. Political modernization .....	138
VI	POLITICAL PARTIES, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, INTEREST AND LOBBY GROUPS .....	141
	1. Political parties .....	141
	1.1. Roles/functions of political parties .....	142
	1.2. Pathological deviations in the functioning of political parties .....	146
	1.3. Types of Political Parties .....	149
	1.4. Lines of social cleavages and political divisions .....	152
	2. Electoral systems .....	155
	2.1. Majoritarian electoral systems .....	159
	2.2. Proportional electoral systems (proportional representation) .....	159
	2.3. Mixed electoral systems .....	160
	3. Social movements .....	161
	4. Interest and lobby groups .....	162

VII	CIVIL SOCIETY .....	166
	1. The core principles of civil society .....	168
	2. Civil strategy .....	170
VIII	POLITICAL CULTURE .....	171
	1. Types of political culture .....	172
	2. Formative factors of political culture .....	173
IX	POLITICAL SYSTEM .....	176
	1. Theories of the political system .....	177
	2. Classifications of Political Systems .....	182
X	VARIETIES OF POLITICAL REGIMES .....	183
	1. Autocracy .....	183
	2. Democracy .....	186
	2.1. Classification of democracy .....	189
	2.2. Origins of Democracy .....	191
	2.3. Types of democracy .....	194
	2.4. Key Features of Democracy .....	198
	3. Models of democracy .....	199
	3.1. Liberal democracy .....	200
	3.2. Polyarchy .....	203
	3.3. Consociational democracy .....	203
	3.4. A discursive model of democracy .....	204
	3.5. Participatory model of democracy .....	205
	3.6. Cosmopolitan democracy .....	206
	3.7. Multicultural citizenship as a model of democracy .....	207
	3.8. A mixed model of democracy .....	209
	3.9. Supervising democracy .....	209
	3.10. Hyper-democracy .....	210
	3.11. Dedemocratization processes .....	213
	4. Modern constitutionalism – The Rule of Law .....	216
XI	FORMS OF GOVERNMENT .....	220
	1. Monarchy .....	220
	2. Republic .....	221
	3. Forms of state authorities .....	222

3.1. Separation of authority system .....	224
3.2. Unity of authority .....	225
4. Structures of government .....	226
XII POLITICAL MARKETING .....	228
1. Elements of Political Marketing .....	229
2. Types of Political Marketing .....	230
3. Public (Rational) Choice Theory in Political Marketing .....	231
XIII POLITICAL COMMUNICATION .....	234
1. Political communication mediated by media systems ....	234
2. Communication paradigms .....	235
3. Mass media and public discourse .....	241
XIV POLITICAL PROPAGANDA .....	248
1. Functions of political propaganda .....	248
2. Types of political propaganda .....	249
XV POLITICAL VIOLENCE .....	252
1. Forms of political violence .....	253
1.1. Theories of violence .....	253
1.2. Types of violence .....	256
2. Political extremism and its forms .....	258
XVI POLITICS AS SUBVERSION .....	263
1. Network society, social networks and the Internet .....	266
1.1. Network society as a form of subversive organization .....	266
1.2. Basic characteristics of the network society .....	269
1.3. Social networks, Internet and cyberspace .....	275
2. Conspiracy and cryptopolitics .....	279
2.1. Cryptopolitics .....	279
2.2. Conspirology .....	282
2.3. Politics as the primary context of the conspiracy ...	285
2.4. Attempts to determine the conspiracy .....	288
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	291

**Ljubiša Despotović  
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