iASK

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES K Ő S Z E G

POLÁNYI CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Studies in Contentious Politics

II.2016/WP01

Studies in Contentious Politics

Preface

This is the first working paper for the new series *Studies in Contentious Politics* which is a product of the newly established Institute of Advanced Studies, Kőszeg (iASK). The series is intended to address the rise of civil unrest across the globe, in response to a variety of triggers: lack of democracy and dignity, lack of political voice and participation, austerity, migration crisis, etc.

In particular, the series would like to highlight contestation in regions that are not always at the focus of attention. Therefore, this first issue looks at dissent and activism in one East Central European country (Hungary), and two countries from the Western Balkans (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia).

The Hungarian study was supported by a grant from the London School of Economics and is available as a chapter in the volume: "Hungary at the Vanguard of Europe's Rearguard? Emerging Subterranean Politics and Civil Dissent," in *Subterranean Politics in Europe*, Mary Kaldor and Sabine Selchow, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 141-167.

The study of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Igor Stripic was written during the International Summer University, sponsored by the Institute for Social and European Studies (ISES) in Kőszeg in 2014.

The Macedonian study was carried out by Dimitar Nikolovski under the auspices of the New Central Europe Program (TAMOP-4.2.1.D-15/1/KONV-2015-0006), where he is a scholar in residence in Kőszeg at ISES.

About the Authors

Jody Jensen is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Politicl Sciences at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. She is director of international relations at the Institute of Social and European Studies (a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence) which she helped to found. She was also the national and regional director of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public that supports social entrepreneurs. She teaches frequently abroad and also works for the European Commission. Her areas of research at the IASK are prefigurative and subterranean politics about new social and political movements, particularly in East and Central Europe and the Balkans; looking at the conjunction of the social and natural sciences in the study of complexity as it translates to social phenomenon and change; she is also very interested in the transformation of education and the social sciences in response to global challenges.

Igor Stipič is currently a candidate for MA in Political and Social Studies of Latin America at Universidad Alberto Hurtato in Chile. He received his BA, with a major in Economics in the US, and is pursuing an MA in Economics and Regional Studies of Latin America at the University of Prague. His interests mainly lie in the fields of international relations, economics and politics. His main geographic areas of interest are Latin America, and the Balkans (in the 21st century). He pays great attention to the processes of social transformations and conflict resolution in the latter due to his origins in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dimitar Nikolovski is a PhD candidate at the Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, where he researches the relations between populist parties and civil society in Southeast Europe. He has background in Political Science and has studied at the Law Faculty in Skopje (BA), the Central European University in Budapest (MA) and the Universities of Sarajevo/Bologna (MA). Dimitar has worked for several think-tanks in Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and cooperates with the Centre for European Training in Skopje. Recently, he joined the team of the Institute for Advanced Studies-Koszeg as a Young Researcher.

Table of Contents

Hungary at the Vanguard of Europe's Rearguard?
Emerging Subterranean Politics and Civil Dissent

Jody Jensen

Introduction

Hungary had a rich tradition of peaceful street protest, from the pro-democracy demonstrations in the late 1980s to the Democratic Charta's anti-fascist, anti-extreme right protests in 1991 and 1992. This peaceful tradition ended in 2006 with what many perceive *post festum* as the breaking of the social contract between Hungarian citizens and their government. A secret speech by Prime Minister Gyurcsány was leaked and broadcast to the public in which he admitted lying to the country for years about the economy to win election. Repeated, spontaneous demonstrations after the leak turned violent under suspicious circumstances that are still under investigation.

Around the 50th anniversary of the 1956 October Revolution in 2006, many Hungarians identified themselves with the revolutionaries, feeling that their freedom and their democracy was under direct threat from what some termed 'a parliamentary dictatorship'. An unspecified anger burst out after people took to the streets to peacefully celebrate the anniversary of '56, and were met with sanctioned police violence. There was little to no response from the EU or other European countries, or international human rights institutions about the uncontrolled police violence and the obvious manipulation of events by the authorities. The explosion of emotions, frustration and anger surprised everyone. Subterranean politics suddenly revealed itself.

Another example of the resilience and tenacity of protestors and an important series of online and offline actions began in 2010 against the arrest, imprisonment and maltreatment of Ágnes Geréb, a doctor and midwife who performs home births which are still illegal in Hungary today. This protest was framed in terms of human rights and addressed democratic deficiencies in the country. The protest confronted the lack of choice in weak and fragile (no-choice) democracies that silence voices who speak out against monopolies of power like the medical establishment in Hungary. This protest provoked widespread regional and international coverage and support.

Subterranean politics in Hungary encompasses a wide and multi-level range of anti-government and anti-corruption discourses already present before the global financial crisis. Tent cities established outside the parliament after the street battles in 2006 can be seen as forerunners to present day global revolts in terms of format, modus operandi and message. This was also the first time that nationalist, right-wing, anti-government groups took advantage of social unrest and began articulating their message in an organized and structured way.

More protests emerged in 2011-2012 in opposition to the criminalization of the homeless with actions around the country by groups like *A Város Mindenkié*[The City Belongs to Everyone]. A sudden upheaval of subterranean activity then arose in response to the government's introduction of controversial measures related to constitutional changes, the media law, retirement age of judges, and oversight of the national bank. A recurring *leitmotif*, sometimes in the background of protests, sometimes in the foreground, were protests against racism, anti-semitism, anti-Roma and the perceived support by the government of right wing policies. Clashes occured, for example, between about 50 supporters of the far

right party *Jobbik* and anti-fascist demonstrators after the appointment of a right-wing director to the New Theater in Budapest. Even after enormous international pressure, including an open letter in *The Guardian* signed by internationally known artistic directors, actors, directors, playwrights, among others, the mayor responded noncommittally. This has been the approach of the government to accusations of supporting the right-wing and no clear signals or messages condemn or condone *Jobbik* actions.

Our research concentrated on the period of 2011-2012 when there were a lot of pro- and anti- government actions and street protests in response to a variety of triggers, some of them mentioned above. The research team conducted online searches of groups and their activities in order to map the landscape of protests and main actors. We conducted both online and face-to-face interviews with protestors sometimes live during street demonstrations. One main aim of the research was to map the terrains of activity, the issues around which new groups emerged and organized, and to create a timeline of protests for the period covered by the research to judge their frequency and persistence.

In many ways what we discovered is similar to the emergence of subterranean politics in other parts of Europe and the world, and events in Hungary mirror the global timeline of activism. There is no question that the global momentum provided impetus and support for an otherwise rather lethargic population to take to the streets in protests about the direction the country was heading.

There is certainly an effervescent quality to emerging subterranean politics in Hungary today. Protests are generally organized around specific issues and to a lesser extent exhibit a broader approach, for example, addressing rampant global capitalism and social injustice, like the 'Hunger March'. There is also less connection to global movements,

although regional and even European-level collaboration can be found on Facebook pages and blogs in English about Occupy! Hungary. Generally, protest is nationally organized and coordinated with Budapest and a few larger cities like Szeged and Pécs, as focal points of activities.

The concept of subterranean politics fits particularly well with the current Hungarian situation, first of all because of the interconnectedness of the Hungarian political and economic crisis and the EU and global political, economic and financial crisis; and second because it is too early to talk about a 'social movement' or movements, or actualization of an emergent aspiration of solidarity which underpins a notion of a democratic civil society. So far actions in the national context have been too fragmented and idiosyncratic to form an emergent whole in terms of civil society self-mobilization with a clear civic ethos. That is why adapting the new framework of 'subterranean politics' has advantages and resonance, since it helps to constructively bundle the multifarious and new manifestations of political dissatisfaction and civil dissent in a new discourse without the restraints and intellectual baggage of notions like civil society and social movement theory. There is something new going on in the way people are communicating, organizing and taking action. Some of this has to do with the effect and adaptation of new technologies, which both influence and inform new notions of civic activism, but it is not enough to explain the emphasis on 'process'. This was present in Hungary in discussions of who should participate and how in demonstrations, even if this emphasis was less pronounced than perhaps in other countries.

Sharing characteristics with other protest movements in Europe, many groups were unified around a profound disillusionment with politics as such, both at the national and European levels. There was also a latent anger and frustration left over from the previous

regime of Prime Minister Gyurcsány which resurfaced in new forms of protest against the present regime of Prime Minister Orbán. Blame and responsibility for the current existential uncertainties and financial hardships, however, were placed in different quarters by different groups – either at the national level with the present government or at the EU level. For anti-government protestors, the overwhelming 2/3rds FIDESZ majority in the parliament signified a return to a more authoritarian political style and threatened to undermine democratic principles and practices. It also brought to mind allegations against the former government of 'parliamentary dictatorship' which threaten democractic processes.

On the other side, a large majority supported the government's stance against attacks and 'Hungary-bashing' from the IMF, the EU and the liberal international media. Many protestors carried signs with slogans that Hungary would not be a colony of the EU, and the additional irritation of austerity measures and sanctions, which directly affected large parts of the population, increased anti-EU sentiments in Hungary as in many other post-communist societies. What may distinguish Hungary, then, from other protests in Europe may be the visibility and centrality of Europe and the discourse about Europe, both positive and negative, in the protests.

The protests in 2011 against the constitutional changes and the media law are diverse, but they clearly fit the pattern of earlier demonstrations, like in 2010 in support of Ágnes Geréb, that framed protest in the context of European values and practices. This is an important element in the articulation of Hungarian democracy that actively takes on European value sets and sees them as a necessary prerequisite for a functioning civil society. At the same time, Hungarians felt victimized by the criticism leveled at the country and many

protestors saw and still see a double standard of evaluation imposed and even hypocrisy evident in older EU member states that are also experiencing a crisis of democracy at the national level.

With regard to the debt ceiling provision in the new constitution, the same day the European Commission criticized Hungary, they called on other member states to decrease state debt even with constitutional measures if needed. This was reported in Info Rádio's Arena program on 3 February 2012. Many in Hungary felt the the EU elite from older member states do not approve of innovations coming from new member states like, for example, taxing the banks which was subsequently adopted by other EU member states.

This feeling is shared by other new member states who expressed at least sympathy, if not support, for Hungary at European Parliament debates. So even if Hungarians generally or in certain cases strongly disapprove of the actions of Prime Minister Orbán's government, many still feel unjustly persecuted by the EU.

The Hungarian Context

The trust Hungarians have in their politicians has not risen with the change of government in 2010. Compared to the region, Hungary rates among the lowest in terms of political trust. In a recent survey of 3000 people, over 80 per cent expressed little or no trust at all in politicians. The researcher, Ferenc Peterfi who compiled the survey, remarked that low public trust is a great problem and has continued to deteriorate since the surveys began in 2005. He said that unless this trend changes, low institutional trust will develop into lack of trust between individuals and their actions. This would exacerbate social and economic problems further (Politics.hu: February 2011). According to the *Public Trust Research*

Survey2010, it is increasingly difficult to call for common action in the civic sphere. As one analyst put it: 'Being a protester in Hungary [is a thankless job]. The waves of far-right protests during the previous government made the role [shameful] ... There is a political culture in Hungary where who you are with is more important than what you are for. This is one of the reasons why democracy has been dismantled in this country to the extent it has today' (Contrarian Hungarian: 2 January 2012).

This may be changing and signal a shift from previous periods because there is a growing frequency of street events, although the relative number of protestors involved in actions is still comparatively low. In support of the view that attitudes may be changing, a participant interviewed at a recent protest by independent media sources said: 'There are not that many of us here, but I believe that the frequency of events shows a shift in peoples' attitudes. It shows that the younger generation is ready to cope with the shadows of the past, and raise their voice for their rights.' Another interviewee said 'that although the impact of the protests was uncertain, it was important to make sure that these measures [i.e., constitutional changes] go into the history books with the note "citizens protested against it".' (Contrarian Hungarian: 2 January 2012).

Many of these trends are based on a historically complex and problematic relationship between citizens and the state. The thesis that has developed is that the nexus between the citizen and the state is flawed or controversial in Hungary, partly because there has been a lack of independent Hungarian statehood continuity over many centuries (Csepeli 2000), partly because of the overwhelming paternalistic attitude of stakeholders in public affairs, and partly because 'transition' to democracy and a market economy was coupled with polarization, impoverishment and fear about the future. Identification between citizens and

state became difficult and the state is viewed as alien or extraneous most of the time, so not to cooperate with it is seen as a heroic struggle. When an independent Hungarian state was finally born after WW I, it had difficulty keeping the social contract with citizens, i.e., it could not protect them from, among other things, wartime occupation and captivity, deportation, internment, evacuation, or emigration. After the systemic change this situation has changed somewhat, but in the perception of citizens, the state itself has remained alien and threatening (Közösségfejlesztők 2010).

This has consequences today. Hungary, for example, rated in the bottom18th position (out of 19 surveyed European countries in 2006) in the *Active Citizenship Composite Indicator* for 'Protest and Social Change Index' (Mascherini and Hoskins 2008). Even though the subdivision of 'Protest' was relatively high in all countries, the low position of Hungary was driven by a low value in 'working in organizations' (only 3 percent in Hungary compared to 30 percent in the top performing Scandinavian countries).Hungary also places 18th for the *Representative Democracy Index*. Although Hungary performs well in democratic values and voting (75 percent in national elections, 38 percent in European parliament elections), it scores low in participation in politics. It is exactly this criteria that separates those countries that perform well from those that don't. In the composite ranking for active citizenship, Hungary is at the bottom in the 19th position.

The disillusionment with democracy can be traced back in Hungary and in other Central and Eastern European countries to the failure of the transition to involve people in the processes. The kind of political unrest in Central Europe which can be viewed as regressive, although very different in content in the different national contexts, can be explained by the fact that people in the region have not overcome their feelings of

disempowerment and frustration at the time of the systemic change. In this respect, the demonstrations in 2006 were more like the OWS movements in their spontaneity and lack of formal leadership, organizers and agenda.

There is a tendency to demonize adversaries in the Hungarian political landscape. This exacerbates the polarization of political interests, undermines dialogue and constructive consensus-building, and provides little space for civil initiatives which are either coopted or corrupted for political purposes. One common feature of present and past demonstrations is mistrust and fear of civil society on the part of politicians, political parties and institutions. From the beginning of transtition, governments have been reticent to include NGOs, civic groups in any policy discussions of social and economic issues (Jensen and Miszlivetz 2006).At first, this was argued in terms of slowing down economic transition with social dialogue; later under the socialists, in response to the 23 October 2006 repercussions, it was declared that politics should be confined to the parliament and not take to the streets. In older, more developed and consolidated democracies, it is normal that when political institutions are unable to function – or even directly threaten the public good – that citizens take to the streets to express their frustration and concern. This is not always understood or unaccepted by the political elite in Hungary. But a counter to street violence, a new kind of political culture, has been emerging in Hungary since 2006 which can be termed 'subterranean politics', and has only begun to become part of the sociopolitical culture and landscape in the recent past. The continuing and growing gap between the people and politicians is only perhaps now being breached by new grassroots-based groups and parties that provide alternative political options like *Jobbik, Milla, LMP, 4K!*. There is a

blurring between the grassroots and politics taking place, a widening gray area, which 'politics' tries to control, manipulate and coopt with great vehemence and speed.

Taking "Europe" to the Street: Subterranean Politics Surfaces in Hungary:
A Tale of Two Protests: Anti-Government Protest (2 January 2012) and Pro-Government Peace
March (21 January 2012)

In looking at and for subterranean politics in Hungary, and searching for the relationship between subterranean politics and Europe, we decided to focus on two marches held in early 2012, one in which the presence of the European question was less visible, the other in which it played an important role. In fact, the second demonstration was organized in response to the first one and the two are connected. The field researchers attended both marches and spoke with some of the participants in order to find out more about their motivation, aims and orientation. It became clear through interviews and observation, and later analysis of the press coverage of the events, that there is an increasing, yet fragile, solidarity expressed in the demonstrations which is new.

New dangers are also apparent, like the cooptation of civil initiatives by oppositional political parties who try to piggy-back on the courage of the social activists to increase their political leverage. This issue became part of the public discussion before, during and after the anti-government demonstrations on 2 January 2012 outside the Hungarian Opera House where the government celebrated the inauguration of the new constitution. The contrast with the October 1989 declaration of Hungary's new constitution is striking and clearly held in the back of people's minds. In 1989, Hungary's new constitution was declared from the

window of the Hungarian parliament in an open space where an enormous crowd assembled to celebrate the founding of the Third Hungarian Republic. In stark contrast, the present government's announcement of the new constitution was declared in the confined space of the small Hungarian Opera House and was not an open public event even for the press, but strictly 'by invitation only'. Because of the seriousness of the opposition protests outside the Opera House, it was reported that the secret service had developed a plan to evacuate politicians via a system of underground tunnels if necessary. Prime Minister Orbán 'escaped' after the ceremony through a side door to avoid confrontation with the public outside. This was unprecedented, especially considering his electoral popularity.

The core dilemma of the protest that was organized outside was whether it should be a 'civil' or 'political' protest. This is a real problem, probably more striking in Hungary than elsewhere. As reported in the blog *Contrarian Hungarian*, if a leader emerged from a political protest, serious political capital could be gained for the political interests they represented. But the stakes were admittedly high for the new, emerging opposition movement: they could alienate demonstrators who did not want to be affiliated with the leadership or organization of a particular political group. This situation had never been confronted before because prior to the election in 2010 and the super majority in parliament; protest initiatives had only been organized by civil society organizations. Opposition parties in the parliament did not participate in street demonstrations before 23 December 2011, when Hungary's green-liberal party *LMP*[Politics Can Be Different] announced a new approach they call 'New Resistance' and resorted to civil disobedience. The political parties included *LMP, the Hungarian Socialist Party, the Democratic Coalition as well as 4K!, the Fourth Republic*

Movement. Rarely have political parties wanted to become involved in street protests to express support and solidarity with demonstrators (Contrarian Hungarian: 8 January 2012).

A consensus was achieved prior to the 2 January 2012 demonstration to organize a 'civilian' demonstration. Eight different permit applications for the demonstration, some submitted by oppositional parties, were withdrawn and instead two private individuals representing civil organizations (*Solidarity* and "*Habitat instead of Jail*," a group active in protesting Hungary's criminalization of homelessness) submitted a joint permit for a collective protest. Political parties were permitted to attend, but no speeches were allowed from party representatives. When this program for protest was made public, a dissenting view immediately emerged that targeted 'the populism of anti-politics' and advocated the need for professional politicians to remain in the forefront of opposition and political action. This dissenting argument thatpolitical parties should not take a backseat to civilian groups in Hungarian politicswas voiced by the former Hungarian Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány, one of the most divisive political figures in recent Hungarian political history. His argument, that if the public turns against the political system and the political elite democracy is jeopardized, gained little support or public acceptance among protestors. It did, however, provide a clearer distinction between the motivations of citizens and politicians in the Hungarian opposition. On the one hand, unity was proposed to protest the changes to the Hungarian 2012 constitution with civil society groups taking leading roles. On the other hand, political opposition wanted to showcase different political views taking advantage of civil protests to garner political party support. In the conflicting public space, a fragile civil solidarity emerged under the banner of 'supporters of the Republic'. (The new constitution replaces the word 'republic' from Hungary's official with the common term 'country').

The second demonstration, the pro-government Peace March organized on 21 January 2012 was promoted by pro-government journalists and media owners. Widely varying reports of numbers ranged from 100,000 – 400,000 to 2 million demonstrators, depending on whether the 'official' media was reporting or alternative sources, but the actual number was probably about 100,000. This was the largest demonstration so far. People carried placards with slogans like 'we will not be a colony', 'democracy forever', 'Hungarian sovereignty', '1956+1956 = 2012'.

In Hungary the distant past is ever present in the current subterranean dialogue as a reference point. This is expressed by the symbolic use of the past in slogans, signs, and images. One of the reasons for the relatively small number of demonstrators is that people's political attitudes and behaviours are very much affected by the strong presence of past traumatic events circumscribed in a rather 'cautious collective memory' today.

There was a wide variety of opinions voiced at this demonstration, and some of the most direct references to the EU and Hungary were made. Some demonstrators did not, in fact, support the FIDESZ government, but came 'on behalf of Hungarians in general'. 'We are not here for FIDESZ, but for the sovereignty of the Hungarian nation', one of the demonstrators who was interviewed said (Contrarian Hungarian: 23 January 2012). Others were motivated to attend by the attacks against Hungary in the foreign press, where many people felt misinformation was being communicated.

Framed as a peace march, a recurring theme was that Hungarians need to make peace with themselves, as reported by one of our researchers. Alternative media sources reported that the absence of an underlying and cohesive message, attractive to both the Euro-skeptics and the Euro-supporters, led to a very 'silent' demonstration, with few speeches. On the

other side, the official national, pro-government media reported that the march was more dignified than the rowdy protests of opposition actions.

The Impact and Role of the Press in Subterranean Politics in Hungary

Complaints were lodged against both the pro-government national press coverage as well as the international coverage of protests and events in Hungary. Locally, protests were downplayed in the national press by pro-government media sources. A typical reponse was to criticize street actions as lacking a coherent platform of ideas.

Liberal and conservative pundits wonder if the anti-government NGOs and the opposition parties have a program which could constitute a real alternative to the Orbán government. The commentators suggest the anti-government groups have no clear ideas about what they want to do after ousting Orbán. If successful, such politics would only perpetuate populist rhetoric, they argue (Budapost.eu: January 2012).The danger of street protests, then, according to some journalists is that they would lead to increased populist, that is, right-wing responses.

Reporting on the protest outside the Opera House is a good example of local, pro-government coverage. **T**he background shots made by the Hungarian state television suggested that there were more police on the scene than anti-government demonstrators. The next day they officially apologized for this misrepresentation, but reported it was due to the closing off of streets in the vicinity of the Opera House and their inability to reach the demonstrators. Typically, the numbers of protestors at events was downplayed to 'a couple of hundred', whereas when the pro-government Peace March took place estimates ranged wildly up towards 1 million.

The general evaluation of OWS-type protests was termed 'tepid' by a Hungarian Brussels correspondent who described Hungary's joining the international protest chain as consisting of 'a single, marginal group, which could only mobilize a few hundred demonstrators'. This he attributes to the limited public interest in the government's economic policies. He says, 'In Budapest the government is actually implementing the program of the demonstrators' (Budapost.eu: 18 October 2011). This is in clear contradiction to the wide range of protests, organized over a sustained period and directed at not just governmental economic policies (e.g., 'F in Math' demonstration, hunger strike by journalists, Blister Circus, etc.), but against constitutional changes, the media law and information protection issues.

Emerging New Public Spaces and the European Discourse

A new public discourse and new public space may be emerging in Hungary as a result of multiple crises. The concept of 'space' is very important in the Hungarian context. The idea of taking back the civic 'space' for citizens as an arena to interact, develop ideas is being experimented with and evolving. One only needs to think of the vibrant European Café cultural space that existed for centuries in Hungary. Cafés became focal points for the political opposition before the systemic change where dissidents met and organized. Retaking and occupying public space is a real battleground in Hungary. In March 2012, the FIDESZ government forestalled any opposition demonstrations in Budapest on the national holiday, March 15th marking the 1848 Revolution, by reserving the entire downtown area for the day and the Administration and Justice Ministry and Budapest City Council were granted permits to occupy public areas for the entire week surrounding the national holiday. These permits are valid for 2013 and 2014 as well. The group *Milla*[One Million for Press

Freedom in Hungary] had announced plans for a large rally on March 15th, but did not receive permission from the police for the demonstration. *Milla* countered, however, reserving prime demonstration space for the next 100 years from 2014 on. They were also granted permission for a demonstration organized on 10 March 2012 instead.

With the overwhelming parliamentary majority of FIDESZ, and lack of viable political opposition, conflict has been removed at that level. Confrontation is taking more creative and alternative routes in the street demonstrations which may appear, at first sight, as contradictory – one week anti-government, pro-European, the next week pro-government, anti-EU – but there is a clear attempt to reorganize the debate around common issues of public concern. What is important is that in a country that has experienced crisis in one form or another for more than two decades, the reaction is not just to austerity measures, but to the remaking of the political, social and economic landscapes and the retaking of public space. This includes a re-articulation of the public good at the national and EU levels. Even though Hungarian protests lack common and articulated goals, they do share surprisingly many understandings about the way democracy should work and what their role and the role of government should be. One basis of understanding is the corrosive influence of money on politics and the desire to have a voice in democratic policy-making at all levels. Calls for austerity measures (more taxation, spending cuts on social programs) are decoupled from discussions of shared European values, but governance is beginning to be understood by people as what they can do together to provide the basic building blocks for the future. This shared understanding is emerging in a diverse milieu – from different economic sectors and social sectors to groups with different political perspectives. An important factor may be not

the number of protestors that take to the streets for a time, but the extent to which they are able to sustain their efforts and networks over the long run.

Current protests, not just in Hungary, are asking on whose side the EU stands in the current power constellation – on the side of citizens demonstrating for greater economic justice, transparency and accountability, or on the side of global capital and finance? Some find strength in the community the EU offers, others argue for more independence from global financial markets and retreat into nation state rhetoric. This plurality of approaches is reflected in the Hungarian situation.

At least two particular attitudes can be observed in the current demonstrations: 1) those who are against the new government measures pertaining to the media law and new constitution and aim only to change the government and have a local focus on local issues, disconnected from more global movements; 2) there are groups that share understanding with other groups globally in their critique of the IMF, global financial institutions and the wider critique of the political elite.

It is interesting to bring up the divisions within certain groups over this issue, for example, *Jobbik* members were present at both anti- and pro-government demonstrations, though pushed out by the more liberal crowd. *Jobbik*'s relations to the EU and rest of the world were summarized in a report of the party gathering as perpetuating friendly relations with the EU, so that Hungary could reassert 'classical European values', but at the same time conducting a foreign policy of its own and opening toward the east – particularly to Russia and Turkey.

Before the anti-government rally outside the Opera House, they announced the formation and introduction of a New Hungarian Guard, a paramilitary organization which

was illegal until 27 January 2012. The far right called their parallel protest 'Let's Clean the Dirt from the Streets', and was in part organized to take revenge against former MSZP government politicians from the socialist party who are held responsible for the attacks on citizens with rubber bullets and trenchons in October 2006. Because of ineffective police oversight, the groups of right-wing and oppositional protestors clashed on several occasions at the demonstration in January which resulted in injuries. About 150 *Jobbik* activists were reported as having taken par (Contrarian Hungarian: 29 January 2012). In the reality of everyday politics (e.g., burning EU flags in the streets), however, they are clearly anti-EU.

A generational change, even gap, can be seen in the current protests. Older demonstrators followed more of the attitudes towards changing the government; younger demonstrators connected more with European-wide and global actions. There is evident innovation in the repertoire of these new subterranean groups. Blogs, Facebook, Interfacebook, the election of an 'alternative president of Hungary' on the internet (which hopes to spread throughout Europe to other countries), the *Clean Hands Movement, Solidarity Movement, The Two-Tailed Dog party, 4K!, Milla*, are increasingly working in coordinated and collaborative ways, some with more some with less success. *Milla*, for example, has been coopted and integrated into the new political party *Together 2014* led by Gordon Bajnai, the last prime minister before the fall of the socialist government. We are beginning to see generationally mixed groups in civil groups initiated by young people. It may be that the youth are socializing parents into activism. This is new in Hungary which cannot boast strong cohesion or collaboration even on shared issues. In terms of demonstration styles with speakers on platforms and crowds in the street, Hungary is more traditional and patriarchal on the surface, but there are new dynamics that can be detected

at the subterranean level as manifested in the recent student demonstrations and the vivid and innovative blogosphere and social media.

In line with a more traditional approach, a new 'Democratic Opposition Round Table' was created by political party elites. This construction reminded people of the systemic change and 'negotiated reform' of the system by elites in Hungary. The new 'Democratic Opposition Round Table' formulated a basic agenda without the inclusion of people outside of political parties and again reflects a rather elitist, anti-civil society approach to protest.

There are obvious efforts on the government's side to utilize the grand opportunities of the new media. A more innovative approach and perhaps as a reaction to criticism towards the government for the lack of civic/public participation in the decision-making processes, there is a new online possibility for the inclusion and channeling of citizens' views on government practices and state functions: www.joallam.kormany.hu[www.goodstate.government.hu]. Here citizens have the opportunity to recommend changes to functions and processes of current decision-making procedures. So it looks like the protests have already achieved a step towards a more direct way to influence governance and policy-making. E-democracy could provide some relief to the democratic deficit people currently feel. It could be a good tool to channel opinions and also reduce unrest, especially since most demonstrators are young. Some events have been organized on online spaces, web2 communities, mostly related with *LMP* and *Jobbik*, the new parties in the parliament who frequently use these technologies to mobilize people.

In many ways, because of its unfortunate experience of national leadership and unstable and shaky democracy, Hungary was a forerunner of contemporary protests in 2010-2011; on the other hand, because of the fragmentation and deep political, ideological,

'bipolar' dividedness of society, social interests and a political culture of demonization, Hungary has further to go than other countries to construct strong social cohesion connecting with others – with similar global and national movements. As in the case of many burgeoning social movements, the momentum may change. What has begun may fall apart, it may cohere, it could morph into something totally different, or it could grow and become more cohesive, reaching out to other like-minded movements. The salience of movement tenacity and perseverance has been surprisingly strong, with a variety of innovative and sustained actions.

The following timeline provides highlights of innovative street actions and illustrates the richness of dissent fermenting on the streets of Hungary today. (See APPENDIX A: Timeline of Dissent.)

Some civil society groups in Hungary are calling on Brussels to restrain what their national government is doing in specific areas like the media law, constitutional changes and information protection; at the same time large public demonstrations were organized in support of the Hungarian government in opposition to edicts from Brussels over austerity measures. The changes being wrought in Hungary today do not reflect the values of many in Hungarian society and a majority of the population support the EU. Many take the view that the government is experimenting with 'opportunistic nationalism' or with new forms of 'leader democracy'. In the name of security the government is practicing fear-mongering, with the EU depicted as an imperialist power. This conflict between the public's primarily positive view of the EU with the government's recalcitrance towards the EU also increases public distrust in the institutions of democracy.

Europe is more than the EU and is comprised of many other institutionalized and non-institutionalized, civil forms of communication, cooperation and collaboration. This is clearly evident in the number of coordinated events throughout Europe which make up part of this study on subterranean politics and surely includes Hungary in terms of acts of civil organization, disobedience and protest. The emergence of polarizing and populist movements in a significant number of European countries poses alarming challenges for a future, hopefully more unified Europe. It is clear from the present confrontation of populist-nationalists in Hungary and the EU that without proper and obviously new communication channels, solutions will not be found. This may provide a new opportunity and space for civil movements, for subterranean politics – joined to other, similar forces throughout Europe – to fill the vacuum. It is evident that the vanguard/rearguard actions of the current Hungarian government have struck a particular chord both nationally and at the European level, provoking a variety of responses, positive and negative, and moving the discourse on Europe in new directions.

It will take time before real and effective solidarity emerges among the various groups in Hungary and with Hungary and others, but there is certainly an inclination and gathering momentum. This is dominated by new social networks and social media, networked resistance and savvy young activists who have no lack of innovative techniques and approaches to addressing contemporary political, economic and social problems. It no longer matters so much where you are in time and space, since these networks, supported by technology, can provide for a more equal playing field for civil actors. Perhaps the first, real post-1989 generation is finally emerging to reinvent politics, democracy, governance and

activism in response to the failures of the past 20 years. (See APPENDIC B: Mapping Major

Hungarian Grassroots/Activist Organizations.)

Bibliography

Blanch, Daniel (2005) *Revisiting Youth Political Participation. Challenges for Research and democratic practice in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem (2010). *Magyarország 2025 Research.* Budapest:Timp Kiadó.

Budapost.eu (7 January 2012). *Anti-government platform lacks coherent program.* (accessed 3 March 2012).
http://budapost.eu/2012/01/anti-government-platform-lacks-coherent-program/

Budapost.eu (18 October 2011). *Tepid Occupy Wall Street – Saturday in Budapest*. (accessed 3 March 2012). http://budapost.eu/2011/10/tepid-occupy-wall-street-saturday-in-budapest.

The Contrarian Hungarian (2 January 2012). *Civil Sphere and Grassroots Protests in Hungary: December, 2011*. (accessed 5 March 2012).

The Contrarian Hungarian (8 January 2012). *To The Margins of An Early January Protest in Hungary*. (accessed 2 March 2012).

The Contrarian Hungarian (23 January 2012). *Pro-Government Rally in Hungary, Jan. 21, 2012*. (accessed 2 March 2012).

The Contrarian Hungarian (29 JAnuary 2012). *Hungarian Guards Judicial Victory, Jobbik Chairman Considers Armed Conflict Unavoidable*. (accessed 6 March 2012).

Csepeli, György (2010). *Társadalmi szolidaritás- Összetartó társadalom.*http://www.kka.hu/_Kozossegi_Adattar/PAROLAAR.NSF/274d67036bb31583 8525670c008147c9/e134d884d2d08cb5c12577c00043cf1f?OpenDocument

Hoskins, B. (2010 October) *Social Context: Differencies and Similarities in the Field of Active Citizen Attitudes in Europe.* Research presented atthe Europe of Active Citizens conference organized by Active Citizenship Foundation, Hungary & Democracy and Human Rights Education in Adult Learning, Budapest, Hungary.

Hunyadi, B. (2010 October). *Assessment, Policy Responses and Recommendations on Active Citizenship Education.* Summary of the Europe of Active Citizens conference organized by Active Citizenship Foundation, Hungary & Democracy and Human Rights Education in Adult Learning, Budapest, Hungary.

Jensen, Jody (2006) 'The Social Costs of a Lumpen Political Class', *Találjuk-ki Közepeuropa [Reinventing Central Europe]*, www.talaljuk-ki.hu.

Jensen, Jody and Ferenc Miszlivetz (2006) 'The Second Renaissance of Civil Society in East Central Europe – and in the European Union', in Peter Wagner, ed., *The Languages of Civil Society*, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Book, pp. 131-158.

Közösségfejlesztők [Community Developers] (2010). *Public Trust 2010 Research*http://reszvetelhete.wordpress.com/. (accessed 23 April 2011).

Lane, Jan Erik and Svant Ersson (2005). *Culture and Politics:A Comparative Approach*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Mascherini, Massimiliano and Brony Hoskins (2005) *Building a Composite Indicator to Measure Active Citizenship in Europe*. http://www.csdiworkshop.org/pdf/3mc2008_proceedings/session_15/Mascherini.pdf

Miszlivetz, Ferenc (2007). *Mi lett veled, Magyarország?* [What Happened to you, Hungary?] Szombathely, Kőszeg: Társadalomtudományok és Európa Tanulmányok Intézete.

Politics.hu (22 February 2011). MIT, *Survey shows Hungarians still distrust politicians*. http://www.politics.hu/20110222/survey-shows-hungarians-still-distrust-politicians (accessed 6 March 2012).

Ross, A. (2008) *A European Education. Citizenship, identities and young people*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books

TÁRKI (2009) *Értékek-World Value Survey*. http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/gazdkult/kutatas.html

Social Mobilization and Political Crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Igor Stipic

Introduction (War, Nation Building, Religion)

Bosnia and Herzegovina, a small South-Eastern European country that numbers a bit less than four million people once again reached the headlines of the world's major news outlets. After ceasing to produce stories interesting enough for ever demanding news consumers for almost two decades, BBC, CNN and Guardian rushed into the country to get information and figure out what is sparkling in the Balkans. Surprisingly enough, this time the spark was to fire the feast of popular discontent against the ruling elites. The evolution was particular, as it seemed to unite for the first time once fiercely divided ethnic groups of the country. It was this prospect of long forgotten unity of people that offered a potentially brighter and more democratic future for the well-known "Bosnian Problem". It seemed as if the protesters finally understood that it is the political elites and not interests of national survival that were unable to offer a better future that certainly all three ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina desire.

So what went wrong in the Balkans? To understand this we should travel some centuries back in time, but in order to keep this "simple" lets return to the 1990s and the time of the war. After the end of WW II, Bosnia-Herzegovina was part of the Yugoslav Federation where a common socialist space was shared among various ethnic, national and religious groups. However, as the world reached the "End of the History" marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall and consequently breakdown of the communist regimes in the Eastern European countries, Yugoslavia was the next in line to embrace the "freedom and prosperity"

of the new capitalist society. Unfortunately, the change did not come easily in Yugoslavia because the existence of the federation, however fragile, offered an insurance against ethnic uprisings and rivalry that characterized Balkan space throughout history (Glenny 2000). Even more unfortunate was the fact that Bosnia-Herzegovina was in itself an example of little Yugoslavia, being the most culturally and ethnically diverse society. Inside the federation, Croat-Catholics, Serb-Orthodox and Bosnian-Muslim shared a common space. So if the old ethnic rivalries were to awaken once more, Bosnians knew very well that hell was awaiting right around the corner. Many truly understood this and tried to stop the bloodshed. In the early 1990s the highest B&H representative, Mr. Bogic Bogicevic, president of the republic at the time and himself an ethnic Serb, warned about the dangers that could come if nationalism prevailed. He understood how each ethnic group would pursue its own interests in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He wisely noted how the country could not be considered as only Bosnian, or only Croatian nor only Serbian, but rather as a common space for all three groups and only as such could survive. Like him, many Bosnians from all three communities cherished the illusion that the war would not come and 100, 000 people protested for a peaceful solution in Sarajevo at the beginnings of the conflict (Glenny 2000). Unfortunately, the devil did come to Yugoslavia and the causalities followed. In the war that damaged all republics, but left the biggest scars for this small country, the nationalists awoke and after many years of being forced to live in peace the stage was open for them. During the war that lasted from 1992 until 1995 more than 200 000 people died (Glenny 2000), many of them innocent civilians and victims of warlord ideals. Moreover, during the Yugoslav Wars the conflicting nations went quickly back in their histories to try to redefine their nations and

nationhood. In the case of Bosnians, Croats and Serbs religion was the main and inseparable point of nationhood (Vjekoslav 2002).

The state apparatuses used religious and ethnic martyrdom of the past to strengthen the national unity and feeling of belonging to a certain nation. The problem of nation building is that you always have to create a negative image of the other in order to create a positive image of yourself. The Croats evoked the suffering of Cardinal Stepinac during the Tito regime, Serbs called on the genocidal Croats who tried to exterminate them in the Jasenovac concentration camp during the WW II, and Bosnians also started considering a fundamental Islamic state as the only way for their survival in the territory. In this atmosphere the religious clergy became increasingly important. The religious institutions, being the basis of the Balkan nation states, were historically prone to cooperate only with the nations that shared their religious identity and would discard all the others as enemies (Vjekoslav 2002). Thus, during the 1990s Croats turned to Germany, Serbs towards Greece and Russia and Bosnian Muslims towards Turkey, Iran and other Islamic countries in the east. This kind of religious nation state was well functioning inside a homogenous society but was never able to operate inside a multi-religious and multi-ethnic society that Bosnia and Herzegovina most certainly was (Vjekoslav 2002)..

Sadly, these were the conditions under which an "independent" Bosnia-Herzegovina was created today. Such conditions were established that Croats hated Serbs and blamed them for the sins of history; the Bosnians regarded an Indonesian Muslim as someone closer than a Croat from Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Serbs learned how Croats are genocidal and should never be trusted. Besides, Croats and Serbs also learned from their leaders that Bosnia is nothing more than "our colony", as Croatia and Serbia behaved as stronger regional

imperialists and did not hide their desires to cut the country in half (Glenny 2000). All these factors led to disintegration and disbelief. The trouble is that Bosnia-Herzegovina inherited the sins of the war, and in this kind of environment wounds accumulated and were never seriously healed. While Serbia and Croatia got their homogenous states where almost everyone shared the same nationality and religion, Bosnia-Herzegovina remained where it was at the beginning of the war with the only difference being that many terrible and bloody crimes were committed, something that would left serious psychological wounds on this small and troubled country. Finally, signing of the Dayton Agreement at the end of 1995 concluded the Bosnian War. The agreement in itself was important as it did stop the bloodshed but it essentially provided little space for true reconciliation or a normal future for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Outbreak and developments of the Protests

Just as foreign editors unfamiliar with the Balkans found themselves bewildered with the breakout of the war in 1992, the same held true for the sudden outburst of popular discontent in June of 2013. The population of Bosnia and Herzegovina that seemed to suffer from chronic disinterest in politics during the two decades of its independence finally took to the streets to demand more political transparency. This truly surprised many; especially the politicians themselves as the citizens from three ethnic groups found it very difficult to be united around anything, especially against the politicians.

The trigger that finally pushed citizens to the streets was the unfortunate case of Belmina Ibrisevic. In 2013, when the Constitutional Court ordered a small and rather insignificant amendment to the law for issuing JMBG numbers (acronym for Unique Master Citizen Number), the ethnic spirits inside political circles rose once again (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013). Quite traditionally, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian divided and ethnically oriented parties find it very difficult to agree on anything as everything is turned into a question of national interest. In this particular case, the Serbian representatives wanted a JMBG number to include specific regional differentiation that others saw as a clear attempt for further decentralization of the country. The real problem here is that the issues the politicians were addressing had nothing to do with the order of the court, but rather with their old and never ending personal ethnic obsessions. As a result of the failure to agree, young Belmina (including all newborns in the country) was unable to obtain all the standard documents to be recognized as a citizen, among which was a passport that she needed to travel to Germany where she would be operated and saved from the illness she suffered. In order to get something done 3,000 people rushed to the house of parliament and blocked the politicians and foreign dignitaries until they would pass the law. In this kind of chaotic situation the exceptional temporary law was finally passed and the girl was able to leave the country. Unfortunately, the inefficiency of politicians was such that by the time Belmina reached the hospital, it was too late and she tragically died shortly afterwards.

The second trigger for protests happened in the city of Tuzla in January-February of 2014 (Dzidic 2014). In this old industrial center of the country, a sudden collapse of four formerly state-run companies that employed thousands gathered people outside in protests. The companies followed the well-known post-communist privatization process where new

owners quickly sold the assets, made quick profits, stole the goods and filed for bankruptcy. Even though the contracts obliged the new owners to invest and make the companies profitable, the law never held them accountable (something very common for almost anything in B&H society, starting from parliament and going all the way to the kindergarten). To make the trouble worse, many companies left their workers unpaid for years. And even though the workers demonstrated for about a month on their own and demanded a meeting with cantonal minister, the leaders of the country simply ignored their voices. After a whole month of peaceful demonstrations other citizens joined the workers: among them were young people, students, pensioners and war veterans. Finally, as protesters found no way to channel their grievances through their political representatives a volcano of popular rage erupted that left the entire country on fire. In a matter of hours the whole B&H constitutional order went up in flames, including its complicated structure of three presidents, two republics, one special district, ten cantons and internationally appointed high representative (Mujanovic 2014).

In both cases, the single trigger of Belmina or Tuzla workers became symbolic of the deep problems in Bosnian-Herzegovinian politics. Just as Belmina died from a treatable genetic anomaly preventing her from consuming food, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society was also dying from a treatable disease that politicians had no personal interest in curing. These triggers also brought unity among the ethnic Bosnians, Serbs and Croats. People from all around the country flocked to Sarajevo or demonstrated in a show of support for change and disgust with dirty politics. It was the issue of life and employment that brought people together as it transcended the common issues of ethnic politics that local political oligarchs like to feed themselves and the common populace with. It was a scene of solidarity, boycott

and disobedience towards established political elites that offered a lot of hope. Consequently, many protests followed under the umbrella of #JMBG protests or Tuzla misfortunes. JMBG and Tuzla were simply triggers and the consensus was clear: "the whole system is broken, all politicians are the same". It was the unity of all, young and old, men and women, Muslim and Christian that offered something new for this country, something that while cheered by one side certainly scared the other - the ruling elite.

Constitutional Dysfunction and Clash of the Old vs. New Ideas

So, as we can see the protests more than anything else posed a threat to the already entrenched power of the ruling elites. As it has been pointed out, the Dayton Agreement with its very complicated and contradictory constitution gives more questions than answers and it truly disintegrates the country and makes proper functioning more difficult. The power is efficiently transferred towards the RS, district of Brcko and 10 different cantons in the entity that is Bosnia-Hercegovina. That is, there is no real central power in the common parliament and even this parliament is further blocked by the narrow interest of the ethnic parties that were directly empowered by the Dayton Agreement. The political elites understand this and they actually do not mind such an inefficient system as it allows them to secure their personal interests and enables them to rule effectively over their ethnic groups. It is for this reason that they are quite scared of the notion of unified protests. They were quick to react and make sure that people were kept separated during the last twenty years but also during the protests. This can be understood by reading the declarations of especially Croat and Serb representatives who claimed how the protests were essentially of ethnic Bosnians and how their own ethnic groups had no reason to demonstrate. President of Republic of Srpska, Mr.

Milorad Dodik tried to paint protesters as an anti-Serb mob declaring that the 3,000 demonstrators that prohibited the exit of politicians for the case of young Belmina are an example of the biggest hostage crisis that has ever hit the territory of ex-Yugoslavia (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013). At the same time, Croat politician Vjekoslav Bevanda claimed how the protesters were trying to kill him (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013), while others complained that Croats and Serbs could no longer feel safe in Sarajevo and for this reason have decided not to attend future parliamentary sessions. However, it is important to bear in mind that the main negotiators of the Dayton Accords were the warlords. Likewise, it is their descendants that are still profiting from this inefficient agreement. They understand how firing up resentment and fear among the groups would secure their hold on power. They created such system in which they would continue to profit even today. These political oligarchs also understand that any kind of real democratic system and well-ordered state would mean their end. Nevertheless, in this unfinished country in which lawlessness and criminality is not only allowed but encouraged, where hatred is perpetuated by politicians on every occasion, in which democracy has no real platform upon which to function, it is the ordinary citizens and not the political elites that suffer.

Furthermore, local politicians have been so eager to discredit the protesters during the protests that several buildings were set on fire. As "well civilized and cultured men" they accused protesters of being hooligans who burned down public property in an attempt to direct public opinion against the protesters. In the same fashion the publicly owned television quickly changed the tone of reporting by focusing on the hooligans that devastated the country while forgetting to consider the reasons for such a public outburst. While it is very difficult to support the burning and hooliganism, which would in a perfect world be

denounced as wrong, maybe we should also ask ourselves what the political elites did to the poor people in Bosnia-Herzegovina to make them behave in such a way. In a system where politicians let newborns die, where they decide to ignore the protests of workers that have not received wages, or where they publicly encourage hatred, is this so unexpected or so difficult to understand? These same politicians that like to protect our cultural heritage, are also the ones that have managed in 2012 to close down the oldest National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina that stood open for 120 years through numerous wars, for as they say the reasons of fiscal (ir)responsibility.

The Reasons and Demands of Protesters

So what actually brought on the protests after so many years of lethargy? Overall, it was the radical demand for justice that united all types of protesters. However, the group was not homogenous at all and this demonstrated how those affected by the current state are quite large in numbers and variety. People in Bosnia-Herzegovina are not known as dedicated protesters and to get them out on the streets there needs to be something extraordinarily twisted in the country. If we consider how the unemployment figures (which are also very difficult to verify since three groups find even this statistic of vital "national interest") are according to different sources in between 43% and 55% we should get a good hint. And even if we cannot agree on the precise figures one thing is sure - the situation is alarming. Bosnia and Herzegovina is known to be the poorest country in Europe, thus beating even a traditional champion Albania (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013).

What is even worse is that economic planning in the country simply does not exist. Besides, people of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not get jobs based on their knowledge or

33

qualifications, but on the basis of whom they know and their connections, which is an example of nepotism at its best. Recently, there was a famous case about a law student who finished his university with superb grades and various distinctions but is currently working on his parent's family farm. In Bosnia and Herzegovina you can be Einstein but no one would care if you lack connections. While people have been quite good sheep for a long time, the stomach has finally spoken and the question of hunger and the future have become more important than national pride and "survival".

The specific irony of the country is that it is very difficult to make any case to the politicians, as they do not find themselves in any way responsible for the state in which the people find themselves. There is not a single politician who has held himself personally accountable for all the "work" he and the government have been doing or more precisely - not been doing. To make the irony even worse, politicians have been well equipped to fight for their personal interests. The salary of a parliamentary representative is higher in average values in Bosnia and Herzegovina than in any other country in Europe (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013). Bosnian and Herzegovinian politicians, regardless of their ethnicity, are very happy to make six average wages in a country that is economically completely devastated and whose future is clearly compromised. Austerity is practiced all the time by average citizen, but politicians never consider an option of digging a bit into their own pockets, which is their only true "national" interest. Actually, there is one thing on which all politicians seem quite able to agree upon and this is the arrival of the IMF funds that are so important for keeping the fiscal stability of the country that directly impacts their earnings and their positions. When it comes to agreeing upon European IPA pre-accession funds or ERASMUS student exchange funds the government traditionally fails. Thus, last year the

country lost 50 million Euros due to some trivial disagreement that has once again involved ethnic disputes, and the same has been the case with the funds for student exchange programmes like ERASMUS +.

Moreover, the principle where the citizens are job-givers to the government is inverted in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the main politicians are more like Mafia Bosses and job-providers to which you need to bow if you want any chance of getting some job and something to eat. In this kind of economy, where the state is the main employer, 65% of government spending goes directly into the hands of those working for the government. This directly leaves bits aside for any productive investment that is clearly nonexistent. It seems quite shameful that in a country where 400 Euros is an official average wage and in reality is probably even smaller, 150 Euros is spent per second on public administration (Pasic 2014). While ethno-national rhetoric serves well to fill the coffers of celebrity politicians, most of the youth is left hopeless in a country in which the rate of unemployment among the young is 57% (Mujanovic 2014), thus beating even the world famous case of Spain.

And the protesters really go out with the most basic demands: jobs, a chance for a decent life and an end to corruption. Unfortunately, these demands seem too much to hope for in a country where several major officials have been under investigation for corruption. In most of the cases the court has been unable to function independently, as it should in any normal democratic country, and has in many cases failed to condemn those who deserved it. Let's not forget the Republic of Srpska where according to local politicians things are not as bad as in the other entity. On the contrary, the truth is that even if the protests involved some groups more than others, essentially the problem of poverty, unemployment and unforeseeable improvements in the future are common for all citizens of the country. Just to

note, the average wage is even smaller in the Republic of Srpska than in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Republic of Srpska has actually only 23% of its young workforce employed (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013). In the same fashion, the number of pensioners in the Republic of Srpska has already exceeded the number of working people in the entity (Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013). Similarly, even though not particularly active during the protests of Tuzla, people in the Republic of Srpska have also raised their voices on various occasions to protest the economic and social situation in the "good entity" their president likes to talk about.

The Response of the EU as a Great Vigilante Power

The EU approach ever since the end of the conflict has been quite undefined as if the EU has no idea how to approach the "Bosnian Problem". While no one truly expected any kind of positive political reaction from domestic politicians during the recent protests it was the EU response that came as a real surprise. Even though the goals of the protesters are essentially the same as those of Brussels and include prosperity and the end of both ethnic tensions and corruption, the EU governs the country with certain contradictions. Ever since the war, the EU has decided to actively deal with nationalist elites as the only representatives of society and EU-privileged partners, thus effectively excluding from negotiations the civil society that may have quite different and progressive ideas on how the country should change. As it has been noted, during the recent protests Mr. Valentin Inzko gave little credit to what counts as proper "democratic development" inside the Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and to its efforts to get directly involved with EU officials (officials have been called on various occasions to come and hear what the populace has to say). It seems the EU

undervalued the importance that protestors could have in moving something that local political elites have not moved for twenty years. On the occasion of the protests in February, Mr. Inzko simply commented, "If the situation escalates we will have to think about EU troops, but not right now" (Hajdarpasic 2014). In this way the High Representative discredited the efforts of civil society and joined those who declared them as hooligans. In this fashion the EU has only been engaged with Bosnia and Herzegovina obstructionist forces, thus keeping them in their seats and the future of the country in their hands. Even though this approach has failed for the last 20 years, the EU is reluctant to look the other way. The EU policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina is simply led by the assumption that the *status quo* can remain as long as there is no civil war. This policy dates back to 1995 and it achieved its main success by stopping the war. However, it has achieved virtually nothing after that and it is not sustainable in the long term. At no point have these international architects of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina reserved any serious energy to include ordinary citizens and activists in reforms that the country requires. In this way, international partners indirectly team up with local elites and ignore the true meaning of peace, human rights and democracy.

As the recent crisis has deeply hit the EU, the union has had less time and energy to deal with outside problems. Additionally, the crisis that broke out in Syria and recently in Ukraine gave Bosnia and Herzegovina much less importance. The EU has even changed its foreign policy approach towards less developed countries on the basis of the "Ownership Principle". This basically means that smaller and poorer countries are now directly responsible for their own future and development. However, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina this directly means that those responsible for the future are the local political

elites that have absolutely no interest in changing the *status quo*. If we look at the case of Croatia a great example can be found in Mr. Ivo Sanader for whom the EU accession meant the arrival of better justice to Croatia and thus his personal imprisonment. The local Bosnia and Herzegovina elites are well aware that if they are to follow the EU they are also deemed to follow Mr. Sanader right into jail and this option does not seem particularly attractive. It is my understanding that the EU needs to take a more direct and hands on approach with local politicians if things are to move anywhere. The EU was one of the decisive factors in 1995 when the country operating today was created and should not run away from its responsibilities to properly deal with the effects of the devastating conflict that hit Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990s. As Misha Glenny points out : "great powers intervene massively in the region, either deploying or exciting violence, before beating a retreat and disclaiming any responsibility for the consequences of the original intervention. And the violence that these interventions encouraged, often inflicted by one Balkan people on another, ensured the continuation of profound civil and nationalist strife. This imagined Balkans, a world where people are motivated not by rational considerations but by a mysterious congenital bloodthirstiness – is always invoked when the great powers seek to deny their responsibility for the economic and political difficulties that the region has suffered as a consequence of external interference" (Glenny 2000). Thus, if the EU refuses to take more responsibility the ghosts of the past may once again come upon us.

Conclusion and the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina

To sum up, the way in which the nations were re-constructed during the Yugoslav Civil wars helped plant the seed of hatred that only grew as a result of inhumane atrocities that were brought with the war. While all the other current nation states directly involved in

the conflict left the party to their respective new nation states where no post-war dialogue and inter-ethnic healing was required, Bosnia and Herzegovina essentially inherited all the problems that accumulated during the war. Besides, as we have noticed such nation building based on religion and discontent towards the others was ill-equipped to deal with a multi-cultural state – and this is exactly what Bosnia and Herzegovina is. Moreover, the warlords that negotiated the Dayton agreement were quite aware of its limitations towards building a reconciled society and effectively had no interest in reconciling anyone, as they were quite happy to rule their own ethnic groups. They also understood how the divisions would essentially allow them to keep a grip on power and personal enrichment. Nevertheless, what happened during the protests of 2013 and 2014 was a direct challenge to this established power of political oligarchs. As a result, they have rightfully perceived the danger that a unified society would present to their narrow interests and have done everything to make sure that there is no mixing of ethnicities during the protests. Their undeniable power that is reflected in immense unaccountability towards the population eventually won once again. We could say to a certain degree that the protesters failed in the end. However, the protests should not be measured in terms of what they have achieved but in terms of what they have signified. It is of crucial importance to understand the psychological transformation that occurred and that is irreversible. During the last year only, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian civil society transformed itself more than it did in previous 18 years. People have begun to understand how current political classes are not the ones who will bring about change and that democracy is achieved on the streets too. The solidarity among the young people has been unprecedented for the country and the bits of free space that are still available have been successfully occupied by the new generations. We should also consider how the

majority of demonstrators have been young people that are mostly affected by high unemployment and unstable futures. They still have the time to mature, develop their ideas and eventually come back for a bigger and more important advancement. Also, the EU has clearly failed the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina as it keeps being satisfied with the *status quo* of the country. The EU has also failed in getting more involved with the civil society. Moreover, the EU and other great powers should understand better their role in the Balkan conflicts and assume greater responsibility towards real and not just partial solutions of the "Bosnian Problem". The danger is that if we fail once again to learn the lessons history has taught us, we will never be able to construct a better society. More than anything else, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs a better education system that would allow people to deal with the troubles of the past and with one another. At the moment, the three present education systems (one for each ethnic group) serve only the interests at the top. Likewise, while it is true that the protests were small in size, it is also true that they were of immense importance for Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although at the moment the movement is still not large enough and possesses no great opportunity for a quick change, sparks still burns and will fire up again once another incident triggers it. The only question is when this trigger arrives will the civil society be able to come together as a truly unified voice that is concerned with human and not nationalistic needs. If this happens, with an adequate approach of the EU, anything is possible.

Bibliography

Armakolas, Ioannis and Maja Maksimovic (2013). "Working Paper No 34. "Babylution" A Civic Awakening in Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Helenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy.*<http://www.academia.edu/4150095/_Babylution_-_A_Civic_Awakening_in_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina>.

Dzidic, Denis (2014). *The Guardian.* The Guardian (7 February). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/07/bosnia-herzegovina-wave-violent-protests>.

Euronews (2013)*.* Euronews (July 1). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.euronews.com/2013/07/01/bosnia-facing-political-inertia-jmbg-protests-call-for-civil-disobedience-/>.

Gallagher, Tom (2005). *The Balkans in the New Millenium: In the Shadow of war and peace*. New York: Routledge.

Glenny, Misha (2000). *The Balkans 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers.* London: Granta Books.

The Guardian (2013)*.* (June 6). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/06/bosnian-parliament-blockaded-id-protest>.

Hajdarpasic, Edin (2014). *Al Jazeera English .*Al Jazeera (February 19). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://m.aljazeera.com/story/201421962648725798>.

Hodzic, Refik (2013). *Buka.* Buka (June 10). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.6yka.com/novost/39549/protesti-u-bih-stvaranje-slobodnih-teritorija>.

Isovic, Maja (2014). *Buka.* Buka. (January 2). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.6yka.com/novost/48824/buka-dogadaj-2013.-godine-protesti-i-gradanski-aktivizmi-u-bih>.

Mujanovic, Jasmin (2014). *Al Jazeera English* (February 11). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/02/it-spring-at-last-bosnia-herzegov-2014296537898443.html>.

Pasic, Lana (2014). *Al Jazeera English .*Al Jazeera (February10). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/02/who-behind-bosnia-riots-201429132930915905.html>.

Trkulja, Goran (2014). *Buka.* Buka (February 9). (accessed 10 July 2014). <http://www.6yka.com/novost/50936/zasto-socijalni-protesti-ne-mogu-izazvati-drustvene-promjene-u-bih>.

Vjekoslav, Perica (2002). *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Populism versus Civil Society in Macedonia

Dimitar Nikolovski

Introduction

Following post-communist traditions, especially in the Balkans, political parties in power have always tried to exert some control over the media. Although far from the ideal standards of a free and independent press, since the early 1990s, there was much progress in the liberalization of the media market, and especially in the development of, at least, media critical towards the governments. The Macedonian case was not different, and it can be argued that the country was a leader in democratic reforms (at least when analyzing democratization through the prism of European integrations) since the country gained candidate status in 2005, before other countries from the Western Balkans. There was a steady progress regarding the economy and the advancement of democratic politics, until the NATO veto in 2008, when the VMRO-DPMNE government realized that liberal democratic politics are not the solution for a long reign, but rather nationalist populism and a stronger control over society.

Needless to say, the media were pivotal to this strategy, and it was realized through crackdowns and takeovers of critical media outlets, threatening and prosecuting journalists, and buying over media loyalty through extensive advertising. According to the Reporters without Borders' "World Press Freedom Index," Macedonia's ratings on the state of media fell from a high 34th place in 2009, to the very worrying 123rd place in 2014 (Reporters without Borders 2014), which can be explained through the government's orientation towards a greater control of the media. Similar conclusions have been made in reports of

the OSCE and, especially, in the European Commission Progress Reports on the advancement of the country in its EU integration.

Due to the fact that pro-governmental media dominates the market in Macedonia at the moment, as concluded by Reporters without Borders (2014) and the European Commission (2011-2015), there is very little space for executing the watchdog function of the media, due to pressures from the government, legal repercussions on media, and conditioning through heavy advertising, with internet portals remaining a "free zone." However, as Jakubowicz (2006) has noted, this environment is very suitable for the lapdogs who serve their owners or the power elite and present their views in the public.

In this paper, I claim that a distinctive feature of populism in Macedonia today is its disdain and struggle against civil society, through the government's employment of negative media discourse and organizing counter-protests. More specifically, I illustrate how the ruling party of VMRO-DPMNE and their media lapdogs reportedon and installed counter-protesters in three instances of civil society activities (First Architectonic Uprising from 2009; "Martin Neskovski" case from 2011 and AMAN initiative from 2012-2013) who had opposed the government.

I first look at some theoretical considerations and how populism was treated with regard to civil society by other authors. Then, I outline the understanding of counter-protests. Finally, I enter a discourse analysis on the three mentioned cases. I finish with recommendations directed at civil activists, media, and political parties, with the purpose of overcoming this situation and building a more participatory political culture in the country.

Populism: A theoretical framework

When discussing populism in Latin America and Eastern Europe, Comisso, Dubb and McTiggue (1992) argued that the greater social participation in Eastern Europe was one of the main prerequisites for successful democratic transition. According to them, social participation would provide for the institutional articulation of interests, and thus populism in this region was not a danger. However, Bozoki and Sukosd (1993) countered this idea, by stating that in Eastern Europe, populism did not emerge from social activism, but was rather a protest led by parts of the elites from above. In fact, as Bozoki and Sukosd stated that part of the elites employed populism as a tool against other elites, which ultimately would not serve as a catalyst for mobilizing civic activism, but as a reinforcement of the role of the state, contrary to the 1989 revolutions. According to them, it was the disorganization of civil society, including the weakness of farmers' workers' and employees' organizations that enabled the emergence and intensification of populism. In 2007, several authors (Krastev, Rupnik, Mungiu-Pippidi, Jasiewicz, and others) in the *Journal of Democracy* warned of the rise of populism in Central and Eastern Europe, despite European integration, posing the question: "Is East-Central Europe Backsliding?"

As the interest in populism increases, especially in the CEE region, many aspects of its interplay need to be assessed. The study that follows explores its relation to civil society, once a populist party has assumed power. Not many studies have paid attention to this phenomenon, or have dedicated small portions to the relation between populists and civil society. The above mentioned articles by Comisso, Dubb and McTiggue (1992) and Bozoki and Sukosd (1993) are among the earliest examples. Furthermore, Ruzza (2009) looks at the issue through the lens of right-wing uncivil society groups and Euroscepticism, while

several authors in "Populist Politics and Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe," (2008) issued by the Institute for Public Affairs in Bratislava, indicate how civil society is threatened by populist leadership in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

In this research, I adopt Cas Mudde's definition of populism as a Manichaean approach to the political world that equates the side of Good with the putative "will of the people" and the side of Evil with the conspiring elite that is in opposition to the notion of pluralism, "which emphasizes the inevitability and desirability of differences of opinion" (as cited in Hawkins et. al, 2012: 3). Kubik (2012: 2) continues along similar linesby giving a somewhat more substance to the definition:

> The main feature of *populism* is the exaltation of the 'will of the people' that can be - it is assumed - directly expressed and enacted if only proper institutional conditions are provided. Consequently, populist politics entails the rejection or curtailment of the mechanisms of indirect (say, parliamentary) democracy and the high level of trust in a (strong) *leader* who is able to embody and articulate common goals as well as lead. Populists tend to focus their political energy on defining and protecting some kind of political "substance" (for example, national) rather than political procedures (say, rules of parliamentarism). When substance and procedure are in conflict, the former trumps the latter, at least in rhetoric.

Following Weyland (2001: 12) and Tismaneanu (2000), I will view populism as "a political strategy, which parties and their leaders adopt to best complement their programmatic and electoral objectives."

Furthermore, Hawkins et. al (2012: 3) pit populism "in opposition to the approach of *pluralism*, which emphasizes the inevitability and desirability of differences of opinion. Whereas pluralism calls for institutions that enshrine and protect minority rights in the pursuit of a majority will, populism craves moral clarity and posits a reified popular will that treats dissent as suspect and dangerous. Whereas pluralism sees political relations as

essentially those of cooperation or even harmony, populism sees a world that is naturally antagonistic." As a thriving civil society is crucial for the pluralism in a country, I want to evaluate this statement and see the attitudes of populists towards civil society.

As there are three main theoretical approaches when discussing populism (Two Strand Theory, Redemptive Theory and Discourse Theory), I mostly abide by the assumption that discourse theory would be most suitable for explaining the phenomenon in this case, due to the post-structuralist notion of discourse, as advocated by Laclau, Mouffe and Foucault, which is based on five arguments:

1) All forms of social practices take place against a background of historically specific discourses (Howarth &Torfing 2005: 7). In other words, whatever we say, think or do is conditioned by a more or less sedimented discourse which is constantly modified and transformed by what we are saying, thinking and doing. (Howarth &Torfing 2005: 7). This will help the understanding of the disqualification used against civic activism that refers to its links to the past and elites of the past, i.e. communism or the transition, where applicable.

2) Discourse is constructed in and through *hegemonic struggles* that aim to establish a "political and moral-intellectual" leadership through the articulation of meaning and identity (Howarth &Torfing 2005: 15). In this way, this research will show that the hegemonic positions enjoyed by the governments in the selected countries impose a public discourse whereby only the governing authorities have "moral and intellectual" capacity to develop the society vision and govern it, as well as to determine the truth and assigns certain roles and identities in the society (for example: traitors, patriots, etc.).

47

3) Hegemonic articulation of meaning and identity is intrinsically linked to the construction of *social antagonism,* which involves the exclusion of a "threatening Otherness" that stabilizes the discursive system while, at the same time, preventing its ultimate closure (Howarth &Torfing 2005: 15). In this way, governments depict protesters as the Other, i.e., as people who do not belong, and hence trigger social antagonism by organizing counter-protests.

4) Stable hegemonic discourse (and social order) "becomes dislocated when it is confronted by new events it cannot explain, represent or in other way domesticate." (Howarth &Torfing 2005: 16). Counter-protests are the means to absorb new developments (protests) by shifting the struggle's focus away from citizens-government relations, i.e., alternative policies vs. state policies, towards two groups of citizens.

5) Dislocation of the discursive structure means that the subject always emerges as a split subject that might attempt to "reconstruct a full identity through acts of identification" (Howarth &Torfing 2005: 16). This split subject is understood as the Self-Other dichotomy in the sense of antagonistic struggle for hegemonic position in the discourse. This argument is closely related to the previous, i.e., it shows how, by means of counter-protests, the government is not turned into a split subject, but divides citizens and thus maintains its hegemonic position in the discourse.

On Counter-Protests and Social Movements

From the vast number of social movement research studies, we will focus on theories and concepts addressing movement-countermovement relations, in order to obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon of counter-protests as the main feature of civil activism in Macedonia that emerged and reached its summit in the last several years.

Kitschelt (1990) views parties, interest groups and social movements as elements of a densely-intertwined network of links between civil society and political institutions in a democratic state. However, he believes that movements and parties operate in two systems of actions – the party and the movement system of actions – and therefore they have different roles in the society. Be that as it may, the manner in which these roles are formulated should be researched in the Macedonian context. If Zald and McCarthy (similar to Turner and Killian) define social movements as series of opinions and beliefs expressing preferences for change of certain elements in social structures and/or distribution of goods, and consider counter-movements to be opposing sets of opinions and beliefs (Diani 1992), Mottle views the counter-movement as a protesting movement in response to changes advocated by the original movement, i.e., a conscious collective and organized effort to counterbalance or divert the course of change (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996). According to Zald and Useem (quoted in Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), governments may intervene on behalf of the opposing sides and in specific cases may assume the role of movement instigators or organizers.

Mayer and Staggenborn (1996, 1628) argue that three conditions promote the rise of counter-movements:

1) the original movement's success;
2) the original movement threatens existing interests, and
3) the political opportunity to mobilize opposing masses, as the most interesting condition for this research.

They further indicate that advocates for certain causes use forms of social movements when they believe these forms are necessary for the attainment of their goals and are potentially efficient, but raise the issue of what happens when governments or governing authorities believe these forms hold potential to effectively counteract the opposing forces.[1]

In Macedonia, movement-countermovement interplay will be analysed by scrutinizing protests organized around social concerns or governmental policies, whose doings have been contested by counter-protests of different forms. Just as social movement organizations claim they represent the interests of a much bigger constituency group from those present at the venue (Tarrow 1997), governing elites believe that counter-protests would decrease the original movement's representativeness. In that line, counter-protests are considered to be the perfect tool in the hands of populist governments, as they provide a completely different image about the actual "constituency". In addition, counter-protests increase the social transaction costs[2] of the original movement, i.e. they are an action that increases "costs" (broadly defined) of activists, which will be shown later in this paper, by means of distorted images in the media and the energy spent on proving the opposite. According to Rootes (1999), it needs to be recognized that states and different state institutions treat different social movements and movement organizations in different policy areas differently, both generally and at different points in time. Actually, the present research focuses on examining the response of state institutions and governing elites to civil

---

[1] Nevertheless, Meyer speaks of the role closed states play in this regard: "*Closed states repress or at least tolerate movements, in general, by being proactive against development of autonomous movements and thus create countermovements.*" (pg. 1637). Here it would be interesting to discuss whether a state that represents itself as open can engage in such activities.

[2] Tarrow believes that "*social transaction costs*" are necessary preconditions for a social movement: overcoming the collective challenges, refining the common goals, building solidarity and maintaining collective action. Ibid, pg. 103.

initiatives and movements that challenge their performance, and the image they try to create in the public by means of street activism and media coverage.

Civil Society under Attack

As illustrated on numerous occasions, and much in line with other transitional democracies from the region, civil society has not been viewed in the most positive light, and citizens have not been particularly active. Regarding activism, the last survey on the political culture in Macedonia conducted by the Institute of Democracy "Societas Civilis" from Skopje reveals that 60% of citizens have never signed a petition, 67% never participated in demonstrations, 70% have not participated in public gatherings, and as many as 80% never complained to a public institution (Markovic 2012). Historically, however, the most prominent examples of civil activism have been connected to ethnicity and religion, such as the 1997 high school and university student protests of ethnic Macedonians against the education at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Albanian language.

Aside from the well-known and widely accepted understanding on the roles that civil society performs, such as the education, assistance to citizens, promotion of values or acting as an alternative mechanism for certain groups of citizens to fulfil their needs or check-and-balance the authorities about serious matters that affect the public wellbeing, civil society was viewed by Macedonian citizens as a more corrupt societal segment dominated by obscure, foreign or partisan interests. As illustrated by public opinion polls from 2007 to 2013 (Klekovski et al. 2007, 2008, 2010, 2013), usually around half of the citizens did not have confidence in civil society, believed that they rarely worked for the interests of citizens,

or that they were heavily instrumentalized by political parties and their leaders. Such attitudes were successfully employed for the populist politics of VMRO-DPMNE whose attacks on the threatening, or criticizing parts of civil society were a crucial aspect of their communication, through official spokespersons, or through media lapdogs. In the following part, I will illustrate the discursive attacks on civil society through three recent case studies, done through media monitoring.

Gays and Atheists versus the Church

The events that took place on 28 March 2009 were called the First Architectonic Uprising, which was organized by the FAB – the First Archi-Brigade (students of architecture) and supported by a group of young people who later organized themselves as the Freedom Square. It was announced that a significant make-over of the centre of the country's capital, Skopje, was under way. Most impressive among the new buildings announced was the construction (revival) of the Church of "Saint Constantine and Elena" on the central square in Skopje. After hearing of these intentions, a group of students from the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje started to gather in university classes and coffee shops to discuss the need for public reaction against the church construction on the designated place. They justified this with the argumentation that the proposed construction works were unsuitable and illogical for such public space, that they were contrary to a square's purpose and might present a safety threat.

After FAB revealed its plans on social media, they were joined and supported by other youth. They planned to hold a peaceful protest on the 28th of March 2009 under the motto

"Don't rape Skopje!" It is necessary to point out that the event overlapped with forthcoming local and presidential elections campaigns.

The next day, around 200 students and supporters gathered in the square to express their opposition, but were countered by a well-organized and twice as numerous group, comprised of people wearing religious insignia. Following unpleasant verbal exchanges between the two groups, counter-protesters exerted violence towards students and their supporters, which the scarce number of policemen were unable to prevent (Ignatova 2009). Following the announcement of protests against construction of buildings on the square, initial reactions came from Janko Ilkovski, a pro-government show-host at *Nasa TV*, who aired and posted the following statement on his blog:

> Tomorrow at 12:00, on the square in Skopje, a gang of gays and atheists will most likely attempt to spread infamies, with the excuse of caring for city architecture, and will oppose the church construction. Therefore, I and my family will participate in counter-protests organized an hour earlier at 11:00, to express our support for having the church built on the square (Ignatova 2009).

In the aftermath of the violent events that took place in the square, the Minister of Interior, Gordana Jankulovska, issued a statement, broadcasted in all media, wherein she said that religious followers were provoked by demonstrators opposing the church construction (Dnevnik 2009a), which immediately leads to the conclusion that the latter are to be blamed, i.e., they are the actual bullies and provocateurs. A similar explanation was offered by Prime Minister, Nikola Gruevski, who said that the protests were a doing of Miroslav Grcev (a professor that the Faculty of Architecture), opponent to all projects promoted by the government and prominent member of SDSM (the main opposition party). Also, it was reported that Gjuner Ismail, Ljubomir Frckoski (prominent members of the opposition) and their daughters were present in the protesting crowd, framing it into a

conspiracy by the opposition (Dnevnik 2009b). Referrals made to Frckoski, Ismail and Grcev (as well as many other opposition members or employees at the Soros-financed Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, one of the favourite targets of the government) would continue to be the most utilized tool in later reports, and served the purpose of construing the identity of these people as a symbol of the so-called SDSM-led transition, thereby undermining the protests' importance and the right to civic engagement. Such statements shifted the public's focus from the actual cause, and further strengthened the hegemonic discourse that the governing authorities were always right.

News captions such as "Exclusive: SDSM's plot against the church construction!", (Vecer 2009a) "Only SDSM profits from incidents in the square" (Vecer 2009b) and "Protests sponsored by Soros and Frckoski" (Vecer 2009c) explicitly interpolated that clashes were a doing of SDSM and inevitably of Soros, as two symbols created by the government and assigned associations of evil, conspiracy and treason.

Another interesting fact is that although organizers were careful to indicate that the protests were organized against the construction of any building on the square, media reports labelled them as protests against the church (Vecer 2009d), which was yet another attempt to depict them as anti-Christian and anti-Macedonian, whereby the protesters were presented as the Other, i.e. the "disenfranchised".

STOP Police Brutality! Or "The Soros-SDSM Conspiracy Again"

What many perceived to be the most massive protests ever organized in Skopje were triggered by a tragic event - the murder of 22-year old Martin Neskovski - on the night between 5 and 6 June 2011, in the midst of celebrations for VMRO-DPMNE's electoral victory

54

held on the Macedonia Square. In a matter of hours, social networks were flooded with information about a boy being battered by a policeman, although the event was not recorded in the official newsletter issued by the Ministry for Internal Affairs in Skopje. Initial reports indicated that the boy fell ill and died shortly after, and only 2 days later (7.6.2011) did the Ministry admit that the boy had suffered serious injuries inflicted by a member of the special police task force called "Tiger."

The story was already placed in the public and was picked up by the media, together with the deceased's actual identity (Martin Neskovski; initially the boy was referred to as Daniel), and on a daily basis young people started gathering at 18:00 hours to protest against the attempts to cover up this affair (FOSM 2011). Later, protesters expanded their demands and included an explicit motion for resignation of the Minister of Interior, Gordana Jankulovska, establishment of full accountability for MoI members, disbandment of the police task force "Alpha", as well as increased civil oversight for MoI's actions. With varied intensity, the protests were organized and lasted until the end of the summer of 2011.

Igor Spasov, member of the special police task force "Tiger", was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment on the account of murder charges (Deutsche Welle 2012), the movement was allowed to make a presentation in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, and the case was duly noted in the 2011 EC's Progress Report for the Republic of Macedonia, but none of the demands put forward by the movement against police brutality were delivered.

News about Martin Neskovski first appeared on social networks and was officially reported by the Internet portal *Netpress* on the 6th of June 2011. This report included statements from eyewitnesses who did not know the deceased's true identity. One day later,

the vast majority of media outlets re-aired the news, indicating the identities of both, the victim and the offender. These and media announcements that followed can be grouped into: 1) stories focused on case proceedings; and 2) stories focused on the protests.

Namely, the statement issued by Ivo Kotevski, MoI's Spokesperson, was duly covered as early as the first day of reports. Regarding the speculations and disinformation marketed on social networks in the previous two days, as well as calls for violence, Kotevski stated that many of those involved in the protests were called to informative talks with the police, and that nobody had notified the police about the organization of protests. He added that protesters had been unaware of why they were on the streets, but were called to do so (Idividi 2011), which immediately created a mysterious atmosphere about the possibility of a background power centre that manipulates the protesters and conspires violent gatherings. On the 7th of June, The daily *Dnevnik* (2011a)qualified MoI's press release as afortunate circumstance, due to threats for mass protests and "all kinds of possible distortions and abuses that could have been created by and associated with this case," attributing a negative context to mass protests and insinuating no need for continued protests. In its unique style of reporting, the daily *Vecer* (2011a) announced that all speculations were to no avail and that although the victim's identity was not yet confirmed, some non-governmental organizations had taken to the streets, again alluding to some kind of secretive organization in spite of the fact that there were no NGO activities in the initial period. Anti-NGO narratives are identified also in the article published in *Nova Makedonija* on the 14th of December 2011, where it was said that sociologists believe that mass and long-lasting protests, by default, have a political background. Organizers of the protests lasting for several days at that point must have enjoyed a certain security and greater support. In

support of these conjectures, the newspaper article included the statement given by sociology professor Ilija Aceski:

> There are indications that political parties are involved in the protests, however it is important to see the extent of their involvement. If they are not involved, the situation is indicative of a strong non-governmental sector, which in our country could be disastrous. A strong non-governmental sector in a weak country can create chaos.

A news story aired on *TV Sitel*[3] followed the same narrative and broadcasted the statement given by Neskovski's brother in which he appealed for non-politicization of events, at which moment the news anchor conjectured: "This is how the brother of Martin Neskovski addressed political parties and self-proclaimed non-governmental organizations which, assisted by some media outlets, attempt to score political points on the brutal murder of an innocent young man." (Sitel 09.06.2011).

Diversions came in the form of an overview of instances of police brutality and the most prominent in that regard was the newspaper *Vecer* which published a title caption "Those who profit from death, lose everything in life!" Specifically, cases covered in this article concerned the work of SDSM and only in the closing remarks referred to the recent death of Martin Neskovski, indicating that distorted realities were presented in the public for the purpose of political gains (Vecer 2011b). Editor Dragan Pavlovic–Latas went another step further and assigned the label of "SDSM and Soros vultures" to individuals like Milcin, Frckoski, Gordan Georgiev (member of SDSM), Branko Gerovski (oppositional journalist) and others attending the protests (Vecer 2011c), as was done in the case of Ismail, Frckoski and Grcev on the occasion of protests organized against the church on the square.

---

[3] Some of the TV news stories have been taken from press-clipping by NVO Infocentre, at the request of the author, for the purposes of another study.

The same overtone continued in the following period, with numerous qualifications being uttered as part of the prime-time news programme aired on *TV Sitel* and related to the protests against police brutality. News stories and reports featured statements about SDSM members participating in the protests "led by the head people at the Soros [Foundation]" (Sitel 07.062011b). Announcements referred to a secretive plan whose "ultimate goal is not justice, but to overthrow the government one week after VMRO-DPMNE's landslide election victory," adding that the protests were a part and parcel of project "Hope," designed by Slovenian PR experts who advised former Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski (Sitel 15.062011) on how to improve his popularity.

On 15 June, the daily *Dnevnik (2011b)* published an article with a rather interesting structure. Namely, the text "MoI and Demonstrators are of Different Opinion", first referred to the statement issued by a member of the movement, followed by excerpts from the official press release issued by the Macedonian Police Union and information that the Helsinki Committee of Human Rights supports the protests, and closed the article with information that SDSM urged the public prosecutor to raise charges against Gordana Jankulovska on the grounds of "abuse of office and public authorization" and against Ivo Kotevski on the grounds of "covering up a criminal offence." This sequence of information was aimed to create a mental image that the protesters, Helsinki Committee of Human Rights and SDSM are one and the same group of people, thereby reinforcing the discourse about one identity opposing the identity of governing authorities.

Writings also directly linked demonstrators to street revolutionaries cheering for foreign-assisted scenarios, usually implicated in violent tactics. Moreover, these types of

qualifications were assisted and reinforced in the interview with Umberto Pascali, US political analyst, aired on the Public Broadcasting Service, and euphorically reprised by *Vecer, TV Sitel* and *Nova Makedonija*, especially his assessment that the protests organized around the death of Martin Neskovski represent a propaganda war and people were used as cannon fodder, as part of the scenario of colour revolutions that relied on Soros' financial power, western media and Internet controllers (Nova Makedonija 2011). All these created an image that movements of this kind were not indigenous to the Macedonian space, but must have been instilled by foreign actors with anti-Macedonian intentions. Personal disqualifications about two prominent participants in the protests indicated that they had attended a seminar in Belgrade, organized by the Soros Foundation, including a lecture on protests in foreign countries organized for the purpose of state destabilization. Such media reports openly indicated that these people are now returning a favour to their mentors and financers (Sitel 16.062011c).

Rather interesting was the reporting angle pursued by *MTV1*, where on a daily basis it was reiterated that despite disclaimers that they are not politically instrumented, "*the protests are attended by SDSM members*" (07-09.06.2011). On several occasions, it was indicated that the protests were organized against the so-called or alleged police brutality, insinuating that the protests might not be organized around the publicly declared cause or that police brutality ever occurred (11-20.06.2011).

The counter-protests in this case were organized so that the protests "would not be abused by the opposition." Announced for the 18th of June 2011, but organized on 20th of June 2011, they ended up in front of SDSM's headquarters. In this case as well, speculations were made or, to use the words of a counter-protester, "rumour has it" that some

participants had been contacted by SDSM inquiring about protest organization and wanting to turn Skopje into Beirut (MTV1, 18.6.2011) after which the group of counter-protesters demanded these abuses to be discontinued (Sitel, 18-20.6.2001). In addition to the fact that counter-protests support the thesis that protests were organized by SDSM, they also intensified the discourse about the split subject, i.e., they put the citizens on the side of the authorities and against other citizens who protested against police brutality, thereby removing the governing authorities as the bone of contention in the social struggles.

AMAN, It's Enough!

The AMAN[4] movement was organized in response to the Decisions and Rulebooks adopted by the Energy Regulatory Commission and Toplifikacija JSC Skopje (the central heating provider), which implied an increase in electricity and district heating prices (Utrinski 2012).

The first round of protests was held on August 8, 2012 in Skopje, followed by a second round one week later, and soon protests were organized in other towns countrywide: Bitola, Kumanovo, Prilep and Tetovo. These protests were organized around the demand to reduce electricity and district heating utility prices to 2008 rates, re-introduce cheap electricity tariffs, retract the engaged capacity charge set at 33 % of the electricity bill, immediately withdraw the new District Heating Rulebook and reduce oil derivative prices so as to reflect the standard of living in the country (AMAN 2012).

---

[4] AMAN refers to a Turkism in the Macedonian language, which means that one is fed up with something.

These protests were organized once a week, on Tuesdays, and had different processional routes. According to movement members and participants, their activities were insufficiently covered by the mass media. For that purpose, they organized a more public gathering in front of the Public Broadcasting Service's building, because the broadcaster did not cover their activities. This protest had a particular motto: "If they won't come to us, we'll come to them", and used banners with slogans like: "Enough with the silence", "No justice, no peace", etc. (A1On 2012a).Protests culminated with the collection of more than 13,000 signatures in February 2013, endorsing the proposed amendments to the Energy Law. The motion presented in the Parliament was expressly denied by the ruling majority (Mitevska 2013).

In their reports on the AMAN initiative, pro-governmental media used similar methods and did not miss an opportunity to underline links between the initiative and the oppositional SDSM. For example, information that the SDSM-led coalition "Alliance for the Future" supports the initiative for the collection of 10,000 signatures to propose new legislation, (Sitel 2012a) as well as that AMAN protesters are members of SDSM (showing photographs with circled individuals alleged of dual membership) (Sitel 2012b). Moreover, in his public statement, Prime Minister Gruevski accused SDSM of manipulating the citizens, who "organized in an association, attempted to stage certain protests, but are managed by SDSM members and associations financed by the Soros Foundations, which also wish to create an image that the government formulates energy prices and should be held accountable" (Sitel 2012c). To make matters worse, the media published documents that "smeared" AMAN's track record and provided evidence that SDSM had requested its members to go out and support the protests, although AMAN "presented itself as an

independent entity," with a title "AMAN, be Branko!" referring to the leader of the opposition and implying that he had organized the protests (Vecer 2012).

Counter-protests for AMAN were organized under the motto "Expensive Privatization," expressing dissatisfaction with the 2006 privatization of the Electricity Distribution Company, implemented upon a decision taken by SDSM, which was in power at that time.

The counter-protests, together with the media attention they were given, confirm the thesis that the movements opposed are actually led by people who lack authenticity (outcasts). On the other hand, "Expensive Privatization" emerged as an ad hoc organization, whose only purpose was to protest against SDSM and ESM's privatization from 2006, yet again stressing that SDSM manipulates AMAN (A1ON 2012b).

Creation of such discourse on the part of some pro-governmental media is best explained with arguments offered by the post-strucutralist discourse theory. Namely, in order to maintain the hegemonic position in the narrative about Martin Neskovski's murder, governing authorities insisted on so-called "non-politicization" of the subject, i.e., treated the case as a criminal offence whose resolution falls within the competences of the police and state institutions, while civic demands for the resignation (read: political responsibility) of the Minister of Interior on the account of extreme police brutality, were labeled "vulture-like, Soros-instigated, ill-intended, politically motivated, etc.". The ultimate goal pursued by these qualifications is to discourage civil reaction to the case, and to label all individuals wishing to join the protests as instruments in the hands of SDSM or Soros. This is how the government made sure that protests would not be massive (which should have been expected, if they maintain the label of civic engagement). At the same time the government controlled the hegemonic discourse and confined it within the realms of the police and state institutions,

instead of allowing the story to develop in the realm of political responsibility among high level officers at MoI and the stance against police brutality, a phenomenon that cannot be tolerated in a democratic society. In this way, the government protected the on-going discourse from shocks and possible "dislocation", i.e., prevented future events that could not be interpreted in their favor. At the same time, the government made sure that the dominant discourse promoted in the public maintained the existing social antagonisms and strengthened the discourse on election winners and losers, according to which governing structures have the legitimate right to act in all areas and the opposition – when supporting or participating in protests – attempt to deny the election victory.

Conclusion and recommendations

As mentioned in the introduction, the three case studies are a beginning to a longer projected series of studies of civil activism. Although they essentially start off with different conceptual grounds and somewhat different terminology (Jensen's paper focuses on subterranean politics as a new development, Stipic looks at ethno-cracy and citizens mobilizing as a response to debilitating politics, while Nikolovski looks at the hardships civil initiatives face in a right-wing populist context), several overarching conclusions may be drawn. Such are the disillusionment with politics as such, dissatisfaction with the involvement of the EU in the respective countries, low institutional trust, transitional legacies, and loose ideological undertones (if any). Nevertheless, the conceptual differences can be easily translated from one article into another. What Jensen calls 'subterranean politics' is exactly the basis for activism in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, and when Nikolovski speaks of populist politics as a discoursive style of ruling elites, one can see

the similarities in the approaches governments in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary have.

Guided by the conclusions that we draw from the three papers, and bearing in mind our intention of contributing to the debate on creating more inclusive and participatory political cultures, we have come up with several recommendations for the activists-political party-media nexus:

For activists:

1. They need to act in a more strategic and creative (on-line) manner to promote their messages in public;

2. They should approach and establish direct contacts with citizens, people-to-people, in order to re-connect with their constituencies and deconstruct the myth about CSO/SM non-authenticity;

3. They should use more diverse and non-traditional forms of protests, or use humor/satire as a manner of expressing protest/opposition;

4. They should focus on clarifying the distinction between politics and partisanship as the basis for social activism;

5. They should ignore negative labels and unresolved issues within the movement, in order to build solidarity among their membership;

6. They need to avoid particularism of action and put forward broader and comprehensive demands, i.e., that in addition to specific demands or causes, successful civil movements commonly have a broader agenda that covers a range of general policy demands or reflects certain (ideological) values that underline civil activism as a whole. The existence of such an agenda should not be treated as a

disadvantage, but rather as an opportunity for specific expressions and broader social and ideological frameworks;

7. Civil initiatives need a broad, inclusive approach to all citizens interested in civil activism, regardless of their political and/or partisan affiliation;

8. They should exercise clear and transparent methods of operation.

For media:

1. Media workers must uphold professional standards and refrain from negative comments and framing within partisan/governmental contexts;

2. They need a broader understanding of civil activism and should interpret it against the matrix of democratic values. This implies the media's openness to civil initiatives and interest in their causes, free from prejudice and labelling;

For political parties:

1. They should participate in broad participatory forums, together with civil initiatives and other political parties;

2. They should refrain from abusing civil initiatives as instruments for agenda promotion and enable their spontaneous development;

3. Partisan and civil actions must be clearly delineated, especially in cases when party members decide to join initiatives and movements;

4. The public discourse must be opened (liberalized), in terms of acknowledging CSO's political engagement, exercised by means of criticism and proposal of new policies as an everyday occurrence in society. The *political* must be liberated from the grip and realm of political parties, and brought back also to civil society;

5. Political parties should refrain from hate speech and labelling of civil activists;

6. Specific activities are needed to develop and improve political culture and to open up arenas for independent citizen action.

Final remarks

The three examples of contentious politics depicted above come at a period of heightened protest cycles in both international and domestic arenas, which have had varying influences on the movements in question.

First of all, in the past few years, significant protest movements brought international attention and a reinvigorated interest in grassroots activism. Most notably, such were the Occupy movements in the United States and Europe, connected to many of the anti-austerity protest cycles, all of which questioned the very neo-liberal consensus. In addition, at least three significant anti-authoritarian protest cycles and movements emerged – the Arab Spring and its various local outbursts, the Gezi Park protests that swept Turkey, and the EuroMaidan in Ukraine, which initiated the civil war in Ukraine. Needless to say, the hard economic situation in Greece produced a tumultuous period in the country as well, and the electoral success of Syriza, along with the emergence of Podemos in Spain, incite much interest in left-wing populist politics.

Second, the region of Central and South-East Europe also experienced a few years of turmoil that aimed at redefining politics, such as the protests in Bulgaria in early 2013 (which led to the governmental resignation) and the subsequent protests after the elections, which aimed at greater accountability and ending political corruption in the new EU member state. Aside from these, other significant examples in the region need to be mentioned, such

as defending public spaces, student occupations, and student plenums in Croatia (2009-2011), "general uprisings" leading to the fall of government in Slovenia (2012-2013), sporadic protest of economic and ecological reasons in Romania culminating with the mass demonstrations that eventually led the government to resign in late 2015, student occupations in Serbia, and Vetevendosje and student protests in Kosovo. From Central Europe, it is very important to note the recent mobilization against the new PiS government in Poland, which promises a serious backslide of democracy. In many of these examples, some dominant motifs may be sketched, such as their horizontal character, fight for basic tenets of constitutional democracy, coalitions between students, workers and intellectuals, and the dilemmas whether they were anti-regime or anti-governmental protests.

Finally, the recent right-wing mobilization in light of the refugee/migrant crisis gives yet another reason for our interest in investigating civil activism.

Coupled with newer developments in the three countries in question (most notably the student and civil protests in Macedonia in 2014/2015, the civil mobilization to aid migrants in Hungary, or investigating the legacy of the BiH events depicted by Stipic), all of the above examples are worthy of further investigation, for which the i-ASK team sets the task to do in the continuation of this series on contentious politics.

Bibliography

АМАН, бе Бранко! (21.09.2012). Vecer. Accessed: 16.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://vecer.mk/default.asp?ItemID=0DB596BFCD62E841A0F7BE8D19ECD341

АМАН револтирани од односот на МТВ. (18.09.2012a). A1On. Accessed: 15.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/37983

Albertazzi, Daniele and Duncan McDonnell, eds. (2008). *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Armony, Ariel C., and Victor Armony (2005). Indictments, myths, and citizen mobilization in Argentina: A discourse analysis. Latin American Politics & Society, 47 (4): 27-54.

Барања (2012).AMAN official website.Accessed: 15.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://amanmk.wordpress.com/%D0%B1%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B0 -2/

Bozóki, András, and MiklósSükösd (1993). "Civil Society and Populism in the Eastern European Democratic Transitions". *Praxis International* 13 (3): 224-241.

Comisso, Ellen, et. al. (1992)." The Illusion of Populism in Latin America and East-Central Europe". In Szoboszlai, Gyorgy, ed., *Flying Blind, Emerging Democracies in East-Central Europe.* Budapest: Hungarian Political Science Association.

Della Porta, Donatella, and Manuela Caiani (2009).*Social Movements and Europeanization*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Diani, Mario (1992). *The Concept of Social Movement.* The Sociological Review, Volume 40, Issue 1: 1–25

Ексклузивно: Сценарио на СДСМ против изградба на црква! (11.04.2009a). Vecer.Accessed: 08.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=7C5DEDBFEC358E4A9C8B0E18BF45C4D9

European Commission (2012). *The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Progress Report for 2011*. Accessed 09.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2011/package/mk_rapport_2011_e n.pdf

Едни исти луѓе на СДСМ на сите протести. (28.09.2012). Sitel TV.Accessed: 15.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.sitel.com.mk/mk/edni-isti-lugje-na-sdsm-na-site-protesti-0

Foundation Open Society Macedonia. (2011). Хронологија на настани за убиството на Мартин Нешковски. Accessed: 09.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://goo.gl/LLQj23

Груевски: Владата не е одговорна и не е среќна за поскапувањето на енергенсите, СДСМ манипулира. (22.08.2012). Sitel TV.Accessed: 16.09.2015. Retrieved from:

http://sitel.com.mk/mk/gruevski-vladata-ne-e-odgovorna-i-ne-e-srekjna-za-poskapuvanjeto-na-energensite-sdsm-manipulira

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Mudde, Cas. (2004). "The Populist Zeitgeist". *Government and Opposition* 39(4): 542–563.

Hawkins, Kirk A. (2010). *Venezuela's Chavismo and Populism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hawkins, Kirk A., et. al. (2012). *Measuring Populist Attitudes*. Working paper, retrieved from http://www.conceptsmethods. org/Files/WorkingPaper/PC_55_Hawkins_Riding_Mudde.pdf

Hawkins, Kirk A. (2013). "Measuring Populism in a Comparative Perspective". Paper presented at the XXXI International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, May 29-June 1, 2013, Washington D.C.

Howarth, D. and Jacob Torfing, eds. (2005). *Discourse Theory in European Politics: Identity, Policy and Governance*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Ignatova, E. (01.04.2009) Македонија: Студентски протест заврши со насилство. Global Voices Online.Accessed: 09.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://mk.globalvoicesonline.org/04/01/552/

„Изгор – Приватизација" контра „АМАН". (12.09.2012b). A1On.Accessed: 16.09.2015. Retrieved from:http://a1on.mk/wordpress/archives/35501

Jakubowicz, K. (2006). *Rude Awakening: Social And Media Change in Central And Eastern Europe*. Cresskill: Hampton Press

Кој од смрт ќарува, од се друго во животот - губи! (10.06.2011c). Vecer.Accessed: 29.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.vecer.com.mk/default.asp?ItemID=FA391DA58E469E4ABE034EC5B8E6ED1C

Kitschelt, Herbert (1990). "New Social Movements and the Decline of Party Organization." pp. 179-208 in Dalton, R. J. and Kuechler, J., eds. *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Klekovski, S. et. al. (2010). Довербата во Македонија. Скопје: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка

Klekovski, S. et. al. (2007). Довербата во граѓанското општество. Скопје: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка

Klekovski, S. et. al. (2008). Довербата во граѓанското општество. Скопје: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка

Klekovski, S. et. al. (2013). Довербата во граѓанското општество. Скопје: Македонски центар за меѓународна соработка

Krastev, Ivan (2006). "Democracy's 'Doubles' ". *Journal of Democracy* 17(2): 52-62.

Kubik, Jan (2012). "Illiberal Challenge to Liberal Democracy: The Case of Poland". *Taiwan Journal of Democracy* 8 (2): 1-11.

Laclau, Ernesto (2005). *On Populist Reason*. London and New York: Verso

Markovik, Nenad et al. (2012). *Research on the Political Culture in Macedonia.* Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Office in Skopje.

Meyer, David S. and Staggenborg, Suzanne (1996). "Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity". *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 101, No. 6: 1628-1660.

Mesežnikov, Grigorij, Olga Gyárfášová and Daniel Smilov (2008). *Populist Politics and Liberal Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs.

MTV 1 Prime Time News.(07-20.06.2011). Macedonian Television – MTV 1. Transcripts retrieved from NGO Infocentre.

Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina (2007). "Is East-Central Europe backsliding. EU Accession is no 'END OF HISTORY' ". *Journal of Democracy* 18, Number 4 (October 2007). National Endowment for Democracy and The Johns Hopkins University Press.

МВР до демонстрантите: Исполнивме сé што можевме. (16.06.2011a). Nova Makedonija.Accessed: 29.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://daily.mk/makedonija/mvr-do-demonstrantite-ispolnivme-se-shto-mozhevme

МВР и демонстрантите на различен колосек.(15.06.2011b). Dnevnik.Accessed: 29.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.time.mk/arhiva/?d1=10&m1=06&y1=2011&d2=17&m2=06&y2=2011&all=0&dnevnik=1&fulltext=1&timeup=2&show=1&q=%D0%BC%D0%B2%D1%80&read=9c055844cd5ba5b

Од инцидентот на плоштадот само СДСМ сака да има ќар (31.03.2009b).Vecer.Accessed: 30.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.vecer.com.mk/?ItemID=BC0AFEEA3514744A8CA42F78A07A84F9

Panizza, Francisco, ed. (2005). *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*. London and New York: Verso.

Plattner, Marc F. and Larry J. Diamond (2007). "Is East-Central Europe Backsliding?" (introduction). *Journal of Democracy* 18 (4): 5-6.

Протест под капата на Сорос и Фрчкоски. (12.04.2009c).Vecer.Accessed: 30.10.2015. Retrieved from:
http://www.vecer.com.mk/%5C?ItemID=EC5794F1B47EAD48A9215C88B853059B

Полицијата не ги заштитила граѓаните.(10.04.2009d). Dnevnik.Accessed: 30.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://goo.gl/5X82Yq

Полициски специјалец осомничен оти до смрт претепал момче.(07.06.2011a). Dnevnik.Accessed: 29.10.2015. Retrieved from:
http://www.time.mk/arhiva/?d1=06&m1=06&y1=2011&d2=09&m2=06&y2=2011&all=0&dnevnik=1&fulltext=1&timeup=2&show=1&q=%D0%BC%D0%B2%D1%80&read=77b38d10a79fb47

Расветлен случајот з асмртта на момчето.(07.06.2011). Idividi.Accessed: 29.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.idividi.com.mk/vesti/makedonija/689945/index.html

Rootes, Christopher A. (1999). *Political Opportunity Structures: Promise, Problems and Prospects*. La Lettre de la MaisonFrancaised'Oxfod. No. 10: 75-97.

Reporters without Borders. (2014). "Biggest rises and falls in the 2014 World Press Freedom Index". Reporters without Borders website.Accessed 09.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://rsf.org/index2014/en-index2014.php

Rupnik, Jacques and Jan Zielonka (2013). "Introduction: The State of Democracy 20 Years on: Domestic and External Factors". *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 27(1): 3-25.

Ruzza, Carlo. "Populism and euroscepticism: Towards uncivil society?"*Policy and Society* 28: 87–98.

Sitel Prime Time News.(10-16.06.2011). TV Sitel. Transcript retrieved from NGO Infocentre

„Сојузот на иднината" ја поддржа иницијативата на „Аман". (07.12.2012). Sitel TV.Accessed: 23.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.sitel.com.mk/node/48374

Социјалната група АМАН н апротест поради поскапувањата.(13.08.2012). UtrinskiVesnik.Accessed:23.10.2015.Retrieved from:
http://212.13.64.44/?ItemID=2F71EE78C9ACE54492C9F69BA4AB6707

Tarrow, Sidney (1994). *Power in Movement.Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

„Тигарот" Спасов осуден на 14 години затвор. (16.01.2012). Deutsche Welle.Accessed: 09.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://goo.gl/5zSKFU

Tismaneau, Vladimir and Sorin Antohi (2000*). Between Past and Future: The Revolutions of 1989 and Their Aftermath.* Budapest: Central European University Press.

Умберто Паскали: Ова е војна на пропаганди. (13.06.2011b). Nova Makedonija.Accessed: 09.09.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/NewsDetal.asp?vest=6131199597&id=9&setIzdanie=22303

Власта произведе расизам.(01.04.2009b). Dnevnik.Accessed: 08.010.2015. Retrieved from: http://goo.gl/67V4Ak

Власта ги одби барањата на АМАН. (08.02.2013). Radio Free Europe-Macedonia. Accessed: 23.10.2015. Retrieved from: http://www.makdenes.org/content/article/24896468.html

Voltmer, K. (2008). "Comparing media systems in new democracies: East meets South meets West". *Central European Journal of Communication* 1: 23-39.

Weyland, Kurt (2001). "Clarifying a Contested Concept: Populism in the Study of Latin American Politics". *Comparative Politics* 34: 1-22.

APPENDIX A: Timeline of Dissent[1]

October 16, 2011: **Occupy Wall Street**. About 500, mostly young, demonstrators to part in a candlelight procession in Budapest in sympathy with the global "Occupy Wall Street" movement. The demonstration ended with a concert in the city's financial district.

One organizer commented: "We are connecting with 'Occupy' protests elsewhere in the world today ... There are people here from both the right and the left of Hungarian politics. There are humanists, philosophers, artists, painters, engineers, people from all walks of life." He added that: "We want to live in a world which doesn't revolve around money, greed, consumption." The demonstrtors had wanted to spend the night in tents on the square but they were not given a permit for this action by city authorities.

October 23, 2011: "**Don't Like the System? – Protest!**" Demonstration. Organized by the Hungarian Facebook group, One Million for the Freedom of Press in Hungary attracted tens of thousands to different venues in the city.. A song was sung called "Don't Like This System" with the instructions to sing the refrain loud enough to be heard in Brussels. Representatives from several civil organizations spoke, includeing the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, 4K!, Roma groups, the Network of University Students, and the The City Belongs to All initiative.

December 1, 2011: **Night of Solidarity** to protest the criminalization of homelessness in Hungarian legislation. Events took place in 16 locations (10 in Budapest, 4 in other cities, and 2 abroad), and activists spent the night in the open air on the streets with the homeless.

Protesters in a Budapest park lie down on the concrete in solidarity with the homeless of the city on Dec. 1, 2011. Their signs say "Habitat instead of jail" and "The poor are not criminals."

December 3, 2011: A number of grass-roots organizations joined forces for a protest called **"F in Math"** to demand the dismissal of György Matolcsy, the minister in charge of economic and fiscal policy after the dowgrading of Hungarian bonds to junk status. Protestors included the Independent trade unions, One Million for Democracy and the Hungarian Solidarity Movement who arrived from another protest against proposed changes to the country's labor code.

---

[1] Information from December 2011 is consolidated from the summary found at the *Contrarian Hungarian* article: „Civil Sphere and Grassroots Protests in Hungary: December, 2011", Posted on January 2, 2012.

Student's organizations and homeless activists also participated. „Toward the end of the demonstration, members of parliament representing LMP – Hungary's green party, Politics Can Be Different – showed up in a window to cheer on the crowd and to open a banner with the sentence 'Gyuri [Matolcsy] is packing'."

Protest against Hungarian economic policy outside the building housing the offices of the members of the Hungarian parliament, Dec. 3, 2011. Photo by Ákos Stiller/HVG.

December 5, 2011: **St. Nicholas Actions**. In protest against the appointment of a far-right actor and playwright to the New Hungarian Theater, St. Nicholas delivered a special gist to Budapest mayor, István Tarlós. A group called " It's not possible that ... " (Az nem lehet, hogy), which was formed almost immediately after the mayoral appointment, delivered a tri-color booklet (in the colors of the Hungarian flag) to city hall which consisted of red pages with 10,395 signatures against the appointment, white pages printed with a critically annotated version of the actor's application materials and green pages featuring a selection of the international comments related to the appointees and their supporters.A performance by a group called Blister Circus (Hólyagcirkusz) also accompanied the delivery of the gift in front of the city hall. Included with the booklet were tickets to performances of Hungarian playwrights for each day in the month of December because the mayor had reasoned these right-wing appointments were made because not enough Hungarian plays are produced in Hungarian theaters.

A performance by Hólyagcirkusz (Blister Circus) awaited those gathering to deliver the booklet to István Tarlós, Dec. 5, 2011.

December 10, 2011: **Hunger Strike**. Two Hungarian journalists began a hunger-strike in front of the headquarters of the Hungarian public media to protest manipulated news footage shown on a public news show (the digitalization of the face of a former pro-government, turned anti-government official).

December 13, 2011: **Protest of the Hungarian Society for Krishna Consciousness**. This colorful demonstration outside Parliament protested against Hungary's new law on recognized religions which does not recognize them as a church. The protest included two live cows, several supporters dressed in cow costumes and the Krishna valley school children who voiced their concerns in poems.

On December 13th, children living in Krishna Valley came to ask at the Parliament where their cows would graze if their land is taken away from them.

December 15, 2011: **Show of Solidarity with Hungerstrikers.** Members of several trade unions held a solidarity protest with the hunger-striking journalists, now numbering 5, outside of the public media headquarters.

December 16, 2011: **Habitat instead of Jail (Börtön helyett lakhatást) organizes internet and street action called "a public space of symbolic significance."** The location of the action

was only revealed at the last minute outside a processing center for booking „guilty" homeless people in the 8th district. Protestors built a tent city and everyone spoke on loadspeakers explaining why they were there. Despite bad weather, the event became a street party and eventually the 24/7 processing center shut its doors and the homeless of the 8th district were left unmolested by the police for the night. One protestor, however, was arrested.
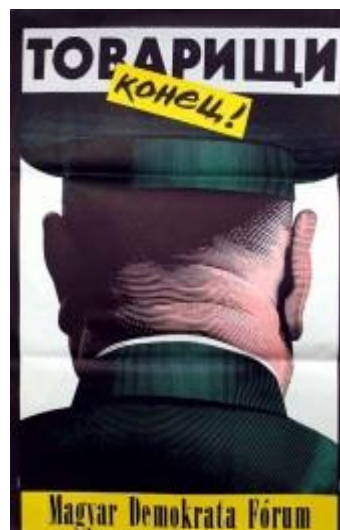

Occupation of a public space in protest of the criminalization of homelessness in Hungary, Dec 16, 2011.

December 17, 2011: **Protests and flashmobs at 29 locations simultaenously throughout the country**. The Hungarian Solidarity Movement is building a network that could serve as the backbone for a general strike in the near future: their particular strength is their decentralized organizational network and their reach into the most diverse strata of Hungarian society. Only two of the 29 locations were in the country's capital, and every single one of Hungary's 19 counties were represented among the locations. The also produced a poster reminiscent of the famous campaign poster for the first free elections in Hungary in 1990, but this time with the image of Viktor Orbán and the slogan "Comrades, it's over!" Unfortunately, when the printer realized the political content of the posters, he refused to deliver them in time for the demonstration so people simply drew them on placards themselves.

"Comrades, it's over!" poster from 2011.   "Comrades, it1s over!" poster from 1990.

 December 19, 2011: **The Network for the Freedom of Education (HAT: Hálózat a Tanszabadságért), a civilian group of educators held its last "office hour"**. This was organized to protest the controversial bill on the Hungarian educational system to be voted into law by the Parliament. The teachers and education experts of HAT had been holding "office hours" outside of the Parliament on days on which the bill was under discussion in the Parliament since early November. Theses educational experts tried to go beyond simply expressing their disagreement with the bill, and made themselves available for consultation to anyone, especially to members of parliament right outside the Parliament. The bill passed without incorporation of any of their suggestions December 20th.

December 22, 2011: **Protest against the Hungarian Media Authority to take away the frequency of the opposition community Klubrádió**. Thousands protested against this decision as Klubradió is viewed as one of the last sources of opposition media. It is unlikely that they will be successful with another bid for a frequency and they will have to stop broadcasting in February.

December 23, 2011: **Activists and LMP (Politics Can Be Different) chain themselves to the Parliament entraces**. This action was taken to protest the passing of the new constitution and electoral laws. A row of protesters awaited those arriving to vote yes on the bills with personalized signs for each government-party lawmaker, asking "Your are not going to betray democracy, are you?" The police dragged away those who were "restricting the movements of others" and activists were taken away one after another. MPs representing the Democratic Coalition stepped into their places and were also taken away by police. Socialist MPs did not get arrested until they after they arrived at the police station. The work in the Parliament continued with only opposition from the far-right *Jobbik* Party. The day ended in a mass rally outside of Parliament.

It took longer for activists to be released from police detention than for politicians. At the conclusion of the rally outside the Parliament, protestors headed to the exits of the building and booed Fidesz MPs. "You are junk," they chanted (a reference also to the country's bond

classification). Fidesz and Christian Democratic MPs, members of the ruling party coalition, were called traitors and likened to Belarussian Lukashenko and North-Korea's Kim Jong-Il.

Protesters outside of the Parliament with individualized posters asking MPs: "You are not going to betray democracy, are you?". Photo by Ákos Stiller/HVG.

Crowds surround the Hungarian Parliament to protest the passage of the laws inside, December 23, 2011. Photo by Szabolcs Barakonyi/Index.hu.

December 28, 2011: "**Music is Not Torture" protest in solidarity with hunger-striking journalists**. Days before Christmas Eve, high-power reflectors and loud-speakers were lowered from above to the "designated hunger-strike area." The speakers repeatedly blasted three extremely irritating Christmas songs at the hunger-strikers. On December 27, two of the group were fired from their jobs, which also meant that they lost access to the building and were literally left out in the cold. The demonstration was organized by the Hungarian Solidarity Movement and relied on famous Hungarian jazz players to bring quality music to the hunger-strikers. On December 29th, security guards arrived to close off the fenced area around the hunger-strikers leaving hunger-strikers without medications, fluids or restroom facilities. But three of the hunger-strikers kept a small hole in the fence open by standing and lying in between the two ends of the fence. When news of the security guard action became known, some

sympathetic MPs arrived with tools to keep the fence open. It was actually on private property where the security guards had no jurisdiction. Since this incident, the hunger- strikers are accompanied by a sympathetic contingent of "strike guards" every night.

December 31, 2011: **Protest against the country's name change**. Thousands gathered to pledge an oath to the Hungarian Republic (Magyar Köztársaság), the official name of the country until constitutional changes in 2011 changed the name to Hungary (Magyarország). The demonstration also saw the founding of the Clean Hands Movement, an organization which aims to provide an "alternative" public (or citizen) media free of political manipulation.

February 11, 2012**: Stop ACTA protest in Budapest**. The protest, of over 1000 primarily young people, was organized by the Hungarian Anonymous Group and Occupy Budapest took to the streets of Budapest outside the Hungarian Parliament and ended at the Hungarian Intellectual Propoerts Office to demonstrate aghainst against the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) that Hungary and 22 other EU countries signed in January. This was simultaneously coordinated with aanti-ACTA demonstrations in London, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon, Prague, Sofia, Bucharest, and 60 cities in Germany. Demonstrators shouted slogans like "Internet freedom!", and "Copy right, Copy left!", and held posters proclaiming "Broadband or Death!" and "Stop ACTA!".

APPENDIX B: Mapping Major Hungarian Grassroots/Activist Organizations

Organization + Description	Date of Founding	Target	Number of supporters*	Political orientation	Tactics	Position on Europe, if any
Milla **(Egymillióan a magyar sajtószabadságért)[1 million for Press Freedom]** Community, grassroots organization, possibly the largest anti-Fidesz (government) organization.	December 2010 with the instalation of Fidesz as the 2/3 majority in parliament, and as soon as the first draft of the New Media Law was published.	Followers are primarily young activists and 'Budapest intelligensia'. Demonstrators include poets and writers who presented anti-Media Law speeches to protestors. It has expanded to include people across the age range. *Milla* maintains that they are a non-political body although they have strong ties to the new party 4K! (The 4K! leader was a speaker at their March 2011 demonstration).	Facebook support has reached 99,089. Estimates of their last protest ranged between 60-100,000 people.	On their site they say that their two main goals are to 1) show politicians that citizens and civil society hold an important and active role in politics with the ability to change faulty politics or politicians and 2) to create a platform for alternative civil, grassroots and political groups to be heard.	Public demonstrations in the streets with speakers. Facebook activism to draw attention to the un-democratic and anti-human rights actions of Fidesz, promarily against the new media Law and new Constitution. Election online of an alternative Hungarian president.***	More pro-EU and in favor of harsh measures imposed on Hungarian government; have subsequently become disillusioned with the EU not taking a firmer stand.
Szolidaritás **(The Hungarian Solidarity Movement)** Anti-Fidesz (government) community organization.	October 2011	Szolidaritás has drawn a more middle-aged crowd. Some say this is due to their stronger links with MSZP and SZDSZ (weak, oppositional parties) and others say its base is more in the old workers union organizations.	Facebook supporters estimated at 10,159 members. This is a loose coalition of old socialists. It is difficult to say how many individuals the group consists	So-called 'left-liberal'.	Their main aim activitiy was to organize the ***BAKA 'Left Roundtable for Change'*** in February 2012 *BAKA* developed recently to unite five different liberal-left parties/organizations that would like to have a roundtable (similar to the ones in 1989). Although this group might not be incorporated directly	More nationalist-orientation and less pro-EU.

		This is an organization of former political elites said to consist of MSZP, The Hungarian Communist Party, SZDSZ and LMP.	of or how many the roundtable or 'workshops' will incorporate.		into what we consider 'Subterranean Politics' they do have some interesting similarities with grassroots activism such as the fact that their first meetings were in Cafés and kept secret from politics at large. They perhaps are taking on the subterranean activist tactics in trying to reestablish new techniques in the political arena. The BAKA group was created in order to hold roundtable discussions and workshops around the country to draft action plans on how to fix the socioeconomic woes of Hungary. The first major plenary session is meant to take place 28 February 2012.	
Occupy Budapest/Világ Forradalom + Valódi Demokráciát Most![**World Revolution+Real Democracy Now**]**/Occupy Hungary** Online communities.	After October 2011	Mostly young people and university students	On facebook the numbers are respectively: 882/ 732/ 1136	Anti-neo liberal economics.	They make links to the larger anti-neo-liberal movement globally so it is important mainly for that reason though it is a weak movement in Budapest. There are many youtube videos showing their main event in October 2011. They also use the 'Guy Fawkes' mask logo so there is a visual symbolism for anti-capitalism that was	Most posts critique the global financial structure and want more equal distribution of wealth. Not per se anti-EU, but anti-EU economic policies. Many posts on *Világ foradalom* [World Revolution] are anti-Union.

					originally developed by the film 'V for Vendetta'.	
Anonymous Online community of hacktivists.	Became active in Hungary in 2011.	Probably, as in other countries, young people and other hacktivists.	Nearly 4500 facebook members.	Anti-Fidesz, anti-authority	They hacked into the Constitutional Court website and changed the words in the new constitution.They hacked into Ministry of Education site and wrote the lyrics of Pink Floyd's song 'We Don't Need No Education' all over it. They also hacked IKSZ's website and put Guy Fawkes faces on it. Images documenting their hacking can be seen on their facebook photos.	They do not specifically address the EU, but are clearly anti-hierarchical, anti-neo-liberal capitalism.
Előlánc [Living Chain] Online community as well as a self-proclaimed civil movement and few know it is actually registered as a political party.	Founded already in 2005, it describes itself as a	This is a small group who wants to promote local production and consumption and a green economy.	169 facebook members	It is a kind of alternative community with green aims. It calls itself eco-political.	They have participated in demonstrations organized by others.	Do not want interference in the sovereignty of Hungary.
4K! 'Fourth Republic' A civil movement initially designed with specifically non-political ends. It is a youth movement aimed at reclaiming	Founded as a civil movement in Fall 2007. Established as an official political party in October 2011.	They are largely a youth-based movement/party. Most of their members are between 18 and 30 from what members say.	On facebook they have 8,930 followers.	As a political party, *4K!* is an alter-political activist party developing into what they define as the 'patriotic left'. They have been active in helping organize and	Organizing activities that would bring young people into the streets to feel they had space within society. They arranged a national pillow fight day, capture the flag across Budapest, and ipod follow the leader to	Pro-European in terms of culture and values, anti-EU neo-liberal economic policies. More global than other groups in their perspective because many have spent time abroad.

space for young people				participate in *Milla* demonstrations.	mock consumerist capitalist culture.	
***Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom* [Movement for a Better Hungary]**	Founded as a political party in October 2003 but began really taking on support only starting after the 2006 riots against the MSZP government. Gained electoral support in the 2009 European parliamentary elections and 2010 national elections.	The group was originally a youth group and turned into a political party. *Jobbik* is known for having a very strong youth base. Recent research on Facebook has proven that they attract mostly young, male, educated supporters (common of many strong populist nationalist parties).	It is hard to tell the exact number of supporters they have, but they currently have 40,215 supporters on Facebook.	The party is a populist nationalist party also considered radical right. Their aim is to create a stronger 'Hungary for Hungarians' which is a popular slogan and rhetorically 'Hungarians' do not include those of Jewish descent or Roma. Last year they moved away from overt anti-Semitic and anti-Roma rhetoric. They have moved towards overtly anti-EU, anti-globalization and anti-democratic language in the last year and specifically the last 6 months.	Participation in and organization of street demonstrations and symbolic acts of defiance against the EU.	They have burned EU flags at rallies or symbolically cut out the stars from the EU flag (reminiscent of the 1956). They are Hungarian right-wing nationalists and want to turn instead to Russia and Turkey.
64 County Youth Movement (*HVIM*) This is a youth movement.	The youth movement was established after the 2006 riots.	Similar to *Jobbik, HVIM* supporters are mainly young males. They also tend to be more rurally based though not exclusively.	On facebook they have 666 followers although they draw larger crowds at the events they organize like at	They are an irredentist nationalist group that works closely alongside *Jobbik* and *Jobbik*'s youth group though they do not have	They have a very successful National Rock festival that they put on annually called Magyar Sziget (to counteract the 'European' and 'corrupt' Sziget Fest that takes place in Budapest).	The group is openly anti-EU and anti-globalization.They are are linked with an international network of right-wing groups.

			their festival which draws a few thousand people annually.	official political ties with them. *HVIM* has a larger goal of supporting movements that might win back the lost territory of Transylvania as well as support the strengthening of Hungary as a nation.		
'Magyar Kétfarkú Kutya Párt [Two-Tailed Dog Party] A mock political party which employs satire and humor.	The Two-Tailed Dog Party (TTDP) was founded in 2006 by 'István Nagy'. This is a joke because this name is the most common Hungarian name, symbolizing everyone.	TTDP supporters are mainly younger, liberal people, but also some Fidesz supporters speak fondly of the party meaning that they can cross political boundaries mocking the entire political system rather than attacking one side or the other like many of the other grassroots groups that can more easily be labeled on a political spectrum.	On facebook TTDP has a quite large number of followers considering it is a mock party group – they currently have 70,992 facebook followers.	This is a satirical, mock political party that crosses political boundaries.	The party is a satirical party aiming to point out the false rhetorical content of mainstream politics and the corruption and bad politics by means of humor. Example: they promised eternal life, one day work weeks and free beers to those that support them.	This is not an issue on which they take a position.

∗We recognize that counting the number of facebook supporters and/or Likes on facebook does not accurately represent a group's popularity or intensity of activities. It is very difficult, however, to measure these groups and their networks.

∗∗Milla was the subject of an investigation by the National Tax and Customs Administration in Hungary. This is viewed as a clear case of government harrassment against their activities.

∗∗∗Unfortunately, this initiative has fallen flat because of manipulation of results of the voting for the Alternative President og Hungary. Milla has since apologized, but their reputation has been tarnished as a result.