

SOME SOCIOLOGICAL ELEMENTS OF NEOCONSERVATIVE POLITICS IN POPULIST MOVEMENTS OF CROATIAN SOCIETY

Branka GALIĆ¹

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract

The increase influence of a new conservative, populist initiatives and movements in Croatia had affect the denial or abolition of human rights. A vast number of civic and religious organizations connected with Catholic Church and its interest had strong influence on the curricula change in Croatia. These changes have had long-term affect the denial or abolition of human rights, have impose a certain system of traditional and non scientific values, and occasionally show very dangerous and worrying elements of cleric-fascist retotics. The introduction of religious education in schools is one of such a changes. The religious education introduce the discourese of refusing women's, LGBT and minority rights into education system. The malignant interest of these conservative and populist movemens to influence the content of education became pretty obvious in the situation of non-transparent attempt to integrate the Catholic Faculty of Theology and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences as well. The consequences of these changes are not yet clear, but it is already clear the failure to develop political culture and democracy as well as serious risk of collapsing human rights in the perspective of Croatian society.

Key words: *clericalism, Croatia, Catholic Church, education, human rights, LGBT, neoconservative politics, populist movements, sociology*

Introduction

The term populism is generally used in pejorative terms in contemporary politics and social sciences to discredit political actors whose views and proposals are not agreed by those who assert them, because populists often make false and unrealistic promises and cheap demagoguery that helps people stir up feelings and passions and thus win their support (Šalaj 2012, 23). Populism often carries the danger of the collapse of democracy and regression into some non-democratic form of government, emphasise many political analysts. Paul Taggart (2002) and Margaret Canovan (1981; 2002) say that populism is a reaction to a feeling of extreme social deprivation, most often economic crisis. Francisco Panizza (2005) also highlights that

¹ brgalic@ffzg.hr

populism most often appears in crisis situations, when citizens lose confidence in the existing social order and in the ability of the political system to offer a solution to overcome the crisis (Šalaj 2012, 35).

At the same time, most contemporary political actors do not want their policies and programs to be qualified as „populist“, looking for other terms to indicate their positions. British political theorist Margaret Canovan four decades ago in her study *Populism* (1981) began a systematic study of the phenomenon of populism, where she classified different typologies of populist movements in two main types: agrarian and political. Agrarian populism she divides in three sub-types: farmer populism (in the US), agricultural populism in some Western European countries, and intellectual populism, in the late 19th-century Russian populist movement. Political populism she further divides in few sub-types: populist democracy, based on advocating for citizens political participation through instruments of direct democracy, reactionary populism, which gathers on the basis of intolerance towards certain minority groups and a subspecies of the populist dictatorship (Canovan 1981). Šalaj points that she calls political populism „the attempt of individual politicians to call people without broad ideology to the broadest possible political support and conquest of power“ (Šalaj 2012, 24). He emphasise, and I agree, that from today's perspective is evident in the last decades, this subspecies of reactionary populism that has become very prominent in political life in Europe, especially reactionary populism.

In populist movements Canovan emphasize specific social and economic problems at the bottom, but their common feature is a political appeal to the people, and a claim to legitimacy that rests on the democratic ideology of popular sovereignty and majority rule (Canovan 2002, 25). She also points the tension within western democracy between the populist tradition and liberal constitutionalism, as well as awareness of a complex and elusive paradox that lies at the heart of modern democracy. „Precisely because it is the most inclusive form of politics, democracy needs the transparency that ideology can supply, and yet the ideology that should communicate politics to the people cannot avoid being systematically misleading“ (Canovan 2002, 25). But, because democracy is about widening the political arena to include the entire population, „the more successful the project of inclusion, the more crowded and dynamic the political arena, and the more interests and opinions exert some small influence on policies, the harder it is for any particular voter to form a picture of the location of power or to trace a clear path through the maze“ (Canovan 2002, 26).

Ideology is indispensable in mass politics, but the ideology of democracy, continually reaffirmed by politicians and the mass media, is full of populist themes, emphasise Canovan, stressing sovereignty and the exercise of the general will against

compromise and accommodation, popular unity against pluralism, majority against minorities etc. (Canovan 2002, 26). The paradox, she says, is that while democracy, with its claims of inclusiveness, needs to be comprehensible to the masses, but the ideology that seeks to bridge the gap between people and politics misrepresents (and cannot avoid misrepresenting) the way on which that democratic politics necessarily works (Canovan 2002, 26).

Populism in postsocialism

The post-socialist experience of the former Eastern socialist countries became a panic movement towards the West as a goal to be seen and to which all attention, hopes and expectations were directed. This goal involved crossing a path that is not at all easy — from totalitarianism to democracy and a market economy (Galić 2000). Although it was often thought that this was something that every state, wishing to see itself as modern, could easily cross, the reality that the new states faced often denied the original euphoria and imposed more cautious attitudes. Namely, post-socialist countries, especially some, including Croatia, were not equipped with the experience of civil democracy, the institutions that make it possible, nor the democratic civic political culture. Most notably, the following problems have arisen: new populism, disrespect and violation of human rights, state paternalism, corruption and crime, while health and environmental problems have been suppressed to the margins of society or completely ignored. Instead of aligning with civic political culture and democratic values, the transition has contributed to an even more intense “development of traditional forms of ethnic consciousness and a whole host of traditional attitudes, and especially authoritarian relations in family, school, politics and the workplace, have greatly contributed to deterrence in developing a civil, democratic political culture and restoring ‘parochial’ and ‘submissive’ forms of political culture with a traditionalist and neo-traditionalist structure in ‘new democracies’, including Croatia” (Galić 2000).

Perhaps the most important drawback of the countries of Eastern Europe in relation to Western Europe and the Western civilization cultural circle in general is the underdevelopment of key elements of the civil and political culture of “civil society” as a basic precondition for the development of modern democracy. “Civil society” implies the usual standards of civility, pluralism, tolerance and human capacity for democratic rule. Namely, without establishing rules of civil society behavior, only authoritarianism is likely. The political cultures of Eastern European countries also contain strong elements of paternalism and religious orthodoxy, which is geared toward conservative political roles and empowering autocratic tendencies. For the mobilization and unification of the newly created mass public in Eastern European countries, including Croatia, there were most often used as key ideological

forces ‡ nationalism and religiosity (attachment to the Catholic Church) ‡ which often degenerated into political intolerance, targeting all minority categories, from ethnic minorities that exist in almost all Eastern European countries to religious, gender and LGBT communities etc.

According to analyst Janos, the most significant patterns and strategies of political adjustment sought to create new political elites in Eastern Europe immediately after the takeover of power, besides adjusting to the liberalist tradition and technocratic strategies, soon was established “neopopulism” (Janos 1994, 14-17). Such political cultures renew, in Almond’s and Verba’s vocabulary, the “parochial” and “submissive” forms of expression of political culture with a traditionalist and neo-traditionalist structure (Almond, Verba 1965). Regardless of the fact that the former socialist countries agreed concerning market mechanisms, the majority of the population of these countries remained nostalgic for the welfare of the former states, because the populist regimes and chaotic characteristics of the markets in these countries allowed various abuses, thus turning free enterprise into a “free hijacking”, together with some illegal business calculations, and turning democracy into intolerance and nationalism (Galić 2000, 205). Because the standard of living of today’s average population is lower than it was under the rule of the former socialist system, people feel deceived, and cynicism towards politicians who have made empty promises prevails. Therefore, in an economic downturn, democracy can hardly have better development strategies, so it is no wonder that the final product of today’s trend has become a semi-authoritarian pattern combined with nationalist and populist policies (Galić 2000, 205). O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) find it equally certain that the transition of authoritarian regimes will lead to democracy as well as to undemocracy and the renewal of a new or even stricter form of authoritarian rule. The transition, according to the same authors, is already leading to confusing rotations of governments that are unable to provide a long-term solution to the institutionalization of political power, and, according to them, the development of violent conflicts that could also be directed towards “rotational regimes” if “the rules of political games are not defined” (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 6).

Populist movements in Croatia

A new impetus for the scientific pursuit of populism emerged in the 1990s, when political movements, which analysts refer to as “right-wing populism”, intensified in a number of European countries. Among them was Croatia too. In the case of Croatia the decisive importance of national identity was most emphasized by the conservative HDZ political party, a new populist party that presented itself as the strongest national party, after the fall of socialism, which “flew in” at the right moment of political headlessness and with good background preparation and managed

to win publicity with the help of new political promises and thanks to a new election law that it immediately passed, that party also got an absolute majority in parliament.² The HDZ also managed to advance its leader, former communist and former JNA general, Ph.D. historian — Franjo Tuđman — then a leading Croatian nationalist, to become president, while political parties who were in opposition for a long time found themselves in an almost insignificant position in Parliament under such conditions (Galić 2000, 205-206). The most important change that this party immediately made was the revolution of symbols, “along the national lines”, while the skill of economic policy was not demonstrated by the new government (Pusić 1992). A rigid authoritarian regime was established and institutionalized, with the obligation to adopt national collectivity as supreme good, and by such an introduction of a hierarchical identity structure all other identities and important topics were suppressed or marginalized, for example — regional, sexual, intellectual, professional, ethnic conflicts, etc. The hegemony of the ruling HDZ party has adversely affected the democratization processes in the country, directly hampering the creation and development of a democratic, civic political culture, enabling the creation of populism, the spread of nationalism, the glorification of fascism, and the founding of new neoconservative groups, with the involvement of religious groups up-bringing in all educational levels of society, thanks to the signing of the Vatican Treaty with the Catholic Church, from 1996 and 1997, too.³

² In the political orientations of Croatia, as shown by the results of the research since 1991, two fundamental opposing types of political culture — traditionalist and modernist — dominated, which largely coincided with the ideological-political opposition of “right” and “left”. The former is committed to traditional values, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, and clericalism, and is largely nurtured by “right-wing” political parties, while the latter is committed to modern values, cosmopolitanism, democracy, and secularism; it is most nurtured by the “left” political parties. Researchers Bulat and Štelov (1995a, 297-315) have come to similar results when exploring the dimensions of the electoral effects of the Croatian political space. When looking at the social demographic characteristics of individual party voters, it can be seen that the HDZ and the “right” have generally been significantly voted on by less educated, rural and older populations, and more often by men than women, while for “left” parties and parties civic-liberal orientations were more voted on by urban populations, of middle and higher status, who were more oriented towards modern values ??(Bulat and Štelov 1995a)

³ The abundant financial support that Croatian citizens pay to the Catholic Church stems from four Vatican agreements signed on behalf of Croatia during the government of Zlatko Mateša, (now deceased) Jure Radić, then the Deputy Prime Minister and President of the State Commission on Religious Communities. Three treaties were ratified in 1997 and the fourth in 1998 with the Vatican (The Holy See) and the Republic of Croatia. It is estimated that Croatia allocates approximately 600 million kunas to the Church annually. The first was the signed Agreement on cooperation in the field of education; then the Treaty on the Counseling of Catholic Believers, Members of the Armed Forces and the Croatian Guard; the third was Legal Matters Treaty and the fourth Economic Matters Treaty. (Hrvatska biskupska konferencija: <http://hbk.hr/ugovori-izmedu-svete-stolice-i-republike-hrvatske/>)

Clericalism in Croatian educational system

The nationalist euphoria of the transition period in Croatia played its part in the initial phase of reintegration of Croatian society, but by long acting solely on the “ethnic line” it became dysfunctional for democracy. The authoritarian and paternalistic state successfully suppressed diversity, individuality, exercised the tyranny of the majority, and displayed intolerance of every kind towards opponents. What particularly hindered the democratization of all former post-socialist societies and was specially evident in Croatia in the last decade of the twentieth century was the restoration of a whole range of pre-modern and old-fashioned values. This retraditionalisation included a return to: historical mythology, religious and rural values, social strata of pre-capitalist stratification, traditional values and traditional lifestyles, disparaging women’s work, discrimination against diversity and individual lifestyle preferences, and glorifying national identity as the basis of individual identity, etc. (Pusić 1993, 9). But special retraditionalization on longterm perspective was happened in education, under the patronisation of inevitable Catholic Church.

The old dreams and political and economic demands of the Catholic Church towards the Croatian state were suddenly awakened. Catholic Church in Croatia, apart from being known for its great demands for the return of property confiscated during the socialism, is well known for already mentioned “Vatican contracts”, which enabled it to supply large material resources and longterm policies to influence educational institutions at all levels, as well as on the media (Galić 2018). Catholic Church became very active in Croatian social and political life, so from 1991 until now the Church has implemented a number of conservative “spiritual” actions in order to promote its values such as: non-working Sunday, punishment of the crimes of the socialist era, introducing religious education from preschool institutions to schools and higher education institutions, protection of marriage as the union of a “man and a woman” (2013 referendum), opposition to abortion liberal law (campaign: “Protecting human life from conception to natural death”), opposition to euthanasia, opposition to natural methods of family planning and the treatment of infertility, and opposition to artificial birth control methods (Galic 2018, 214).

New “clericalization” of Croatian society began in 1991 with the introduction of religious education in primary schools as the only one “elective” course, which has a privileged status among compulsory subjects without an alternative, and continued with the obstruction of introducing health education, from the early 1990s. In the case that pupil do not select the only elective course, he or she will be in the situation of “time lost” during that class in the middle of the class-schedule, 2 times a week for the whole school year and for every year in primary schools, from 1990s

until now.⁴ In secondary schools, an alternative is an “ethics”. Their influence especially expanded after the conclusion of the “Vatican Treaties” in 1996 and 1997 and is very alive until now, according to international Contracts that the Government of the Republic of Croatia in the mid-1990s concluded with the state Vatican in the areas of “education and culture”, in “legal issues” etc. Catholic religious education in public schools was introduced at all levels in public state educational institutions (from preschools to universities), and all was performed by persons whom the bishop gave a confirmation of the canonic mandate (*missio canonica*). According to the Vatican’s Contract in the field of education, public school/state schools do not have right to choose the teachers to perform religious education in schools by themselves and public competition, as they choose for other subjects-matters in schools, but “the bishop determines a suitable person for performing religious education”, according to Vatican’s Contract about Catholic Religion in Public Schools and Religious Education in Public Preschool Institutions (*Ugovor između Svete Stolice i Republike Hrvatske o suradnji na području odgoja i kulture*, HBK, 1996) (Galić 2018, 216). Schools cannot do much if teacher is inappropriately behaving towards children, if someone discriminates or sends a message of harassing, racist or even fascist content, too.⁵ Croatia still don’t have any kind of school-subject concerned with the curricula about sexual or human rights education at primary or secondary schools.

One of the most important attempts to impose clerical influence on the educational system and secular society in Croatia was 5 years ago when the Catholic Church tried to impose the integration of the Catholic Faculty of Theology (CFT) with the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS, University of Zagreb) to establish dominance in the educational system in schools, as the FHSS educates professors for schools, but the Church needs dominance in the educational system. In 2014 the ex-Dean (now Rector of the University of Zagreb from 2014) signed secretly, without legal approval of the FHSS Council, the Contract with CFT, despite that the realisation of that Contract should have been provided at the expense of FHSS and its students, because its students would be discriminated in applying for their study, during studies and in getting employment. After signing the Contract, ex-Dean received very soon the votes for the Rectorate, and became the Rec-

⁴ The stigmatization of those who did not choose religious education is a particular topic, for which neither the Church nor the state in Croatia show any interest.

⁵ Accordingly, religious instruction largely depends on the choices of teachers, whereby the bishop has the right, by his decree, to revoke the canonic mandate (*missio canonica*) for teaching Catholic doctrine or religious education due to “the correctness of the teaching and the personal timidity”, what is stated in the Vatican’s contract on performing religious education in public schools and religious education. So, it is not surprising that sometimes teachers of Catholic religion in schools show their intolerance and hatred towards other ethnic groups, minority religions, minority sexual and LGBT populations, but also sexist attitudes towards women and other different opinions (Galić 2018, 210-225).

tor because it was a good „deal“ with the Catholic Church. The Church expected from him to “return” the service by signing a wishful Contract on joint double major studies with an important faculty (FHSS) in Croatia which educates half of the required teaching staff for many public-school subjects. But, conditions, legal approach and reciprocity of study programs of two faculties were not equal, neither were the possibilities for getting jobs in public schools for graduated students and neither the responsibilities of faculty authorities, since FHSS is in the ownership of the Republic of Croatia and works under “civil law” and CFT is in the ownership of the Holy See and works under “canon law” (where women are not equal with men). At the same time, international Contracts of State of the Vatican City were presented and officially accepted in Croatia as the law even “above” Croatian Constitution, but question about it goes beyond this paper.⁶

However, the Church didn’t succeed with that Contract finally because one of the faculty members at the time — the Vice-Dean⁷ — opposed it publicly and with the help of some colleagues and the majority of students managed to stop this attempt at the Faculty Council, which finally rejected it. However, the fight has been going on for months and years, and to this day the author of this text still have the consequences from that activities that she must endure in rigged trials of a corrupt Croatian juridical system. But people in Croatia on average are not at all informed about that kind of actions and processes that are going on very far from public eyes, because interests of Catholic Church in Croatia are fighting very far from public eyes.

New conservative populist organizations in Croatia

In the last 2,5 decades, Republic of Croatia became full of religious associations and organizations, Internet portals, TV stations, neo-conservative and radically right in-

⁶ For attendance, CFT asked additional condition — the parish’s confirmation, what was not possible to fulfill for some students of FHSS in the first place. Also, CFT wanted for their students to get more than twenty different studies on different Departments on FHSS, as the second major study, but at the same time CFT offered for students of FHSS only one study as the second major — “religion pedagogy and Catechesis”, i.e. “confessional religion” for teaching in public schools. It was meaning that their students can easily enter and get plenty of possibilities for study at FHSS, but students of FHSS can get only one study of confessional religion on CFT. Additional problem for students of FHSS was in getting jobs because they were in unequal position without “canonic mandate” if they are not religious or are members of other religious community. From religious teachers is expected to have a virtuous life in accordance with the Catholic doctrine (Galic 2018, 216-217).

⁷ At the time, the author of this paper was working for the FHSS as the ViceDean for Science and International Cooperation, but because of her open opposition to concluding a harmful contract for the FHSS, she was illegally dismissed by the Rector and the Senate of the University of Zagreb, and defamed by the deans in the media. Today, there are 2 court proceedings, which are being conducted incorrectly and unfavorably for her, although she has the Ombudsman’s legal opinion that this is discrimination based on conviction.

initiatives and movements that have emerged in Croatia at the end of transition period from 1990s until now, and as a response to the secularization process in Western European and East European countries. The Croatian new conservative and populist political movement is comprised of a dozen of conservative civil society organizations of the last decade, connected openly or hidden with Catholic Church with demanding of “safeguarding Christian values”. They promote Catholic values, advocate for active citizen participation in the society and in politics, pursue pro-life activism and oppose abortion, oppose to rights for marriage and for adopting children in the case of homosexual persons; they oppose to the autonomy of the state in educational curricula, oppose to reproductive rights,⁸ oppose to education on gender roles etc. The nexus between neo-conservative groups in Croatia and their like-minded people in the United States is evident in their common political agenda, with the “mentoring” position of US actors in the transfer of experience and action strategies, while their financial links are often hidden.⁹ Revival of forces that were defeated in World War II can be only added to it.

The first manifestation of conservative mobilization was in 2006 with the association Voice of Parents for Children (Glas roditelja za djecu — GROZD). They objected to the introduction of curriculum for sexual education program in schools (Bijelić, 2008). The other associations — Association for a Comprehensive Sex Education “Teen- star and the Reform — Association for the Promotion of Ethics, Morality, Family Values, and Human Rights — both were connected with the same persons. *Teen-Star* was offered to schools and teenagers on responsive sexual behaviour aiming at the maintenance of the virginity of its participants or the discontinuation of sexual activity. The Reform opposed the introduction of sex education in school curricula. Association “Teen-Star” is a member of an international association

⁸ Concerning the history of reproductive rights legislation in Croatia, in the former Yugoslavia — abortion first was legalized in 1952. Further liberalization of the conditions and procedure for termination of pregnancy were in 1960 and 1969 and the last free-reproduction Law-act in ex Yugoslavia was accepted in 1978. Republic of Croatia also accepted the same Law from ex state in 1991 and until now didn't change the text of the law which allow the termination of pregnancy on demand until the 10th week of pregnancy, but changed the practice in hospitals. In majority of hospitals (about 80-90%) medical staff is calling on “the call to conscience”, and this impedes or hinders access to abortion for many women, specially poor. In last few years populist and conservative demands for more restrictive regulation or ban on the application of the Abortion Act was growing, with particular reference to national interests and religious postulates.

⁹ For example, the visit of controversial pseudoscientist Judith Reisman in Croatia in 2013 and 2014. Reisman holds a PhD in communication, founded the Abstinence Clearinghouse, which promotes abstinence before marriage. It is neither the historical, nor the sexological, the biological, nor the psychological or psychiatric profession; she is traveling the world with her campaign against the sexual revolution (Hodžić, Bijelić 2014).

Teen-StarR International, connected with the Natural Family Planning Center in Washington, D. C. (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 67)

The third important association — *Vigilare* (meaning “watchful”) — promotes preservation of “dignity of rights of the individual, family and values of life” (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 67). They organize international activism, call supporters and send emails to politicians and to the heads of institutions who believe in traditional values. They called, for example, controversial communicologist Judith Reisman as the strong person fighter against sexual education in schools, against human rights for homosexuals and against women’s reproductive rights. Although Reisman came twice, in 2013 and 2014 and had many lectures on different faculties in different towns in Croatia, she wasn’t accepted everywhere very well, except theological faculties as well as Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb, where was very conservative dean (Petričušić, Čehulić and Čepo 2017). Fourth established association was the Center for the Renewal of Culture with the goal of educating and training future conservative leaders, as the part of a pan-European conservative association with its leader in Croatia Stjepo Bartulica,¹⁰ PhD, an American returnee from Croatian diaspora.¹¹

One of the most influential new conservative organizations in Croatia is In the Name of the Family that is part of the broader religious-political movement. They advocate for exclusively religious influence on the family institution in Croatian society, oppose sexual and reproductive rights and insist on the primacy of religious education. This new conservative association was particularly active on the issue of denying rights to LGBT persons, in promoting the right of exclusively heterosexual marriages and families with children. It was active and still is against national minorities, against women’s reproductive rights with the help of the increasing “the call of conscience” of gynecologists at abortion clinics, organizing a “40 Days for Life” initiatives to intimidate women seeking abortions at clinical centers, and obstructions against signing the Istanbul Convention in Croatia (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017). In the Name of the Family organized on the 1st December 2013 the

¹⁰ Professor of political philosophy at Catholic University in Zagreb, advisor to Croatian ex Prime Minister Tihomir Orešković in 2016, and member of the Opus Dei Catholic Association. Bartulica, along with Vice Batarelo, head of the populist-conservative association *Vigilare*, is one of the most prominent conservatives in Croatia. One of the main tenets of this movement is social engagement, which is why Bartulica is known for engaging in similar actions before. He was one of the initiators of the “I was an embryo too” initiative as well, when signatures were collected against the Act on Medically Assisted Fertilization.

¹¹ Apart from these groups and associations, there are some other associations for promoting family values Association for Promoting Family Values “Blessed Alojzije Stepinac” (Udruga za promicanje obiteljskih vrijednosti ‘Blaženi Alojzije Stepinac’), Center for Natural Family Planning (Centar za prirodno planiranje obitelji) itd. (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 68).

referendum on the constitutional definition of marriage as a “union between man and woman”, why Croatia had to change the constitutional text in heteronormative way. Although the same definition already exists in the Family Law, the referendum claimed that was necessary to constitutionalize the definition. That initiative significantly increased the level of intolerance and homophobia. Although only 38% of eligible voters voted, The State Election Commission pronounced the official acceptance of the referendum, and announced that “66% voted ‘Yes’, 34% voted ‘No’ and 0.57% of ballots were invalid” (Petričušić, Čehulić, Čepo 2017, 74).

Croatian religious political movement registered their political party Croatian Growth “HRAST” in 2010 that was politically active and aligned with the European Christian Political Movement, and concerned with three main goals: the protection of the traditional family, the resistance to the introduction of sex education in schools and the prohibition of abortion — connected with a wider European neo-conservative agenda (Petričušić, Čehulić and Čepo 2017, 69). In February 2012 it formed the civic initiative “I was an Embryo Too” and presented a legislative proposal to Croatian Parliament for infertility problems by advocating natural conception and opposing the freezing of embryos for the purpose of artificial insemination, emphasise the same authors, so the conservative movement in Croatia is trying to restrict the potential for liberalization of reproductive rights.

Croatian clerical etc. Fashism

Catholic Church in Croatia didn't officially criticised some convicted war criminals, nor what they did, but on the contrary, some of their clerics openly celebrate and glorify that convicted war-criminals.¹² Graffiti with hatred speeches against Serbs, LGBT people and women's rights again were re-painted in last years and last days over many buildings and facades in many towns of Croatia.¹³ Over than 2000 anti-fascist monuments have been destroyed throughout the Croatian country, from 1990s, while no investigations by state authorities have been taken. However, when one student drew a sickle and hammer last year at the memorial-statute of the first Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, the State Attorney's Office initiated criminal proceedings and threatened him with imprisonment, immediately. The Catholic Church in Croatia also regularly holds every year masses for Ustashe's leader from World War II. Ante Pavelić at one church in the centre of Zagreb, without any reaction

¹² Some of Croatian bishops openly defend the Ustashe's salute *Za dom spremni* (Ready for home) who were Hitler's associates and who were executing people (Serbs, Jews, and communist Croats) in concentration-camps in Croatia during World War II., the largest and most terrifying being Jasenovac.

¹³ During maskerade in Croatia, one pair of homosexual kissing dolls with adopted child was burned in one square of little town in Dalmatian back, as the “folk custom”.

from the Croatian government, and this year it has been moved to the main church of Saint Marko near by The State Parliament of the Republic of Croatia

"Gender Ideology" against Christianity

The Catholic Church proclaimed the document of Istanbul Convention as a "gender ideology" and carried out a major campaign in the media and Internet portals against the ratification of the Convention in Croatia, but finally didn't succeed in it, because Croatian Parliament finally ratified that convention. But regularly representatives of Catholic Church in Croatia oppose to any kind of gender education in Croatia, and openly advocate against women's organizations as well as against any woman intellectuals who are fighting for human and women's rights. They support strengthening the influence of new male groups of registered associations and portal sites or forums on Internet to strengthen male dominance in society and fight for "male rights". At the same time, some bishops state for women they are beings of the 2nd class in public (*drugotne*), without any reaction of the state institutions.

Instead of a conclusion

In a situation where there is no movement to defend the material interests of the poorer and workers, and the state and political parties see only their preferential interests, while completely marginalizing the influence of trade-unions, it is not difficult to gain marginalized, impoverished and dupeable sections of the people through a sense of belonging to a particular populist identity group — Catholics, veterans, men, heterosexuals, patriots, as well as radical right-wingers, etc., to ensure long-term survival. In that circumstances specially Catholic Church has own interest and continues with her consequence of the revival of the "1000-year dream" as the most patriarchal, but also the most powerful church institution in this region, which refuses to accept the equal emancipation of women and men, the development of democracy, human rights and new knowledge, but returns all deeper into the abyss of the Middle Ages using for that goal all possible old and new organizations, that emerge from undeveloped political culture of postsocialist democracy in Croatia.

References

- Almond, G.A., Verba, S. 1965. *The Civic Culture*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.
- Bijelić, N. 2008. Sex Education in Croatia, *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 15 (4): 329-343.
- Bulat, N., Štrelor, D. 1995a. "Dimenzije političkog prostora i izborni učinci." In *Pohod na glasače. Izbori u Hrvatskoj 1990.—1993.*, edited by Vrcan S. et al., 295-317. Split: PULS.

- Bulat, N., Štrelov, D. 1995b. "Neke determinante izbornog ponašanja građana na izborima 1992. godine." In *Pohod na glasače. Izbori u Hrvatskoj 1990.—1993.*, uredili Vrcan S. i suradnici, 317-338. Split: PULS.
- Canovan, M. 1981. *Populism*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Canovan, M. 2002. "Taking Politics to the People: Populism as the Ideology of Democracy." In *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, edited by Mény, Y., Surel, Y. 25-44. London: Palgrave.
- Galić, B. 2018. "A case study of retraditionalization and clericalization of Croatian society: 'feminist threat' at the governing position of a higher education institution." *Sociologija*, LX(1): 210-225.
- Galić, B. 2000. "Politička kultura 'novih demokracija'". *Revija za sociologiju*, 31(3-4): 197-209.
- Grdešić, I., Kasapović, M., Šiber, I., Zakošek, N. (ur.) 1991. *Hrvatska u izborima 1990*. Zagreb: Naprijed.
- Hrvatska biskupska konferencija: <http://hbk.hr/ugovori-između-svete-stolice-i-republike-hrvatske>, visited 1. 3. 2020.
- Hodžić, A., Bijelić, N. 2014. *Neokonzervativne prijetnje seksualnim i reproduktivnim pravima u Europskoj Uniji*. Zagreb: CESI.
- Janos, A. C. 1994. "Continuity and Change in Eastern Europe: Strategies of Post Communist Politics". *East European Politics and Societies*, 8(1):1-31.
- O'Donnell, G., Schmitter, P. C. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule. Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies*. Edited by O'Donnell & Schmitter. Philippe Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Panizza, F. 2005. "Populism and the Mirror of Democracy" In: *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy*, edited by Panizza, Francisco, 1-31. London: Verso.
- Petričušić, A., Čehulić, M. i Čepo, D. 2017. "Gaining Political Power by Utilizing Opportunity Structures: An Analysis of the Conservative Religious-Political Movement in Croatia". *Croatian Political Science Review*, 54(4):61-84.
- Pusić, V. 1992. *Vladaoci i upravljači*. Zagreb: Novi Liber.
- Pusić, V. 1993. "Nova agenda za nove demokracije", *Erasmus*, 2:7-13
- Taggart, P. 2000. *Populism*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Taggart, P. 2002. "Populism and the Pathology of Representative Politics" In: *Democracies and the Populist Challenge*, edited by Meny, Y. and Surel, Y., 62-80. Palgrave: Basingstoke.
- Taggart, P. 2004. "Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe" *Journal of Political Ideologies* (9)3: 269-288.
- Šalaj, B. 2012. "Suvremeni populizam" U: *Analiza Hrvatskog politološkog društva*. 22-45
- Ugovor između Svete Stolice i Republike Hrvatske o suradnji na području odgoja i kulture*. 1996-Hrvatska biskupska konferencija: <http://hbk.hr/ugovori-između-svete-stolice-i-republike-hrvatske/>, visited 1. 3. 2020.
- Istraživački izvještaj "Dinamika sociokulturnog kapitala u Hrvatskoj". 1996. Zagreb: Ekonomski institut.