

THE **GOOD STORY**

Green narratives for the Balkans



DOBRA PRIČA

Zeleni narativi za Balkan



GREEN EUROPEAN
FOUNDATION



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Social anthropologist and a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Vienna

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In the last few years, Serbia has been the field site of an unprecedented environmental mobilization. Similarly as in other Balkan states, popular ecological rebellion has started with a struggle against small hydropower plants, a nominally green infrastructure which, however, implied a destruction of the mountain commons. Connecting the local residents, environmental scientists and wider publics, the fight against the river enclosures came to be understood as a fight for the "life itself", with ecological concerns expressing a number of social grievances. At the same time, activist groups formed to contest the mounting air pollution, water contamination and enclosure of urban greenery. Last year, such developments culminated in a wide interclass alliance against the multinational giant Rio Tinto and its plan to extract lithium and borate, both essential for the energy transition. Calling the project as not only polluting, but unjust, illegal, and an outright state betrayal, an environmentalist front made the Serbian state tentatively stop the project, while at the same pushing the ruling party to adopt the environmental language in an attempt to co-opt the resentments.

This text zooms in on struggles for land, rivers and air in Serbia to reflect on three wider tensions at the heart of the Balkans' ecopolitics. The first is green grabbing, that is, the tension between commoning and privatisation that structures all levels of environmental action - including the resistance itself. The second is the struggle over ecological debt, that is, the way debts to multinational capital are contested with debts to ancestors, who are themselves seen as having died to liberate the land. The third is the national moral economy, that is, a populist bargain between the rulers and the ruled which might conceal another key social antagonism at play: that between the landed and the landless. But the real reason why ecopopulism is so appealing and yet so thorny, I argue, is because it asks an entirely new question: how to account for the exchanges of life itself.

Ecopopulist equivalencies

By *ecopopulism*, I refer to a way of organising that pits the 'people' against the 'elites', constituting the former as the defender of 'life itself' and depicting the capitalist state as the spreader of death. I do not use the term in a derogatory way, nor do I imply that populism is inherently right- or left-wing, exclusionary or inclusionary. Instead I speak of ecopopulism to describe the ways environmental causes get popularized across the world, with ecology becoming a medium for competing affects, meanings and demands. For while the Balkan eco-rebels often say that the nature



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TRI EKOPOPULISTIČKE LEKCIJE ZA BALKANSKU ZELENU LEVICU



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Srbija je u poslednjih nekoliko godina bila teren neviđene ekološke mobilizacije. Slično kao i u drugim balkanskim državama, narodna ekološka pobuna počela je borbom protiv malih hidroelektrana, nominalno zelene infrastrukture koja je, međutim, podrazumevala uništenje planinskih dobara. Povezujući lokalno stanovništvo, naučnike iz oblasti životne sredine i širu javnost, borba protiv ograđenih reka postala je shvaćena kao borba za „sami život“, sa ekološkim brigama koje izražavaju niz društvenih pritužbi. Istovremeno, formirane su aktivističke grupe da se bore protiv sve većeg zagađenja vazduha, kontaminacije vode i ograđivanja gradskog zelenila. Prošle godine, takav razvoj događaja kulminirao je širokim međuklasnim savezom protiv multinacionalnog giganta Rio Tinto i njegovog plana za ekstrakciju litijuma i borata, koji su bili ključni za energetska tranziciju. Nazivajući projekat ne samo zagađujućim po životnu sredinu, već nepravednim, nezakonitim i potpunom državnom izdajom, ekološki front je naterao srpsku državu da privremeno zaustavi projekat, dok je istovremeno gurao vladajuću stranku da usvoji jezik životne sredine u pokušaju da ko-optira zamerke.

Ovaj tekst zumira borbu za zemlju, reke i vazduh u Srbiji kako bi se osvrnuo na tri šire tenzije u srcu ekopolitike Balkana. Prvi je zeleno otimanje (green grabbing), odnosno napetost između zajedničkih dobara i privatizacije koja strukturira sve nivoe ekološke akcije – uključujući i sam otpor. Drugi je borba oko ekološkog duga, odnosno način na koji se dugovi multinacionalnom kapitalu osporavaju sa dugovima precima, za koje se smatra da su umrli da bi oslobodili zemlju. Treća je nacionalna moralna ekonomija, odnosno populistička pogodba između vladara i vladajućih koja bi mogla prikriti još jedan ključni društveni antagonizam u igri: onaj između zemljoposjednika i bezzemljaša. Ali pravi razlog zašto je ekopopulizam tako privlačan, a opet tako trnovit, tvrdim, je zato što postavlja potpuno novo pitanje: kako objasniti razmenu samog života.

Ekopopulističke ekvivalencije

Pod ekopopulizmom mislim na način organizovanja koji suprotstavlja „ljudu“ protiv „elita“, konstituišući prve kao braniocima „samoga života“ i prikazujući kapitalističku državu kao one koja širi smrt. Ne koristim termin na pogrdan način, niti impliciram da je populizam inherentno desničarski ili levičarski, isključujući ili inkluzivan. Umesto toga, govorim o ekopopulizmu da bih opisao načine na koje se uzroci životne sredine popularizuju širom sveta, pri čemu ekologija postaje medij za nadmetanje uticaja, značenja i zahteva. Jer dok balkanski eko-pobunjenici često govore

is 'above politics', what that exactly means is subject to constant inner contention. Rather than starting from one class, locale or identity, the participants must always anew articulate what binds them together. This, in turn, begs a question: how does environmental dispossession translate into political identity?

On the one hand, we might find theories of populist equivalences helpful. Populism, Laclau's and Mouffe's have argued, is not a single ideology but a distinctive logic of creating hegemony by articulating the 'chains of equivalence' between *different* social demands.¹ As *demos* is an agonistic plurality, they argue, it can only be expressed through various groups' mutually equivalent positions to a common enemy, rather than through one shared signifier. In such way, it can indeed be said that environmental metaphors act as 'floating signifiers' – broad enough to connect different voices into a common platform. When an angry protest speaker at an "Ecological Uprising" in Belgrade claims *this country is a diamond*, for example, or when another compares the crowd to *scapegoats* and *migrating swallows*, they borrow the themes from environmental imagination to name the lines of dispossession that the crowd shares beyond the entrenched fault lines.

And yet, life is not just a stuff of signs, and the drives for environmental uprisings not so random. As Susana Narotzky suggests, populism is always a reaction to capitalism's double binds: of *demos*' power and monopoly wealth, freedom and dependence, equality and privilege. Sometimes, popular movements push for a just world for all; sometimes they close ranks. But in all cases, they are products of an outrage of reasonable people inasmuch of their leaders' articulation. Similarly, here I focus on "the substantive motivations - both material and discursive – that push various agents (individual, collective, corporate, institutional) to action when confronted in a struggle for resources that they value differently".² What really drives diverse protesters together, I argue, is their persuasion that they defend a vital substance they depend on. The environment is seen as a hypersubject - a common signifier that is somewhat *pregiven* to the act of gathering.

Now for a Marxist, such idea of "higher goods" can be a hard cookie to swallow. Isn't this just a fetishization of nature, obscuring human productivity on the ground? At its most radical, I argue, ecopopulism seeks to trump circulation of capital with circulation of life. Capital's ability to ever procreate itself through surplus value is here countered with life's own desire to expand – cattle searching for water; rivers flowing from one generation to another; ancestors passing the land on to the descendants still to come. Reproductive metaphors are thus no simple nationalism: they point to the imagination of deeper, life transmissions that sustain those of men and those of capital. As such, ecopopulism is a dream of going beyond both money as a universal means of exchange, *and* beyond the populist empty signifiers. Against these, ecopopulists wish to establish alternative, *life equivalences*. But how that life gets to matter beyond mere biology, of course, is always situated at a specific historical conjuncture. Vital transactions precede, but they are never separated from those of capital and those of political loyalty. So how do we share the resources we all depend on, if we are also differentially implicated by them? Who has the right to decide about the land? And with whom to establish alliances? Here I explore three such questions Balkan ecopopulisms pose.

1 Laclau, Ernesto, and Chantal; Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemony and the Socialist Strategy*. London: Verso.

2 Narotzky, Susana. 2019. Populism's claims: The struggle between privilege and equality. In: Bruce Kapferer & Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (eds.) *Democracy's paradox: Populism and its Contemporary Crisis*, Oxford: Berghahn, 97-121.

da je priroda „iznad politike“, šta to tačno znači podložno je stalnim unutrašnjim raspravama. Umesto da počnu od jedne klase, lokaliteta ili identiteta, učesnici moraju uvek iznova artikulirati šta ih povezuje. Ovo, zauzvrat, postavlja pitanje: kako se oduzimanje životne sredine pretvara u politički identitet?

S jedne strane, teorije o populističkim ekvivalencijama bi mogle biti korisne. Populizam, tvrde Laclau i Mouffe, nije jedinstvena ideologija već posebna logika stvaranja hegemonije artikulacijom „lanaca ekvivalencije“ između različitih društvenih zahteva¹. Kako je *demos* agonistički pluralitet, oni tvrde, on se može izraziti samo kroz međusobno ekvivalentne pozicije različitih grupa prema zajedničkom neprijatelju, a ne kroz jedan zajednički označitelj. Na taj način se zaista može reći da metafore životne sredine deluju kao „lebdeći označitelji“ – dovoljno široki da povežu različite glasove u zajedničku platformu. Kada ljuti govornik protesta na „Ekološkom ustanku“ u Beogradu tvrdi da je ova zemlja dijamant, na primer, ili kada neko drugi uporedi gomilu sa žrtvenim jarčevima i lastama koje se sele, oni pozajmljuju teme iz mašte životne sredine kako bi naveli linije razvlašćenja koje gomila deli izvan ukorenjenih linija raseda.

Pa ipak, život nije samo tvorevina znakova, a nagoni za ekološke pobune nisu tako nasumični. Kao što sugeriše Susana Narotzky, populizam je uvek reakcija na dvostruke veze kapitalizma: moć *demos*a i monopolsko bogatstvo, slobodu i zavisnost, jednakost i privilegije. Ponekad se popularni pokreti zalažu za pravedan svet za sve; ponekad zbijaju redove. Ali u svim slučajevima, oni su proizvodi besa razumnih ljudi u smislu artikulacije njihovih vođa. Slično tome, ovde se fokusiram na „suštinske motivacije – i materijalne i diskurzivne – koje guraju različite agente (individualne, kolektivne, korporativne, institucionalne) na akciju kada se suoče u borbi za resurse koje drugačije vrednuju“². Ono što zaista pokreće različite demonstrante zajedno, tvrdim, jeste njihovo ubeđivanje da brane vitalnu supstancu od koje zavise. Okruženje se posmatra kao hipersubjekt – uobičajeni označitelj koji je donekle predodređen činu okupljanja.

Sada za marksiste, takva ideja „viših dobara“ može biti težak kolači za sažvakati. Nije li ovo samo fetišizacija prirode, koja zamagljuje ljudsku produktivnost na terenu? U svojoj najradikalnijoj formi, tvrdim, ekopopulizam nastoji da nadmaši cirkulaciju kapitala cirkulacijom života. Sposobnost kapitala da se ikada razmnožava preko viška vrednosti ovde je suprotstavljena sopstvenoj želji života da se proširi – stoka u potrazi za vodom; reke koje teku iz generacije u generaciju; preci prenoseći zemlju potomcima koji tek dolaze. Reproductive metafore stoga nisu jednostavan nacionalizam: one ukazuju na imaginaciju dubljih, životnih transmisija koje podržavaju transmisije ljudi i kapitala. Kao takav, ekopopulizam je san o prevazilaženju kako novca kao univerzalnog sredstva razmene, tako i populističkih praznih označitelja. Nasuprot njima, ekopopulisti žele da uspostave alternativne, životne ekvivalencije. Ali kako taj život dolazi do materije izvan puke biologije, naravno, uvek se nalazi u specifičnoj istorijskoj konjunkturi. Vitalne transakcije prethode, ali se nikada ne odvajaju od kapitalnih i političkih lojalnosti. Dakle, kako da podelimo resurse od kojih svi zavisimo, ako smo i mi različito implicirani? Ko ima pravo da odlučuje o zemljištu? A sa kim sklapati saveze? Ovde istražujem tri takva pitanja koja postavljaju balkanski ekopopulizmi.

1 Laclau, Ernesto i Šantal; Mouffe. 1985. *Hegemonija i socijalistička strategija*. London: Verso.

2 Narotzky, Susana. 2019. Tvrdnje populizma: borba između privilegija i jednakosti. U: Bruce Kapferer & Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (ur.) *Paradoks demokratije: populizam i njegova savremena kriza*, Oxford: Berghahn, 97-121.

1. What do we share, and what do we not?

First, we should note that all sides speak in the name of environment: the state and its protected investors laud the energy transition, while the affected residents list endangered species as their companions. All politics is now environmental politics: the question is which sides emerge in the green transition's mist. For some, ecology promises a liberation movement, for others, it delivers a continuation of capital in new ways. What others have identified as "environmentalisms of the rich and poor"³ are thus uneasily coexisting at the very heart of ecological rebellion. When lost in the game, the very least a Green Left can do is to focus on class asymmetries behind the truism "we all drink the same water, we all breath the same air".

Consider Rio Tinto itself, a company with a century and a half of mining history for whom this could be the first lithium gig. That a firm deeply embroiled in colonial and often, violent extractivist history is now interested in decarbonisation, is another example of green capitalism – an attempt to solve the climate crisis with the same means that caused it.⁴ And yet, the environmentalism of the rich does not stop at the nation's borders. Within them, ecology becomes a promise of an enlightened consciousness, a bourgeois rediscovery of 'nature' as long as it does not touch the class distribution. Such are the Nova S and N1, the liberal pro-opposition media who have been happy to support the movement until one protest speaker depicted the privatisation laws as theft. Then, its journalists started to wonder whether the movement missed the target and shifted from ecology to politics – ironically, the very same argument that the ruling regime accuses it for.

For many people I know, the mentioned speaker was right. After selling banks and factories, they believe, the only things left to sell in Serbia are water, air and land. "Privatisation of the society is our biggest problem" one villager in Topli do told me as we manned the barricade on a river bridge in 2019. Having quitted his job in a town's factory because the new private owner stopped paying, this sixty-something shepherd was one of many dispossessed standing behind the rebellion. He voted for the president Vučić, but opposed the corrupted clique that, he believed, surrounded the president. He volunteered in the Serbian army, but dreamt of a Balkan federation with the 'fellow nations' of Romania and Greece. And he rose against the investor who wanted to enclose the river his cattle drank from, and yet cherished the idea of redistributing the 'water surplus' to the water-starved region of Vojvodina. In other words, this man's was no straightforward nationalism, nor simply a possessive claim. Opposing what he saw as a privatisation of everything, he thought that the water should be *shared*.

Indeed, struggles against the small hydropower plants in the region have mobilized so passionately because they posited rivers as *flowing commons*: something that cannot be possessed, but only saved and passed on. In my research among the 'river defenders', I encountered villagers clashing with investors, recreational fishers undergoing court trials, touched urbanites sending donations, and the unemployed devoting great amount of their time, energy and poetry to protect the streams they love. For some it meant a direct defence of their livelihoods and their way of life. For others, it was an escape from precarious labour in towns, a promise of a self-sufficient return to their grandfather's land. Still for others, it was a promise of liberation from an authoritarian regime and a sense of equality hitherto unknown.

³ Martinez-Alier, Joan. 2003. *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁴ Rajković, Ivan. 2020. "Green Capitalism and Its Others." *Theorizing the Contemporary*, *Fieldsights*, March 24. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/green-capitalism-and-its-others>



1. Šta delimo, a šta ne?

Prvo, treba napomenuti da sve strane govore u ime životne sredine: država i njeni zaštićeni investitori hvale energetske tranzicije, dok pogođeni stanovnici navode ugrožene vrste kao svoje partnere. Sva politika je sada politika životne sredine: pitanje je koje strane se pojavljuju u magli zelene tranzicije. Za neke, ekologija obećava oslobodilački pokret, za druge donosi nastavak kapitala na nove načine. Ono što su drugi identifikovali kao „ekonacionalizam bogatih i siromašnih“ stoga s nelagodnom koegzistencijom u samom srcu ekološke pobune.³ Kada se izgubi u igri, najmanje što zelena levica može da uradi je da se fokusira na klasne asimetrije iza truzima „svi pijemo istu vodu, svi udišemo isti vazduh“.

Uzmite u obzir sam Rio Tinto, kompaniju sa vek i po rudarske istorije za koju bi ovo mogao biti prvi litijumski nastup. Da je firma duboko upletena u kolonijalnu i često nasilnu ekstraktivističku istoriju sada zainteresovana za dekarbonizaciju, još je jedan primer zelenog kapitalizma – pokušaj da se klimatska kriza reši istim sredstvima koja su je izazvala⁴. Pa ipak, zaštita životne sredine bogatih ne prestaje na granicama nacije. Unutar njih, ekologija postaje obećanje prosvetljene svesti, buržoasko ponovno otkrivanje „prirode“ sve dok ne dotiče klasnu distribuciju. Takvi su Nova S i N1, liberalni proopozicioni mediji koji su rado podržavali pokret sve dok jedan protestni govornik nije opisao zakone o privatizaciji kao krađu. Tada su njegovi novinari počeli da se pitaju da li je pokret promašio cilj i prešao sa ekologije na politiku – ironično, isti argument za koji ga optužuje vladajući režim.

Za mnoge ljude koje poznajem pomenuti govornik je bio u pravu. Posle prodaje banaka i fabrika, smatraju, u Srbiji je ostalo da se proda samo voda, vazduh i zemlja. „Privatizacija društva je naš najveći problem“, rekao mi je jedan meštani iz Toplog Dola dok smo 2019. godine bili na barikadi na mostu na reci. Napustivši posao u jednoj gradskoj fabrici jer je novi privatnik prestao da plaća, ovaj šezdesetogodišnji pastir bio je jedan od mnogih obespravljenih koji su stajali iza pobune. Glasao je za predsednika Vučića, ali se suprotstavio korumpiranoj kliku koja je, smatra, okružila predsednika. Dobrovoljno se prijavio u srpsku vojsku, ali je sanjao o balkanskoj federaciji sa „sunarodnicima“ Rumunije i Grčke. I podigao se protiv investitora koji je želeo da ogradi reku iz koje je njegova stoka pila, a ipak je negovao ideju da se „višak vode“ preraspodeli na žednu regiju Vojvodine. Drugim rečima, ovaj čovek nije bio direktno nacionalista, niti samo posesivan. Suprotstavljajući se onome što je video kao privatizaciju svega, smatrao je da vodu treba deliti.

Zaista, borbe protiv malih hidroelektrana u regionu su se mobilisale tako strastveno jer su reke postavile kao opšte dobro: nešto što se ne može posedovati, već samo sačuvati i preneti dalje. U svom istraživanju među „braniteljima reka“, sreo sam seljane koji se sukobljavaju sa investitorima, rekreativne pecaroše koji prolaze kroz sudske procese, građane koji šalju donacije i nezaposlene koji posvećuju veliku količinu svog vremena, energije i poezije da zaštite potoke koje vole. Za neke je to značilo direktnu odbranu njihovih sredstava za život i načina života. Za druge je to bilo bekstvo od nesigurnog rada u gradovima, obećanje samodovoljnog povratka na zemlju svog dede. Za druge je to ipak bilo obećanje oslobođenja od autoritarnog režima i do tada nepoznatog osećaja jednakosti.

³ Martinez-Alier, Joan. 2003. *Ekologizam siromašnih: Studija ekoloških konflikata I validacije*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

⁴ Rajković, Ivan. 2020. „Zeleni kapitalizam i njegovi drugi“. *Theorizing the Contemporary*, *Fieldsights*, 24. mart <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/green-capitalism-and-its-others>

What articulated these different desires was often an image of rivers as something bigger than oneself, flows running from times immemorial to generations still to be born. Thus, when South Serbian activists used the slogan 'river brothers and river sisters' (*braća i sestre po rekama*), they evoked an and expanded kinship: everyone could be called a river kin as long as they support the vital flows. Rivers came to be imagined as the last shared substance, something that unites different actors in their struggle for the 'streams of life' to continue – and against those who would stop them and spread death.

And yet, together with such equivalence of use-value (water as a source of life) came another, that of the market. Because you don't have to be a capitalist to capitalize from the environment. Across Serbia, eco-bungalows are spreading for middle-class urbanites sick of urban stress. Thinktanks that were crucial for the liberal transition are now switching to sustainability agendas. And many researchers of the economy, including me, are jumping on the eco-bandwagon. Indeed, everything from mineral extraction through green advocacy to eco-tourism and autochthonous species breeding is now a new horizon of opportunity for all involved. And in that opportunistic jump, everyone's declarations of *commoning* are compromised by an economy that constantly *individualizes* their own social reproduction. Even when a villager supports a wider protest action in Belgrade, for example, they are still faced by the localized paperwork – location permits to be opposed, court cases to be won in each place separately. And even when one acts as a green left activist for environmental justice on the state level, their attempts of collaboration are constantly upended by demands for individual representation: media and parties' search for charismatic leaders, the funders' preference for experts, Facebook echo chambers.

Put differently, the political economy of ecological movements demands that they stay *atomized* despite their attempts of *collectivisation*. Which is one of the reasons the Serbian eco-scene never united: dozens of organisations are at constant ambivalence with each other, residents on one village falling off with their neighbours. When we abandon the idealist obsession with unity, we realise that the fight is so generative not despite, but precisely because an abstract commoning is *not* an option. For whereas we are all plagued by the "green grabbing" of environmental resources, this strikes differently one who works in an air-purified office and one who works at a petrol station; one who defends their immediate environment and those doing it as a vocation; the citizens of the Northwest and those in the Southeast of the country; the landed and the landless. If something more than *bios* connects these different groups, it is still to be articulated. Put differently, we are at once amidst new commonings and new privatisations: every actor is in a big rediscovery of who they are to each other, and what they *do* and *do not* share.

As environmentalism develops as an economic transformation, the issue of labour needs to be urgently positioned back to its centre. This does not mean simply repeating the patterns of workerist politics - but neither does it mean conceding to the liberal common sense and the capital's attempts to buy new class consensus. One emerging class bargain is the pact between large capital and the political class, who then present it as redistribution to the workers. The pollution, the Serbian president claims, is the result of the reindustrialization the country, while he depicts new jobs, highways, and real estate price soar as in interest of the working people. But such environment-for-jobs bargain also occurs on the side of resistance, where we see the emergence of micro-paternalist bond between the poorer and the wealthier. After the rivers of Topli do were defended, for example, its residents stopped shaping the rebellion further and instead engaged in ecotourist brandification. And ironically, at that same place where an elderly villager told me that privatisation is the society's biggest problem, a street is now named after Mita Gaga - the pre-WWII private investor into hydropower, who, it seems, was a good capitalist because he was also a local patron.



Ono što je artikulisalo ove različite želje često je bila slika reka kao nečeg većeg od vas samih, tokova koji teku od pamtiveka do generacija koje se tek treba roditi. Tako, kada su južnosrpski aktivisti koristili slogan „braća i sestre po rekama“, evocirali su i proširili srodstvo: svako se može nazvati rečnim srodstvom sve dok podržava vitalne tokove. Reke su se zamišljale kao poslednja zajednička supstanca, nešto što ujedinjuje različite aktere u njihovoj borbi da se „tokovi života“ nastave – i protiv onih koji bi ih zaustavili i širili smrt.

Pa ipak, zajedno sa takvom ekvivalentnošću upotrebne vrednosti (voda kao izvor života) došla je još jedna, ona tržišta. Zato što ne morate biti kapitalista da biste kapitalizovali iz okruženja. Širom Srbije šire se eko-bungalovi za urbaniste srednje klase bolesne od urbanog stresa. Think tankovi koji su bili ključni za liberalnu tranziciju sada prelaze na programe održivosti. I mnogi istraživači ekonomije, uključujući i mene, skaču na eko-vagon. Zaista, sve od vađenja minerala preko zelenog zagovaranja do eko-turizma i uzgoja autohtonih vrsta sada je novi horizont mogućnosti za sve uključene. I u tom oportunističkom skoku, svačije izjave o zajedničkom dobru su kompromitovane ekonomijom koja stalno individualizuje sopstvenu društvenu reprodukciju. Čak i kada meštani sela podržavaju širu protestnu akciju u Beogradu, na primer, i dalje se suočavaju sa lokalizovanom papirologijom – lokacijskim dozvolama se treba protiviti, sudskim sporovima koji se dobijaju u svakom mestu posebno. Čak i kada se neko ponaša kao zeleni levičar za ekološku pravdu na državnom nivou, njihovi pokušaji saradnje su stalno ometani zahtevima za individualnim predstavljanjem: potraga medija i stranaka za harizmatičnim liderima, preferencija finansijera za ekspertima, Facebook echo komore.

Drugačije rečeno, politička ekonomija ekoloških pokreta zahteva da oni ostanu atomizovani uprkos pokušajima kolektivizacije. Što je jedan od razloga zašto se srpska eko-scena nikada nije ujedinila: desetine organizacija su u stalnoj ambivalentnosti jedna prema drugoj, meštani jednog sela otpadaju od svojih komšija. Kada napustimo idealističku opsesiju jedinstvom, shvatamo da je borba toliko generativna, ne uprkos, već upravo zato što apstraktno zajedništvo nije opcija. Jer, dok nas sve muči „zeleno otimanje“ ekoloških resursa, ovo pogađa drugačije one koji rade u kancelariji sa prečišćenim vazduhom i one koji rade na benzinskoj pumpi; onaj koji brani svoje najbliže okruženje i one koji to rade kao poziv; građane severozapada i jugoistoka zemlje; zemljoposjednika i bezemljaša. Ako nešto više od biosa povezuje ove različite grupe, to tek treba da se artikuliše. Drugačije rečeno, mi smo istovremeno usred novih zajedništva i novih privatizacija: svi akteri su u velikom ponovnom otkrivanju onoga ko su jedni drugima, i šta rade, a šta ne dele.

Kako se zaštita životne sredine razvija kao ekonomska transformacija, pitanje rada treba hitno da se vrati u središte. Ovo ne znači jednostavno ponavljanje obrazaca radničke politike – ali ni to ne znači popuštanje liberalnom zdravom razumu i pokušajima kapitala da kupi novi klasni konsenzus. Jedna nova klasna pogodba je pakt između krupnog kapitala i političke klase, koji to onda predstavljaju kao preraspodelu radnicima. Zagađenje je, tvrdi predsednik Srbije, rezultat reindustrializacije zemlje, a nova radna mesta, autoputeve, rast cena nekretnina prikazuje kao u interesu radnih ljudi. Ali takva pogodba o poslovnom okruženju se dešava i na strani otpora, gde vidimo pojavu mikro-paternalističke veze između siromašnijih i bogatijih. Nakon što su reke Toplog dola branjene, na primer, njegovi stanovnici su prestali da dalje oblikuju pobunu i umesto toga su se bavili ekoturističkim brendifikacijom. I ironično, na istom mestu gde mi je jedan stariji seljanin rekao da je privatizacija najveći problem društva, ulica je sada nazvana po Miti Gagi – privatnom investitoru hidroelektrana pre Drugog svetskog rata, koji je, izgleda, bio dobar kapitalista jer je bio i lokalni mecena.

2. Whose is the land?

As the European Union seeks to achieve self-sufficiency in green transition, extraction models once reserved for the 'Third World' begin to shift back to its own backyard. And so do the memories of anti-imperial wars, infusing some of the Balkans' green narratives with a characteristically anticolonial bent. Grabbing of natural resources, in this optic, is a re-occupation of the country, a loss of democratic sovereignty as well as its national wealth. What here sounds as a classical blood-and-soil argument, I argue, in fact opens up a new sense of solidarity with the world's oppressed.

When residents' organisations frame their resistance to Rio Tinto, for example, they often cite the company's wrongdoings in the countries of the Global South. The massive water pollution it caused in Madagascar, a civil war in Papua New Guinea, and the destruction of an ancient Aboriginal cave are used as references well beyond the NIMBY logic. 'A vest, *anterija* and sandals, we will end like the Papuans did', one of the protest banners says, replacing a traditional verse on Serbian pride with a fourth world nation's plight.

Another opening of universality happens through memories of the World War I, references to which abound in protests against Rio Tinto. As the local legacies of WWII are too divisive - separating those who stood with the Communist Party (partisans) and those who turned into collaborationists (chetniks), the WWI can serve as a reminder of an united fight of a small peripheral nation against the imperial occupation. Key groups' names and slogans are directly inspired by the fight against Austria-Hungary, claiming to carry that past heroism into the present moment (*Marš sa Drine, Ekolubarska bitka, Odbranimo Cer*).

This brings us to the domain of sacrifice, a main figure through which Balkan anti-imperialisms mobilize. Namely, if the rivers have served as a symbol of life cycles that cannot be commodified, the soil is defended as something that had been liberated through great loss of lives in the past, and is hence inalienable. "Our blood is not for sale" (*krv naša nije roba*), says a popular song in the movement, while one drawing shows past heroes as battling for the land on which, in the present, greenery abounds. By evoking war sacrifices, environmentalism shifts into an ideology of liberation. Land is here understood as *not ours alone* to possess and sell: it belongs to those who gave their lives for its freedom, and thus no living person has a right to alienate it.

While such rhetoric estranges some of the local leftists, it is an important alternative to the ways environmental debt is being framed. For it is *debt* that sets green capital into motion: the revenues Serbian leadership saw in lithium, or the billion dollars indemnity fee that, it is now speculated, Serbia might have to pay to Rio Tinto. On a global level, Fridays for the Future and the Extinction Rebellion tried to counter such *debt to capital* with debt to Earth, citing our obligations to other species and the coming generations instead. But such declarations of *debts to life*, I find, are never about nature in the abstract. Rather, they are always textured with much concrete dues to specific predecessors remembered in particular struggles for liberation. In the Balkan eco-riots, patrimonies are real, peopled with children to be born inasmuch as with ancestors who had died for the land. The debt of life comes as haunted by the concrete ghosts of those who sacrificed their lives, and who can now be seen as the real owners of the environmental commons - transforming the living generations as mere stewards of longer cycles of transmission.



2. Čija je zemlja?

Kako Evropska unija nastoji da postigne samodovoljnost u zelenoj tranziciji, modeli ekstrakcije koji su nekada bili rezervisani za „Treći svet“ počinju da se vraćaju u sopstveno dvorište. Kao i sećanja na anti-imperijalne ratove, ulivajući neke od zelenih narativa Balkana sa karakterističnim antikolonijalnim naklonostima. Otimanje prirodnih resursa, u ovoj optici, predstavlja ponovnu okupaciju zemlje, gubitak demokratskog suvereniteta kao i njenog nacionalnog bogatstva. Ono što ovde zvuči kao klasičan argument krvi i tla, tvrdim, zapravo otvara novi osećaj solidarnosti sa potlačenim u svetu.

Kada, na primer, lokalne organizacije kreiraju narativ svog otpora Rio Tintu, često navode greške kompanije u zemljama globalnog juga. Ogromno zagađenje vode koje je izazvalo na Madagaskaru, građanski rat u Papui Novoj Gvineji i uništenje drevne aboridžinske pećine koriste se kao reference koje su daleko izvan NIMBY logike. „Jelek, anterija i opanci, završićemo kao Papuanci“, kaže jedan od protestnih transparenta, zamenjujući tradicionalni stih o srpskom ponosu nevoljom četvrte svetske nacije.

Još jedno otvaranje univerzalnosti dešava se kroz sećanja na Prvi svetski rat, referenci na koje obiluju protesti protiv Rio Tinta. Kako je lokalno nasleđe Drugog svetskog rata previše podeljeno – razdvajajući one koji su stajali uz Komunističku partiju (partizane) i one koji su se pretvorili u kolaboracioniste (četnike), Prvi svetski rat može poslužiti kao podsetnik na ujedinjenu borbu male periferne nacije protiv imperijalne okupacije. Nazivi i slogani ključnih grupa direktno su inspirisani borbom protiv Austrougarske, tvrdeći da to herojstvo prošlosti prenesu u sadašnji trenutak (*Marš sa Drine, Ekolubarska bitka, Odbranimo Cer*).

Ovo nas dovodi do domena žrtvovanja, glavne figure kroz koju se mobilišu balkanski antiimperijalizmi. Naime, ako su reke služile kao simbol životnih ciklusa koji se ne mogu komodificirati, tlo se brani kao nešto što je u prošlosti oslobođeno velikim gubicima života, pa je stoga neotuđivo. „Krv naša nije roba“, kaže popularna pesma pokreta, dok jedan crtež prikazuje nekadašnje heroje kako se bore za zemlju koja u sadašnjosti obiluje zelenilom. Evociranjem ratnih žrtava, ekologija prelazi u ideologiju oslobođenja. Pod zemljom se ovde podrazumeva da ne posedujemo i prodajemo samo našu: ona pripada onima koji su dali svoje živote za njenu slobodu, pa niko živi nema pravo da je otuđuje.

Iako takva retorika otuđuje neke od lokalnih levičara, ona je važna alternativa načinu na koji se uobličava ekološki dug. Jer dug je taj koji pokreće zeleni kapital: prihode koje je srpsko rukovodstvo videlo u litijumu, ili odštetu od milijardu dolara koju bi, kako se sada spekuliše, Srbija možda morala da plati Rio Tintu. Na globalnom nivou, Fridays for the Future i The Extinction Rebellion pokušali su da se suprotstave takvom dugu kapitalu dugom prema Zemlji, navodeći umesto toga naše obaveze prema drugim vrstama i narednim generacijama. Ali takve izjave o dugovima prema životu, smatram, nikada nisu o prirodi apstraktno. Umesto toga, oni su uvek teksturirani sa mnogo konkretnih obaveza prema specifičnim prethodnicima koji se pamte u posebnim borbama za oslobođenje. U balkanskim eko-nemirima, baština je stvarna, naseljena decom koja se rađaju u meri u kojoj su preci umrli za zemlju. Dug života dolazi kao progonjen konkretnim duhovima onih koji su žrtvovali svoje živote i koji se sada mogu posmatrati kao stvarni vlasnici zajedničkih dobara životne sredine - pretvarajući žive generacije kao obične upravitelje dužih ciklusa prenosa.

Thus, where states cite their debt to green capital – and where green capital itself acts in the name of the future generations – the eco-rebels cite their debts to the past relatives: a grandfather who died starving, or a mother who, lying at a deathbed, wants to take one more swim in a local stream. This means that there is no straightforward way to abstract the environment into one planetary good, or easily demarcate the nationalist from the antinationalist, particular from universalist, the right- from left-wing. Instead, we witness myriad forms of commons – all embedded in particular transgenerational struggles - which can be put into equivalence with one another, but never entirely removed from the land(s) they grew upon.

3. Whose is the state?

Now, where does this leave the regional states? Serbian eco-rebels have been clear that their prime point of contention is not Rio Tinto itself, but the politicians aiding to its favour. In speculations about the secret contracts between the state leadership and the company, the ruling party came to be portrayed as the chief traitor. In this logic, capital might wish to buy whatever it likes, but at the very least, the nation state is expected not to turn its own citizens' livelihoods into commodities. As one man from a village in Eastern Serbia said to a journalist, furious because the mine will displace him: "I am not angry at the Chinese who bought us. They have money, so they are buying. I am rather angry at the man who sold me."

Of course, the capitalist states put their citizens' lives on sale all the time. But the *land* still occupies a central place in the national moral economy. Following E. P. Thompson, here I understand moral economy as a set of unwritten obligations that bind the dominant and the dominated, which keeps a certain social system in place.⁵ Arguably, it was the land ownership that was at the centre of such state-people bond in modern Serbia': from duke Miloš giving the land to settlers after autonomy from Ottoman Empire was won to the mobilisations in world wars and the Yugoslav conflicts which, in their different ideological shapes, were all couched as "saving one's hearth" against an invader. The 'people' had been constructed as willing to obey the rulers in the fight for the country, in exchange for a livelihood that is supposedly guaranteed to them by possessing the land. To do otherwise is to betray a tacit deal between the rulers and the ruled - the state and its peasants, a general and his soldiers families, a politician and his voters - and hence, makes the state representatives illegitimate.

The popular accusations of treason shake the hegemony of the ruling block, for they question the basic assumption of sovereignty that liberal nation states rest upon. For his part, the Serbian president tried to deflect such critiques by denying he took any money from the company, and symbolically aligning with the residents. But simultaneously, Vučić tried to spin a new division. The residents of the Jadar valley, he claims, act in the name of selfish interests, undermining the country's need for development while some of them willingly sell the land. Pitting those who would profit from the mine against those who would profit from its cancellation, Vučić here points to the core dichotomy behind the seemingly all-national rejection of the Jadar project: the conflict between the landed and the landless. In the not so distant future, the regional Left will thus have to muster its own response to the question of how to redistribute the land.

⁵ Thompson, Edward Palmer. (1971). The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century. *Past & Present*, (50): 76-136.



Dakle, tamo gde države navode svoj dug zelenom kapitalu – i gde sam zeleni kapital deluje u ime budućih generacija – eko-pobunjenici navode svoje dugove prema prošlim rođacima: dedi koji je umro od gladi ili majci koja je ležala u na samrti, želi da se još jednom okupa u lokalnom potoku. To znači da ne postoji direktan način da se apstrahuje okruženje u jedno planetarno dobro, ili da se lako razgraniči nacionalističko od antinacionalističkog, posebno od univerzalističkog, desnog od levičarskog. Umesto toga, svedoci smo nebrojenih oblika zajedničkog dobra – koji su svi ugrađeni u posebne transgeneracijske borbe – koji se mogu staviti u ekvivalenciju jedni s drugima, ali nikada u potpunosti uklonjeni iz zemlje na kojoj su izrasli.

3. Čija je država?

Sada, gde ovo ostavlja regionalne države? Srpski eko-pobunjenici su bili jasni da njihova glavna tačka sporenja nije sam Rio Tinto, već političari koji pomažu u njegovu korist. U spekulacijama o tajnim ugovorima između državnog vrha i kompanije, vladajuća partija je počela da se prikazuje kao glavni izdajnik. U ovoj logici, kapital bi možda želeo da kupi šta god želi, ali se u najmanju ruku očekuje da nacionalna država ne pretvara sredstva za život svojih građana u robu. Kako je jedan čovek iz sela u istočnoj Srbiji rekao novinaru, besan jer će ga rudnik raseliti: „Nisam ljut na Kineze koji su nas kupili. Imaju para, pa kupuju. Prilično sam ljut na čoveka koji me je prodao.“

Naravno, kapitalističke države sve vreme stavljaju na prodaju živote svojih građana. Ali zemlja i dalje zauzima centralno mesto u nacionalnoj moralnoj ekonomiji. Prateći E. P. Thompsona, ovde moralnu ekonomiju shvatam kao skup nepisanih obaveza koje vezuju dominantno i nad kojim se dominira, a koji održava određeni društveni sistem na mestu⁵. Nesumnjivo, upravo je zemljišno vlasništvo bilo u središtu takve državno-narodne veze u modernoj Srbiji': od vojvode Miloša koji je zemlju dao doseljenicima nakon što je stečena autonomija od Otomanskog carstva do mobilizacija u svetskim ratovima i jugoslovenskim sukobima koji, u svojim različitim ideološkim oblicima, svi su bili predstavljeni kao „spasavanje nečijeg ognjišta“ od osvajača. „Narod“ je konstruisan kao voljan da se pokori vladarima u borbi za zemlju, u zamenu za egzistenciju koja im je navodno zagarantovana posedovanjem zemlje. Učiniti drugačije znači izdati prečutni dogovor između vladara i vladajućih - države i njenih seljaka, generala i njegovih porodica vojnika, političara i njegovih glasača - i time državne predstavnike čini nelegitimnim.

Popularne optužbe za izdaju potresaju hegemoniju vladajućeg bloka, jer dovode u pitanje osnovnu pretpostavku suvereniteta na kojoj počivaju liberalne nacionalne države. Sa svoje strane, srpski predsednik je pokušao da odvrati takve kritike negirajući da je uzeo novac od kompanije, i simbolično se svrstavajući u stanovnike. Ali istovremeno je Vučić pokušao da posadi novu podelu. Stanovnici doline Jadra, tvrdi on, deluju u ime sebičnih interesa, potkopavajući potrebu zemlje za razvojem, a neki od njih voljno prodaju zemlju. Suočavajući one koji bi profitirali od rudnika protiv onih koji bi profitirali od njegovog ukidanja, Vučić ovde ukazuje na suštinsku dihotomiju koja stoji iza naizgled svenacionalnog odbacivanja projekta Jadar: sukob zemljoposjednika i bezzemljaša. Tako će u ne tako dalekoj budućnosti regionalna levica morati da izvuče sopstveni odgovor na pitanje kako da raspodeli zemlju.

⁵ Tompson, Edvard Palmer. (1971). Moralna ekonomija engleske gomile u osamnaestom veku. *Prošlost i sadašnjost*, (50): 76-136.

At an ecopopulist watershed

When faced with an inability to erase capitalist monopolies altogether, popular mobilizations can refrain to defending particular entitlements - one's own nation, one's own class, one's own eco-zone - a freedom for some that only becomes a privilege in the eyes of others, and, in turn, generates new forms of resentment. Currently, Balkan eco-movements are at precisely this populist watershed. On the one side of it we see attempts to restore past privileges, on the other we witness demands for expansive community-making. On the one side, we see national opposition against foreign capital - and on another a much more open fraternity of the oppressed. For the Green Left, it is crucial to recognize that it is the same 'people' that stand on *both* sides: the alliances are still in the making.

The ruling party in Serbia uses this ambiguity to pit one section of the resistance to the other one. Three years ago, the president Vučić blamed the river guardians for the increasing urban air pollution, which another group, *Eko-Straža*, mobilizes against. In response, the river guardian Aleksandar Panić declared that the president wants to 'set water against air'. Similarly, a suggestion to displace Rio Tinto's tailing pond to East Serbia was met by stark opposition by the activist in West Serbia: as Marija Alimpić from the initiative *Zaštitimo Jadar i Rađevinu* said, the livelihoods of Jadar valley cannot be saved by destroying someone else's. This consciousness of the externalities of resistance - saving my life might mean ruining another one's - is also present among those who say that we cannot reject lithium extraction in Serbia, while still using the cell phones sourced by African and Asian countries' child labour. And the water rights activist Iva Marković often frames the local environmental riots within wider Balkans's struggles over labour, women's subordination, and global climate justice. But such attempts to forge a trans-environmental solidarity, I suggest, only work when they create palpable bonds of reciprocal transactions between concrete groups. When not, and certain groups feel left off - as once East Serbian organisation felt omitted from a joint protest - they break off and form renegade cells.

As the Earth is no abstract place, any claim of abstract universality through "nature" necessarily fails. This is the ultimate lesson of ecopopulism: the defence of *life* unfolds only through the concrete *lives* and concrete, emplaced exchanges. In the future, the Green Left can either fully exchange itself with those it represents, or else be swallowed by the abstraction that both green capitalism and green nationalism create.



Na ekopopulističkoj vododelnici

Kada su suočene sa nemogućnošću potpunog brisanja kapitalističkih monopola, narodne mobilizacije mogu se uzdržati od odbrane određenih prava - sopstvene nacije, sopstvene klase, sopstvene eko-zone - sloboda za neke koja postaje privilegija samo u očima drugih, i, zauzvrat, generiše nove oblike ogorčenosti. Trenutno su balkanski eko-pokreti upravo na ovoj populističkoj vododelnici. S jedne strane vidimo pokušaje da se obnove privilegije iz prošlosti, a sa druge svedoci smo zahteva za ekspanzivnim stvaranjem zajednice. S jedne strane vidimo nacionalnu opoziciju stranom kapitalu - a sa druge mnogo otvorenije bratstvo potlačenih. Za Zelenu levicu, ključno je prepoznati da su isti „ljudi“ koji stoje na obe strane: savezi su još uvek u stvaranju.

Vladajuća stranka u Srbiji ovu nejasnoću koristi da jedan deo otpora suprotstavi drugom. Predsednik Vučić je pre tri godine okrivio čuvare reke za sve veće zagađenje urbanog vazduha, protiv čega se mobilise druga grupa, *Eko-Straža*. U odgovoru, rečni čuvar Aleksandar Panić je izjavio da predsednik želi da „namesti vodu protiv vazduha“. Slično tome, predlog da se Rio Tintovo jalovište izmesti u istočnu Srbiju naišao je na oštro protivljenje aktivistkinje u Zapadnoj Srbiji: kako je rekla Marija Alimpić iz inicijative *Zaštitimo Jadar i Rađevinu*, život doline Jadra ne može se spasiti uništavanjem tuđeg. Ova svest o spoljašnjosti otpora - spasavanje mog života može značiti i uništavanje drugog - prisutna je i među onima koji kažu da ne možemo da odbacimo ekstrakciju litijuma u Srbiji, a da i dalje koristimo mobilne telefone dečjeg rada afričkih i azijskih zemalja. A aktivistkinja za pravo na vodu Iva Marković često uokviruje lokalne ekološke nemire u okviru borbi šireg Balkana oko rada, podređenosti žena i globalne klimatske pravde. Ali takvi pokušaji da se stvori trans-ekološka solidarnost, predlažem, funkcionišu samo kada stvaraju opipljive veze recipročnih transakcija između konkretnih grupa. Kada nisu, a određene grupe se osećaju izostavljenim - kao što se nekada istočnosrpska organizacija osećala izostavljenom iz zajedničkog protesta - one se raskidaju i formiraju otpadničke ćelije.

Pošto Zemlja nije apstraktno mesto, svaka tvrdnja o apstraktnoj univerzalnosti kroz „prirodu“ nužno propada. Ovo je krajnja lekcija ekopopulizma: odbrana života odvija se samo kroz konkretne živote i konkretnu, uspostavljenu razmenu. U budućnosti, Zelena levica može ili da se u potpunosti razmeni sa onima koje predstavlja, ili da bude progutana apstrakcijom koju stvaraju i zeleni kapitalizam i zeleni nacionalizam.

What makes a good story? A compelling narrative, a powerful beginning, an interesting hook? The convincing and trustworthy messenger? The medium through which the story gets conveyed? The time of the day in which we become exposed to that story, or the resonance it creates within our memory and worldview? The answer to the question is probably intuitive, situated between the two clichés of “all of the above” and “it depends”. The famous speeches – Major Gavrilović’s (alleged) emphatic address in front of the defenders of Belgrade, Martin Luther King’s empowering “dream”, Emmeline Pankhurst’s resolute message for equal rights: were delivered not only by exceptional messengers but they also offer an emotion, a sense of purpose, an authentic promise of meaning to the forlorn soul. The messenger may be insincere, the emotion may be short-lived, but good stories are unavoidably ideological.

Take, for instance, the eco-populist stories that build common fronts for the protection of “the people” or environment from “them” – the elites and other perceived outsiders. In times of desperation, such as wars or other crises, they offer a sense of unity, situated behind the anti-political slogans against a dispossessing, hegemonic outsider. But these stories are also noticeably shallow, dependent on the least common denominator. Due to the circumstances in which we live, environment and land are often resembling this lowest denominator, the only thing ‘we’ can cling on to. Defining ‘us’ is an uneasy task, as this sentiment is shared across the ideological spectrum, from the left-leaning actors, commonly associated with socially progressive politics, to the tributaries of right-wing ideologies: conservatives, nationalists, populists, and (particularly) the far right – and everything in between.

Zooming in the latter, nexus of the right-wing and the environment is not just some pragmatic realization that this topic wins votes. The far reaching ‘roots’ (with an intended emphasis) of far-right ecogism, dating back to 19th century romanticism and organicism, urge us to understand that nostalgic mysticism may form a potent, mobilizing story. The rhetoric of the “living earth” and the appreciation of the local, home-grown soil as the source of authentic cultural values can be open to multiple and mutually conflicting ideations, including the far right. If that happens, the abovementioned frames are situated around the conceptual configurations of “purity” (not necessarily right) and “order” (very much right), often conveyed through binary (friend-foe, black-white) lenses. In this far-right ecogism, nature and the nation form an organism, implying that anything beyond this organism is



EMOTION, IDEOLOGIES, AND TRANSFORMING FAR-RIGHT ECOLOGIST TENDENCIES IN ECOLOGICAL ACTIVISM

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EMOCIJE, IDEOLOGIJE I TRANSFORMACIJA EKTREMNIH DESNIČARSKIH EKOLOŠKIH TENDENCIJA U EKOLOŠKI AKTIVIZAM



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Šta čini dobru priču? Neodoljiv narativ, snažan početak, zanimljive udice? Ubedljiv i pouzdan glasnik? Medij kojim se priča prenosi? Doba dana kada smo joj izloženi ili saglasje sa našim pamćenjem i pogledom na svet? Odgovor na pitanje je verovatno intuitivan, između dva klišea “sve pobrojano” i “zavisi”. Čuvane govore – obraćanje majora Gavrilovića braniocima Beograda, nadahnjujući “san” Martina Lutera Kinga, odlučna poruka Emeline Pankhurst za ista prava, izgovorili su ne samo izuzetni govornici, već su i emotivni, daju osećaj svrhe; autentično su obećanje svrhe usamljenoj duši. Glasnik može biti neiskren, emocija može biti kratka, ali dobre priče su neizbežno ideološke.

Uzmimo na primer ekopopulističke priče koje grade zajednički front za zaštitu naroda ili životne sredine od “njih” – elita i drugih koji se percipiraju kao stranci. U vreme očajanja, kao što su ratovi i krize, oni nude osećaj jedinstva, smešteni iza antipolitičkih slogana protiv otimača, hegemonističkog stranca. Ali ove priče su takođe primetno plitke zavisno od najmanjeg zajedničkog sadržaja. S obzirom na okolnosti u kojima živimo, životna sredina i zemlja često predstavljaju najmanji zajednički sadržalac; jednu stvar za koju možemo da se držimo. Definisati “nas” nije lak zadatak, jer je ovaj sentiment prisutan na celom ideološkom spektru, od levičarskih aktera, koji se uobičajeno dovode u vezu sa naprednim politikama, do desničara – konzervativaca, nacionalista, populista, i naročito ekstremnih desničara, kao i svega između.

Stavi li se pod lupu, veza između desnice i životne sredine nije tek neko pragmatično saznanje da ova tema donosi glasove. Dalekosežni „koreni” (s nameranim naglaskom) desničarskog ekologizma datiraju iz romantizma i organicizma 19. veka i teraju nas da razumemo da nostalgični misticizam može da obrazuje moćnu, mobilišuću priču. Retorika o “životnoj zemlji” i veličanje domaćeg tla kao izvora autentičnih kulturnih vrednosti, može biti otvorena za brojne i međusobno suprotstavljene ideje uključujući i ekstremno – desničarske. Ako se to dogodi, gore pomenuti okviri se postavljaju oko koncepcije “čistoće” (ne nužno tačno) i “reda” (veoma tačno) i saopštavaju kroz binarnu prizmu (prijatelj – neprijatelj, crno – belo). U ovakvom desničarskom ekologizmu, priroda i nacija tvore organizam, implicirajući da bilo šta izvan ovog organizma treba da bude ili potčinjeno ili isključeno. Zato ponekad bivaju nostalgični ili otvoreno revizionistički: kada političari i verske vođe lamentiraju nad [srpskim duhom u tamnici koja je sada okupirano Kosovo](#), mistična veza između ljudi, nacije i zemlje biva utkana u kolektivnoj mašti.

to be either subjugated or excluded. This is why they tend to be nostalgic or sometimes straightforwardly revisionist: when politicians and religious leaders lament [for the Serbian spirit stranded in the dungeon that is now "the occupied" Kosovo](#), the mystical relationship between the people, nation, and the land becomes embedded in the collective imaginary.

Overall, far-right ecologism, in The Balkans and beyond, can be reduced to two, mutually overlapping variations. One is the top-down, far-right ecologism coming from the far-right parties. The far right may have a limited number of seats in the national parliaments, but it nonetheless dictates the "hot topics" in a society through discursive provocations. For instance, the scandalous public appearances and statements, the "bad manner politics" or Šešeljičacija, all serve to flamboyantly percolate the abstraction that is "the public opinion". The far right takes pride in direct action, willingness to speak on behalf of the "silent majority" – when an ecological crisis becomes far too imminent, far right (ecologists) appear as willing to take matters into their own hands through direct action.

The other, arguably much broader and more insidious, is far-right ecologism as a set of ideas existing irrespective of party politics. This form can be taken up by environmental activists and non-nationalist politicians falling prey to the need to invoke a powerful emotional response, a good story. This often-well-intentioned rhetoric actually gives vent to justified frustrations but also the unjustified exclusions, leading to a slippery slope. For instance, the (over-or-under) population arguments developed under the pretext of environmental protection or the autarkic ideals of the "land (in)capable of sustaining the nation" may not appear straightforwardly fascist, but they bring about a volatile emotional and ideational context which often becomes too difficult to contain.

Far-right ecologist spectrum is also about "rational" or "yes, but" environmentalists, those who advocate for a balanced environmental protection, hence not disrupting the economic underpinnings. In fact, most of the right-wing parties in the Balkans are in favor of this status-quo environmentalism. At best, they evolve into the discourses of ecological modernization, offering a cornucopian imaginary of a technologically-advanced and self-dependent nation capable of addressing the ecological problems while not disrupting the economic growth. In the Western Balkans, this often amounts to the imaginaries of technologically-advanced "estonias".

However, there is a long way to go from these individual frames and emotional snippets to mature arguments, let alone stories in environmental politics. It is now quite clear that the far-right ecologism coming from the nationalists is not that well accepted in the Balkans. With a couple of notable exceptions, such as the activism of Serbian "Dveri", Bosnian Movement of the National Pride or ecofascist VK and Telegram groups, there does not seem to be much going on. Despite often resorting to direct action just like the far right, ecological movements in this region, mostly concerned about extractivism and the lack of transparency around the decision-making processes, were not eager to bring the far right on board. After all, why would anyone think that putting borders on nature is politically sensible? It is not that one can imagine there is something innately Montenegrin about a part of Prokletije? Would stopping pollution on the Serbian "side" of Danube put an end to the pollution in Romania? The answers to these questions may seem obvious,



Uopšte uzet, ekstremno desničarski ekologizam, na Balkanu i šire, može se svesti na dve varijante koje se međusobno preklapaju. Jedan je nametnut (top-down) ekstremno desni ekologizam koji potiče od ekstremno desničarskih partija. Ekstremna desnica može imati ograničen broj mesta u nacionalnim skupštinama, ali provokacijama nameće "vruće teme" u društvu. Na primer, skandalozni javni istupi i izjave, politika loših manira ili Šešeljičacija, sve služe da na veličanstven način prodru u apstrakciju – javno mnjenje. Ekstremna desnica se ponosi direktnom akcijom, spremnošću da govori u ime tihe većine – kad ekološka kriza postane neizbežna, ekstremno desničarski (ekolozi) se ističu kao voljni da uzmu stvari u svoje ruke kroz direktnu akciju.

Drugi je, širi i podmucliji, ekstremno desničarski ekologizam kao skup ideja koje postoje nezavisno od partijske politike. Ovaj oblik, mogu da pakupe eko aktivisti i nenacionalistički političari koji tako postaju plen potrebe da izazovu snažnu emocionalnu reakciju, dobru priču. Ova često dobronamerna retorika daje oduška opravdanim frustracijama, ali i neopravdanom isključivanju, navodeći na klizav teren. Na primer, argumenti o prenaseljenosti, odnosno o nedovoljno stanovništvu, razvijeni pod izgovorom zaštite životne sredine ili autarhičnih ideala o zemlji (ne) sposobnoj da održi naciju, možda se ne čine otvoreno fašističkim, ali donose nestabilni emocionalni i idejni kontekst koji se teško može obuzdati.

Ekstremno desničarski ekološki spektar je takođe o "racionalnom" ili "da, ali" aktivistima, onima koji zagovaraju uravnoteženu zaštitu životne sredine, neremeteći ekonomsku bazu. Zapravo, većina desničarskih partija na Balkanu su za status-quo environmentalizam. U najboljem slučaju, oni evoluiraju u diskurse ekološke modernizacije, nudeći kornukopijski imaginarijum tehnološki napredne i nacije oslonjene na sopstvene snage sposobne da rešava ekološke probleme ne remeteći ekonomski rast. Na zapadnom Balkanu, to obično podrazumeva slike tehnološki naprednih Estonija.

Pa, ipak, dug je put od ovih pojedinačnih okvira i emotivnih crtica do zrelih argumenata, a da ne govorimo o politikama zaštite životne sredine. Sada je sasvim jasno da ekstremno desničarski ekologizam koji potiče od nacionalista, nije tako dobro prihvaćen na Balkanu. Osim par upečatljivih izuzetaka, poput aktivizma srpskih Dveri, bosanskog Pokreta nacionalnog ponosa ili ekofašističkih VK i Telegram grupa, ne dešava se mnogo toga. Uprkos posezanja za direktnom akcijom kao što to čini i ekstremna desnica, ekološki pokreti u ovom regionu, uglavnom zabrinuti zbog ekstraktivizma i nedostatka transparentnosti procesa donošenja odluka, nisu voljni da uključe ekstremnu desnicu. Na kraju krajeva, zašto bi bilo ko pomislio da je ograničavanje prirode politički razborito? Nije da se može zamisliti da postoji nešto urođeno crnogorsko na delu Prokletija? Da li bi zaustavljanje zagađenja na srpskoj strani Dunava sprečilo zagađenje u Rumuniji? Odgovori na ova pitanja se mogu činiti očitim, ali ne smetimo s uma da se neke od najingenioznijih ideja u istoriji čovečanstva mogu svesti na apsurdno frejmovanje: nedavni izliv antivakser-skih stavova u ime "slobode da ubiješ" je dokaz poente. Ovaj retorički problem gde jedna priča potiskuje drugu bez obzira na utemeljenost na znanju, brišu granicu između dobrog i lošeg, istinitog i lažnog, nije dokaz da su priče prevaziđene ili da činjenice nisu važne. Uvek smo živeli u dobu priča i ekstremno desničarski ekologizam dokazuje da se može predstaviti na uznemirujuće razuman način npr. podržavajući lokalno i čišćenje smeća prvo iz svog dvorišta, jer statistike o upravljanju otpadom ne lažu.

but lest we forget that some of the most ingenious ideas in human history may be reduced to a silly framing: the recent outburst of anti-vaxx attitudes in the name of a "freedom to kill" is a case in point. This rhetorical conundrum where one story trumps another irrespective of the knowledge claims they make, eliding the boundary between the good or bad, true or false, is not a proof that stories are obsolete or that facts don't matter. We have always lived in the "age of stories", and far-right ecologism proves that it can be presented in a disquietly sensible manner, e.g., through fostering the local and taking "the rubbish" out of our backyards first because waste management stats don't lie!

While there seems to be not much to research on the end of far-right ecologism of parties, the impact of far-right ecologism as a set of ideas, stories, and underpinning emotions associated with environmental activism in the Western Balkans (and arguably elsewhere) that remains vastly underresearched. If standing up against the excavators and bulldozers which dig up the riverbed for the pipes to be inserted is going to be justified through a call for protecting "the land of the forefathers" (the "dedovina"), even the most progressive and anti-patriarchal among the ecological activists have little to object to here. The issues of framing become more amplified when the networks behind these slogans and emotions are unfolded. In other words, it is not only about a good (or a "bad") story, but also about the messengers and the consumers of these stories. This lesson is well-known to anyone who has seen the heartwarming pictures of puppies from the local shelter, only to find out that they had been posted by the [Serbian far-right organization called "Levijatan"](#) that takes pride in promoting animal welfare but also intimidating the Roma communities.

Where does one go from here? This piece is by no means a call for more "rational" environmentalisms, as (carefully) emotionally-loaded stories will always beat the crude facts. However, for a transformative change to happen, the restless work on the ground is to facilitate these emotions by carefully constructing the imaginaries associated with them. Easier said than done - what environmental activism should do is crack the path-dependent logic of our (post)transitional polities, and in so doing, it has to go beyond mere resentment by offer spaces for hope and deliberation against the widespread fatalism. But even this rejection of fatalism will not prevent some exclusionary and extreme voices. In the present absence of a major far-right ecologist force in the Balkans, dissenting this logic has to occur first in these small, deliberative spaces. One should not expect much from these interactions, as "converting" is hardly ever a consequence of a rational conversation. What these conversations can do, however, is prevent prospective polarizations within the ecological movement which may significantly water down its future potential. And the future of ecologism and the life on our planet will be emotional and ideological, much like putting a price tag on the rivers and canyons of The Balkans is a bit too much even for the most stultified among us.



Logo of „Ne damo dedovinu“, an initiative led by Bratislav Simović, presidential candidate of the far-right „Dveri“ in Serbia (Source: Facebook)

Dok izgleda da nema šta mnogo da se istražuje u domenu ekstremno desničarskih ekološkog partija, uticaj ekstremno desničarskog ekološkog kao set ideja, priča i emocija povezanih sa aktivizmom u oblasti zaštite životne sredine na zapadnom Balkanu (a izvesno moguće i drugde) ostaje pretežno neistražen. Ako će stajanje pred bagere i buldožere koji iskopavaju rečno korito radi postavljanja cevi biti opravdano pozivom na zaštitu zemlje predaka (dedovine), čak ni najprogresivniji i anti patrijarhalni među ekološkim aktivistima nemaju mnogo čemu da prigovore. Problemi frejminga postaju naglašeniji, kada se mreže iza ovih slogana i emocija raspletu. Drugačije rečeno, nije samo do dobre ili loše priče, već i do glasnika i konzumenata ovih priča. Lekcija je dobro poznata svakome ko je video srceparajuće slike kuca iz prihvatilišta, samo da bi kasnije saznao da ih je objavila Srpska ekstremna desničarska organizacija Levijatan koja se ponosi promovisanjem dobrobiti životinja, ali i zastrašivanjem romskih zajednica.

Kuda dalje? Ovaj tekst nipošto nije poziv za racionalnije ekologizme, jer će pažljivo osmišljene priče sa emotivnim nabojem uvek pobediti sirove činjenice. Ipak, kako bi se dogodila transformacija, neumoran rad na terenu mora da odneguje ove emocije pažljivo gradeći slike povezane s njima. Lakše je reći nego učiniti da ekoaktivizam treba da probije logiku zavisnosti post-tranzicionih politika i pritom mora otići dalje od ogorčenosti na način što će ponuditi prostore nade i za diskusiju nasuprot široko rasprostranjenog fatalizma. Ali čak ni ovo odbacivanje fatalizma neće sprečiti neke isključive i ekstremne glasove. Pri trenutnom nepostojanju značajne ekstremno desničarske ekološke sile na Balkanu, suprotstavljanje ovakvoj logici se najpre mora dogoditi u ovim malim deliberativnim prostorima. Ne treba mnogo očekivati od ovih interakcija, jer preobraženje gotovo nikada nije posledica racionalnog razgovora. Ono što pak ovi razgovori mogu, jeste da spreče polarizaciju perspektiva u okviru ekološkog pokreta, a koje mogu značajno da razvodne njegov budući potencijal. I budućnost ekološkog i života na našoj planeti će biti i emocionalna i ideološka, baš kao što je prodaje reka i klisura Balkana previše čak i za najapatičnije među nama.

Sve navedeno nije argument da je radikalizacija jedini put ka ideološkom buđenju. Moguće da nije ni poželjna. Radikalne politike, uključujući i ekološke, su postale modni izraz – primeri greenwashing-a od strane velikih zagađivača u regionu i multinacionalnih korporacija su samo smetnja plemenitim ciljevima zelenih politika. Još jedan, jednako zabrinjavajući pravac je biti previše radikalni i previše fokusiran na emocionalnu privlačnost bez promišljanja dugoročnih strategija i alternativa mantri da projekti uništavaju životnu sredinu. Kako je Zigmunt Bauman jednom primetio, trenutna rešenja, bez obzira koliko izuzetna i smela bila, suštinski su konzervativna. U najboljem slučaju, nude kratkoročnu nadu, skelet koji čeka da bude ispunjen dodatnom vrednošću. Promena vrednosti zahteva vreme, pa se pomalja kao rezultat svog napornog rada utkanog u stvaranje mreža i geografije nade. Zatvaranje građanskog prostora i projektna logika postupaka u poluautoritarnim stabilokratijama zapadnog Balkana, oslabila je potencijal nekih od najboljih priča, jer su često izjednačene sa praznim obećanjima.

This all is not to argue that radicalization is the only pathway to an ideological awakening either. It may possibly not even be the desirable one. Radical politics, including environmental movements, have become a fashion statement – the greenwashing examples from the big regional polluters and international corporations are already a hindrance to the noble goals green politics. Another, equally worrisome caveat is being “too radical” and overfocused on the emotional appeal, without thinking through the long-term strategies and alternatives to the mantra of “development projects” destroying the environment. As Zygmunt Bauman once noted, instant solutions, regardless of how extraordinary and bold they may be, are essentially conservative. At best, they offer a short-lived hope, a skeleton waiting to be filled with added value. The change in values takes time, emerging as a product of all the hard work put into the creation of networks and geographies of hope. The foreclosing of civic space and the project-based logic of operations in semi-authoritarian “stabilocracies” of the Western Balkans has weakened the potential of some of the best “stories”, as these were, more often than not, equated with empty promises.

It is here that one should be looking for a response to what a non-exclusionary, “good story” is. A promise delivered, a transformation through small steps, situated on what is out there, all while keeping in mind (and negotiating) the utopias. In the Balkans but also elsewhere in Europe, these utopias are found on the broad terrain of ethnoecologies, nostalgia, traditions and “dedovinas” on one, but also our common, intersectional and just future for everyone on the other hand. Ideologies flesh out that future by bringing some of the very abstract ideas closer to their “consumers” through – none other than emotionally-loaded stories. Much as ecologism is often conceived of as this meta- ideology that somehow transcends the existing political polarizations by appealing to our common interests and emotions, it is high time to realize that such a realization can be temporal at best: a non-political (environmental) alliance is a myth. What is needed instead are deep frames carried by powerful stories and strong emotions. But deep frames do not imply grand, empty dreams, but also attainable, short-term goals. They can be, as the author of this piece suggests, non-hierarchical, starting from (and possibly ending with) local solutions, but they can also be conservative: the story of prudence and responsibility with respect to nature should have its voice in the environmental struggle, in The Balkans and elsewhere. Ignoring tradition, local activities and the responsibility towards “our children” (as patriarchal as it sometimes sounds) is doomed to fail in the countries heavily dependent on the narratives of political messianism and social conservatism. What is a must though, is that these conservative and all other stories are to be purged of anti-humanist wet-dreams of a Blood-and-Soil, homogenic nation-as-container. For this to be avoided, our imaginary needs to be not only focused on the long term futures, but tangible promises of a short-term, gradual, and more inclusive change. A promise we all have to depart from – and deliver on.

Ovde treba tražiti odgovor na pitanje šta je neisključiva dobra priča. Ispunjeno obećanje, promena kroz male korake, zasnovana na postojećem i sve to dok se imaju na umu utopije (i pregovara se o njima). Na Balkanu, ali i drugde u Evropi, ove utopije su utemeljene na širokom polju etnoekologije, nostalgije, tradicije i „dedovine“ na jednoj, ali i našoj zajedničkoj, isprepletanoj i pravедnoj budućnosti, s druge strane. Ideologije nam pružaju uvid u tu budućnost na taj način što približavaju svojim „sledbenicima“ vrlo apstraktne ideje upravo kroz priče pune emotivnog naboja. Veliki deo ekologizma se često koncipira kao ova meta-ideologija koja nekako prevazilazi postojeće političke podele obraćajući se zajedničkim interesima i osećanjima, krajnje je vreme da se shvati da je to, u najboljem slučaju, privremenog karaktera: nepolitički ekološki savez je mit. Ono što je potrebno su duboki okviri koje nose snažne priče i emocije. Ali duboki okviri ne impliciraju velike, prazne snove, već i ostvarive, kratkoročne ciljeve. Oni mogu biti, kako autor ovog teksta nalazi, nehijerarhijski, počevši od (i verovatno završavajući se na) lokalnim rešenjima, ali takođe mogu biti konzervativni: priča o mudrosti i odgovornosti uz poštovanje prirode trebalo bi da ima svoj glas u ekološkoj borbi na Balkanu i drugde. Ignorisanje tradicije, lokalnih aktivnosti i odgovornost prema “našoj deci” (koliko god to patrijarhalno zvučalo) osuđeno je na propast u zemljama koje su vrlo zavisne od narativa političkog mesijanizma i društvenog konzervativizma. Ono što je neophodno je da se ove konzervativne i sve druge priče očiste antihumanističkih snova o krvi i tlu homogene nacije. Kako bi se ovo izbeglo, naša mašta mora biti usmerena ne samo na daleku budućnost, već i na opipljiva obećanja postupne, inkluzivnije promene u kratkom roku. Obećanje od kojeg svi moramo da krenemo - i ispunimo ga.



May (be) we live in interesting times. From the left margins of society, public health suddenly becomes the common interest of various traditionally opposed political stances globally. The global health crisis accelerated pre-existing trends, such as digitalization, environmental degradation, and rising inequality. The effects of the pandemic have exacerbated all the inequalities in society, with those already living in poverty being the worst affected. And yet, by exposing the faults of highly professionalized health systems of rich countries - such as the Northern Italian region of Lombardia (the region with the second-highest GDP in Europe with EUR 399 billion), the global pandemic created interest and opportunities for growth and transformation of the concept and financing of the health systems in most of the European countries - toward the sustainable public health.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has put Europe's health systems under unprecedented strain and exposed their vulnerability to shocks. The pandemic has highlighted the interconnectivity of health, social and economic systems and the need for a more integrated approach to policy-making. Addressing these challenges requires more than an isolated discipline consultancy-based health-expert approach. While different countries have had varying experiences in dealing with the pandemic, it is clear that a coherent inter-sectional dialogue and the supranational strategy in public health is needed to ensure global health system resilience and sustainability in the future.

All the public health, green or leftist activists, surely were surprised with the final report or even the initiation of the Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development - led by former Italian Prime Minister Professor Mario Monti and consisted of health experts from across the European Region, to reflect faults of the global response to COVID-19, seeking responsibility and/or answers for over the 1.2 million deaths in the WHO European Region alone at the time (September 2021).

The final report presented in Copenhagen in September 2021, following the Call to Action issued in March 2021, summarises the lessons learned from different countries' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, drawing on the experiences of health leaders from 16 countries, providing recommendations on how to improve the resilience of health systems, including recommendations on investments in public health and health systems, governance, research, and data collection.

Public Health in interesting times:

CAN WE EXPECT A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF GLOBAL HEALTH?

Marija Ratković
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Education BIOPOLIS



Javno zdravlje u zanimljivim vremenima:

MOŽEMO LI OČEKIVATI ODRŽIVU BUDUĆNOST GLOBALNOG ZDRAVLJA?

Marija Ratković
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Verujem da živimo u zanimljivim vremenima. Sa leve margine društva, javno zdravlje odjednom postaje zajednički interes različitih tradicionalno suprotstavljenih političkih stavova širom sveta. Globalna zdravstvena kriza ubrzala je postojeće trendove, kao što su digitalizacija, degradacija životne sredine i rastuća nejednakost. Posledice pandemije su pogoršale sve nejednakosti u društvu, a najviše su pogođeni oni koji već žive u siromaštvu. Pa ipak, razotkrivanjem grešaka visokoprofesionalizovanih zdravstvenih sistema bogatih zemalja - kao što je severnoitalijanska regija Lombardia (region sa drugim najvećim BDP-om u Evropi sa 399 milijardi evra), globalna pandemija je stvorila interesovanje i prilike za rast i transformaciju koncepta i finansiranja zdravstvenih sistema u većini evropskih zemalja - ka održivom javnom zdravlju.

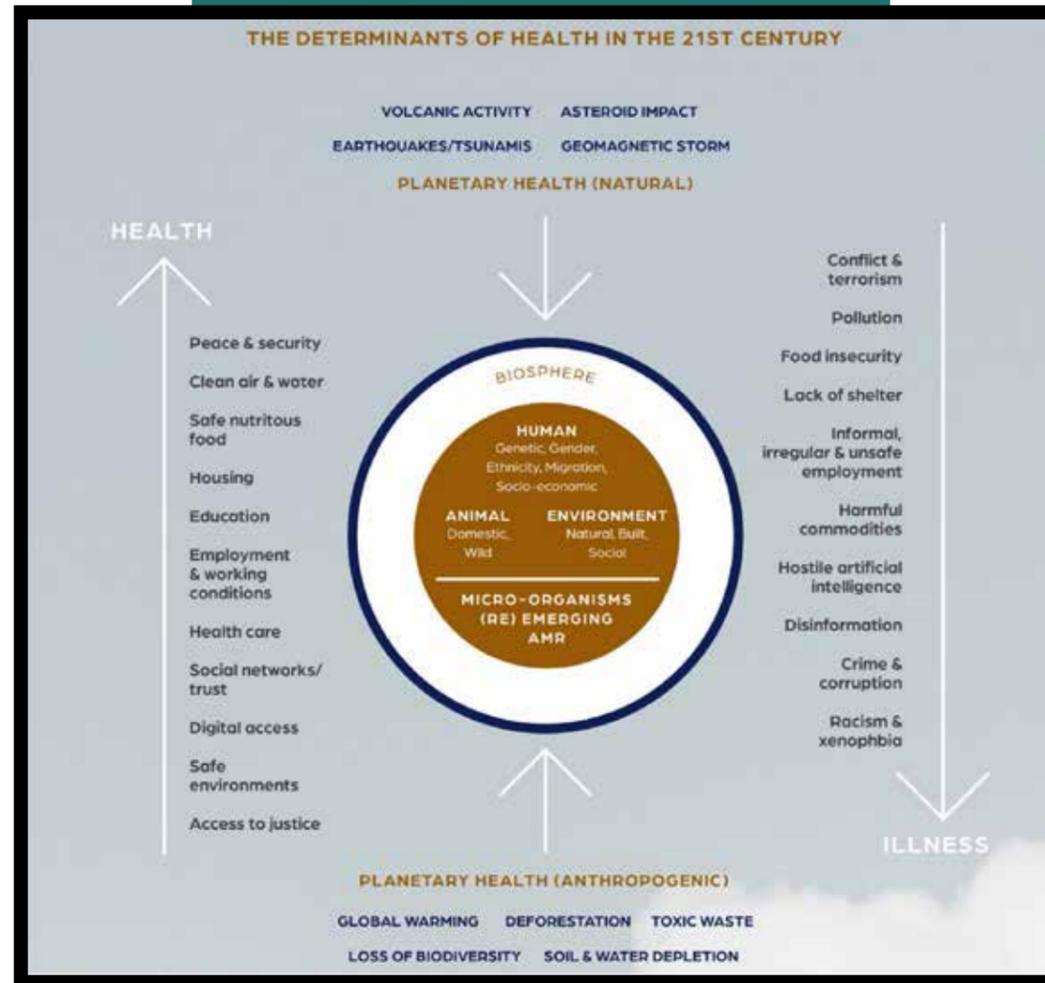
Širenje COVID-19 stavilo je evropske zdravstvene sisteme pod neviđeno opterećenje i izložilo njihovu ranjivost različitim udarima. Pandemija je istakla međusobnu povezanost zdravstvenih, društvenih i ekonomskih sistema i potrebu za integrisanijim pristupom kreiranju politike. Rešavanje ovih izazova zahteva više od izolovanog pristupa zasnovanog na savetovanju stručnjaka za zdravlje. Dok različite zemlje imaju različita iskustva u suočavanju sa pandemijom, jasno je da je potreban koherentan međusektorski dijalog i nadnacionalna strategija u javnom zdravlju kako bi se osigurala otpornost i održivost globalnog zdravstvenog sistema u budućnosti.

Svi aktivisti za javno zdravlje, zeleni ili levičarski, sigurno su bili iznenađeni konačnim izveštajem ili čak pokretanjem Panevropske komisije za zdravlje i održivi razvoj - koju je predvodio bivši italijanski premijer profesor Mario Monti i koju su činili zdravstveni stručnjaci iz celog evropskog regiona, da bi se adresirale greške globalnog odgovora na COVID-19, tražeći odgovornost i/ili odgovore za preko 1,2 miliona smrtnih slučajeva samo u Evropskom regionu SZO u to vreme (septembar 2021).

Konačni izveštaj predstavljen u Kopenhagenu u septembru 2021. godine, nakon poziva na akciju objavljenog u martu 2021. sumira lekcije naučene iz odgovora različitih zemalja na pandemiju COVID-19, oslanjajući se na iskustva zdravstvenih lidera iz 16 zemalja, pružajući preporuke o tome kako poboljšati otpornost zdravstvenih sistema, uključujući preporuke o ulaganjima u javno zdravlje i zdravstvene sisteme, upravljanje, istraživanje i prikupljanje podataka.

The Commission's findings indicate that countries with strong national institutions, effective governance arrangements, and public services – underpinned by robust investments in health and social care – have better managed the crisis than those with weaker governance arrangements. The report also shows that well-resourced communities played a key role in supporting people in need, preventing people from falling through the cracks, and ensuring an effective response to local needs.

Source: The [final report](#) presented in Copenhagen in September 2021 >>>



<<< Izvor: Završni izveštaj predstavljen u Kopenhagenu u septembru 2021

Sustainable Health as Pan European mutual interest: Has it come to this?

The virus attacked countries at different times and in different ways, exposing a range of weaknesses in national health care systems. Even though the health systems struggled to manage the clinical and financial consequences of COVID-19, we all witnessed the crash of the richest region of Italy - Northern Italy. In this summary, we will compare the Covid-19 response for three different cases as carefully differentiated in a scientific article: Northern Italy (central Europe, high positives, high deaths), Germany (central Europe, high positives, low deaths), and Greece (south Europe, low positives, low deaths).

Source: COVID-19 in Northern Italy: An integrative overview of factors possibly influencing the sharp increase of the outbreak, Published online 2020 Apr 16. doi: 10.3892/mmr.2020.11079 >>>

Comparison of factors relevance among Northern Italy, Germany, and Greece.

Factor	Northern Italy	Germany	Greece
Population density ^a	++	++	++
Age-distribution	+++	+++	+++
Smoking	+	++	+++
Physical activity and Population health index	++	++	++
In-door social life	++	++	+
Family habits	++	+	+++
Environmental factors	+++	+	++
Administrative organisation, bias, and bureaucracy	+++	NA	-
The collapse of the health system	+++	-	-
Testing strategy	++	NA	++

^aReferring to urban areas. +, low relevance; ++, medium relevance; +++, high relevance; NA, not analysed.

Održivo zdravlje kao panevropski zajednički interes: da li je došlo do ovoga?

Virus je napao zemlje u različito vreme i na različite načine, otkrivajući niz slabosti u nacionalnim zdravstvenim sistemima. Iako su se zdravstveni sistemi borili da upravljaju kliničkim i finansijskim posledicama COVID-19, svi smo bili svedoci kraha najbogatijeg regiona Italije - severne Italije. U ovom rezimeu upoređićemo odgovor na Covid-19 za tri različita slučaja koja su pažljivo diferencirana u naučnom članku: Severna Italija (centralna Evropa, veliki broj pozitivnih, veliki broj smrtnih slučajeva), Nemačka (centralna Evropa, visoki pozitivni, mali broj smrtnih slučajeva) i Grčka (južna Evropa, mali broj pozitivnih, mali broj smrtnih slučajeva).

<<< Izvor: COVID-19 u Severnoj Italiji: integrativni pregled faktora koji bi mogli uticati na nagli porast epidemije, objavljeno na mreži 16. aprila 2020. doi: 10.3892/mmr.2020.11079

Northern Italy - The Rich also Cry

Northern Italy was the first European case with more than 10,000 positives. Italy's health system and its response to the Covid-19 outbreak is a perfect case study on the importance of sustainable public health. Italy first reported Covid-19 cases on February 21st, 2020. By March 11th, they had over 9,000 cases, more than anywhere else in the world outside of China. As of April 5th, there are over 95,000 cases and 10,000 deaths in Italy alone (WHO). The crisis has led to an overwhelming response from the Italian government that has included a nationwide lockdown for all citizens, with exceptions for emergencies and essential workers. However, despite these measures, the country continues to experience a shortage of medical resources needed to address this crisis. The Italian government did not take the necessary measures to control the spread of Covid-19 in time. It was too slow to react and take action. The very low levels of public spending on health (about 5.5 percent of GDP) and the weight of out-of-pocket expenses (about 20% of total expenditures, with a constant increase in recent years) have made it impossible to adequately face the emergency. The general practitioner network is also obsolete, consisting mainly of small medical practices, poorly equipped and understaffed, which do not allow for adequate clinical management and remote monitoring, nor a vertically integrated care model between the different levels of patient care. The lack of a valid organizational model for local health services able to integrate vertical and horizontal clinical pathways. As a result, the northern region of Italy is considered the most devastated area in Europe with more than 20,000 dead people.

Summary of the health system breakdown in Northern Italy would include the following:

- (1) The underinvestment in public health. The country spends (summary of public, private, and out-of-pocket) from 8.7% in 2019 to 9.7% in 2020 percent of its GDP on health care, which is just below the OECD average;
- (2) Gaps in public health and social care services;
- (3) The lack of government response to the COVID-19 pandemic in its early stages;
- (4) Age distribution, health state, and population health index (PHI) - Italy's high proportion of elderly citizens and the existence of comorbidities increase the risk of mortality has been hit particularly hard by the virus;
- (5) The lack of testing and the late implementation of quarantine measures, and
- (6) The lack of resources and hospital beds and intensive care units (ICU/ICCU) to deal with the crisis.



Severna Italija: I bogati plaču

Severna Italija je bila prvi evropski slučaj sa više od 10.000 pozitivnih. Italijanski zdravstveni sistem i njegov odgovor na epidemiju Covid-19 je savršena studija slučaja o važnosti održivog javnog zdravlja. Italija je prvi put prijavila slučajeve Covid-19 21. februara 2020. Do 11. marta imala je preko 9.000 slučajeva, više nego bilo gde u svetu van Kine. Od 5. aprila, samo u Italiji (SZO) ima preko 95.000 slučajeva i 10.000 smrtnih slučajeva. Kriza je dovela do širokog odgovora italijanske vlade koji je uključivao karantin širom zemlje za sve građane, sa izuzecima za hitne slučajeve i tzv. neophodne radnike. Međutim, uprkos ovim merama, zemlja i dalje ima nedostatak medicinskih resursa potrebnih za rešavanje ove krize. Italijanska vlada nije na vreme preduzela neophodne mere da kontroliše širenje Covid-19. Veoma nizak nivo javne potrošnje na zdravstvo (oko 5,5 odsto BDP-a) i veliki troškovi koji građani sami plaćaju (oko 20% ukupnih rashoda, uz konstantno povećanje poslednjih godina) onemogućili su adekvatno suočavanje sa vanrednom situacijom. Mreža lekara opšte prakse je takođe zastarela, sastoji se uglavnom od malih medicinskih ordinacija, loše opremljenih i sa nedovoljno osoblja, koje ne dozvoljavaju adekvatno kliničko upravljanje i daljinsko praćenje, niti vertikalno integrisan model nege između različitih nivoa nege pacijenata. Nedostatak adekvatnog organizacionog modela za lokalne zdravstvene službe koje bi mogle da integrišu vertikalne i horizontalne kliničke puteve. Kao rezultat toga, severni region Italije smatra se najrazorenijim područjem u Evropi sa više od 20.000 mrtvih ljudi.

Rezime sloma zdravstvenog sistema u severnoj Italiji bi uključivao sledeće:

- (1) Nedovoljno ulaganje u javno zdravlje. Zemlja troši (sažetak javnih, privatnih i sopstvenih sredstava) od 8,7% u 2019. do 9,7% u 2020. godini na zdravstvenu zaštitu, što je malo ispod proseka OECD-a;
- (2) Nedostaci u javnom zdravstvu i uslugama socijalne zaštite;
- (3) Nedostatak vladinog odgovora na pandemiju COVID-19 u njenim ranim fazama;
- (4) Starosna distribucija, zdravstveno stanje i indeks zdravlja stanovništva (PHI) – visok udeo starijih građana u Italiji i postojanje komorbiditeta povećava rizik od smrtnosti posebno teško pogođen virusom;
- (5) nedostatak testiranja i zakasnelo sprovođenje karantinskih mera, i
- (6) Nedostatak resursa i bolničkih kreveta i jedinica intenzivne nege (ICU/ICCU) za suočavanje sa krizom.

Germany - benefits of the mutual trust

The German administration had a different approach and strategy against Covid-19 than Italy. Germany's public health system is decentralized, with a universal multi-payer health care system, which means that most decisions are taken by the federal legislature. It provided a legal framework for protecting the population from epidemics. The details of how the regulations are implemented are decided by the states, on the local level. Germany took strong and effective measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 starting very early on in March 2020. The federal government has been in charge of coordinating efforts through the Robert Koch Institute (RKI). Local communities, such as neighborhood associations, also played a role in efforts to contain the virus early on. The government acted quickly to close borders, impose quarantines and ban large gatherings – including soccer matches – when it realized how dangerous Covid-19 was. People were quarantined in their homes for about two months, with some exceptions such as grocery shopping and walking/running outside for at least 2 hours per day. Public health measures in Germany relied on a strong testing system from the beginning and still perform more tests per capita than most countries. Because Germany has universal health care, anyone can be tested for free if they have symptoms or suspect they have been exposed to someone infected with Covid-19. There were no curfews or police controls on roads or streets. However, people who were tested positive for Covid-19 were asked to quarantine for two weeks separately from other family members and friends at home or another place provided by the government with food, etc... Germany has also used its wealth and financial strength to fund research into therapies and vaccines while providing other countries with medical supplies.

The German administration approach and strategy against Covid-19 can be summarized as:

- (1) No general lockdown but social distancing, self-responsibility, and self-protection;
- (2) A massive testing strategy and an effective contact tracing system including the use of IT tools;
- (3) A lockdown carefully used to reduce the number of infections sustainably - protect the elderly and vulnerable groups;
- (4) A herd immunity concept among young people by letting them continue to meet, work and socialize, and
- (5) Trusting the population to follow safety guidelines and to show solidarity with the promise of a return to normal life.



Nemačka - koristi od uzajamnog poverenja

Nemačka administracija je imala drugačiji pristup i strategiju protiv pandemije Covid-19 od Italije. Nemački javni zdravstveni sistem je decentralizovan, sa univerzalnim sistemom zdravstvene zaštite sa više strana koje ga finansiraju, što znači da većinu odluka donosi savezno zakonodavstvo. On je obezbedio pravni okvir za zaštitu stanovništva od epidemije. O detaljima o tome kako se propisi sprovode odlučuju države, na lokalnom nivou. Nemačka je preduzela snažne i efikasne mere za sprečavanje širenja Covid-19 počevši veoma rano u martu 2020. Savezna vlada je bila zadužena za koordinaciju napora preko Instituta Robert Koh (RKI). Lokalne zajednice, kao što su susedska udruženja, takođe su igrale ulogu u naporima da se virus obuzda rano. Vlada je brzo reagovala da zatvori granice, uvede karantin i zabrani velika okupljanja – uključujući fudbalske utakmice – kada je shvatila koliko je Covid-19 opasan. Ljudi su bili u karantinu u svojim domovima oko dva meseca, sa nekim izuzecima kao što su kupovina namirnica i šetnja/trčanje napolju najmanje 2 sata dnevno. Mere javnog zdravlja u Nemačkoj su se od početka oslanjale na snažan sistem testiranja i još uvek obavljaju više testova po glavi stanovnika nego većina zemalja. Pošto Nemačka ima univerzalnu zdravstvenu zaštitu, svako može da se testira besplatno ako ima simptome ili sumnja da je bio izložen nekome zaraženom Covid-19. Nije bilo policijskog časa ili policijske kontrole na putevima ili ulicama. Međutim, ljudi koji su bili pozitivni na Covid-19 zamoljeni su da budu u karantinu na dve nedelje odvojeno od drugih članova porodice i prijatelja kod kuće ili na drugom mestu koje je vlada obezbedila hranom, itd... Nemačka je takođe iskoristila svoje bogatstvo i finansijsku snagu da finansiraju istraživanja o terapijama i vakcinama dok drugim zemljama obezbeđuju medicinski materijal.

Pristup i strategija nemačke administracije protiv Covid-19 mogu se sažeti na sledeći način:

- (1) Bez opšteg zatvaranja, već socijalno distanciranje, samoodgovornost i samozaštita;
- (2) Masivna strategija testiranja i efikasan sistem praćenja kontakata uključujući korišćenje IT alata;
- (3) Zaključak pažljivo korišćen za održivo smanjenje broja infekcija – zaštita starijih i ranjivih grupa;
- (4) Koncept imuniteta krda među mladima tako što će im se omogućiti da nastave da se sastaju, rade i druže, i
- (5) Poverenje da će stanovništvo slediti bezbednosne smernice i pokazati solidarnost sa obećanjem povratka normalnom životu.

Greece - unexpected wonder from the margins

Greece, at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, was considered a country in which the virus could spread rapidly. It has very high levels of population density, a high level of tourism, and a large elderly population. However, Greece has managed to control the spread of the coronavirus effectively with no lockdown and only one death. After the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak in Greece (the first case was confirmed on 26 February 2020 and the first death occurred on 10 March 2020.), the Greek authorities put into action a national lockdown with strict measures that were even stricter than the ones in other EU countries and the USA. In addition, Greece started a very early track and trace approach (even before the European Union guidelines). As a result, Greece has managed to keep its positive cases percentage at 0.5% and its deaths percentage at 0.7%. The whole crisis management in Greece was done on time, with transparent communication to the public, with all governmental decisions and actions being communicated through daily briefings of government officials. The responsible medical staff as part of those briefings too, while they also gave their daily briefing. Their main aim was to keep the Greek public informed about what was going on and what the next steps would be. The public health system of Greece is free for all citizens and permanent residents of Greece, providing both primary care and hospital care for all kinds of diseases.

Greece's success against Covid-19 can be attributed to:

- (1) Early response from the Greek government;
- (2) Early lockdown (strict measures) nationwide;
- (3) Early track and trace approach by health officials;
- (4) Free healthcare for everyone, and
- (5) Transparent communications from the government to the public;

Connecting the dots: Toward the Sustainable Future

First, we must fully recognize the interconnections between the health of humans, animals, plants and the planet – environment, biodiversity and climate above all. But, secondly, the resulting One Health policy, in turn, needs not only to be operationally implemented but also to be intimately integrated into a wider and coherent policy framework, comprising in particular economic and financial, technological, social, and international policies. We then articulate the proposed new strategy into a number of recommended actions involving the national, pan-European, and global levels. — Mario Monti, Chair of the Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development

The main public health policy failures drawn as the conclusions from these three case studies include failures in protecting frontline health workers, shortages of critical medical supplies and equipment, insuffi-



Grčka - neočekivano čudo sa margine

Grčka je na početku pandemije korona virusa smatrana zemljom u kojoj bi se virus mogao brzo širiti. Ima veoma visok nivo gustine naseljenosti, visok nivo turizma i veliki broj starijeg stanovništva. Međutim, Grčka je uspela da efikasno kontroliše širenje koronavirusa bez izolacije i samo jedne smrti. Nakon izbijanja pandemije Covid-19 u Grčkoj (prvi slučaj potvrđen je 26. februara 2020., a prvi smrtni slučaj 10. marta 2020.), grčke vlasti su uvele nacionalnu blokadu sa strožim merama koje su bile čak i strože od onih u drugim zemljama EU i SAD. Pored toga, Grčka je vrlo rano započela pristup praćenju i pronalaženju (čak i pre smernica Evropske unije). Kao rezultat toga, Grčka je uspela da zadrži svoj procenat pozitivnih slučajeva na 0,5%, a procenat smrtnih slučajeva na 0,7%. Celokupno upravljanje kriznim situacijama u Grčkoj je obavljeno na vreme, uz transparentnu komunikaciju prema javnosti, a sve vladine odluke i radnje su saopštavane kroz dnevne brifinge vladinih zvaničnika. U sklopu ovih brifinga i odgovorno medicinsko osoblje, a takođe su davali svoj dnevni brifing. Njihov glavni cilj je bio da grčku javnost obavestavaju o tome šta se dešava i koji će biti sledeći koraci. Javni zdravstveni sistem Grčke je besplatan za sve građane i stalne stanovnike Grčke, pružajući primarnu i bolničku zaštitu za sve vrste bolesti.

Uspeh Grčke u borbi protiv Covid-19 može se pripisati:

- (1) Ranom odgovoru grčke vlade;
- (2) Rano zatvaranje (stroge mere) širom zemlje;
- (3) Rano praćenje i praćenje pristupa zdravstvenih službenika;
- (4) Besplatna zdravstvena zaštita za sve, i
- (5) Transparentna komunikacija vlade sa javnošću;

Povezivanje tačaka: ka održivoj budućnosti

Prvo, moramo u potpunosti prepoznati međusobne veze između zdravlja ljudi, životinja, biljaka i planete – životne sredine, biodiverziteta i klime iznad svega. Ali, drugo, rezultujuća politika „Jedno zdravlje“, za uzvrat, treba ne samo da bude operativno sprovedena, već i da bude prisno integrisana u širi i koherentni okvir politike, koji se posebno sastoji od ekonomske i finansijske, tehnološke, socijalne i međunarodne politike. Zatim artikulišemo predloženu novu strategiju u niz preporučenih akcija koje uključuju nacionalni, panevropski i globalni nivo. — Mario Monti, predsednik Panevropske komisije za zdravlje i održivi razvoj

Glavni promašaji politike javnog zdravlja izvučeni kao zaključci iz ove tri studije slučaja uključuju neuspehe u zaštiti zdravstvenih radnika na prvoj liniji borbe, nestašice kritičnih medicinskih zaliha i opreme, nedovoljno testiranje i praćenje kontakata, ograničen kapacitet bolnica i jedinica intenzivne nege (ICU), sporo reagovanje od organa za javno zdravstvo,

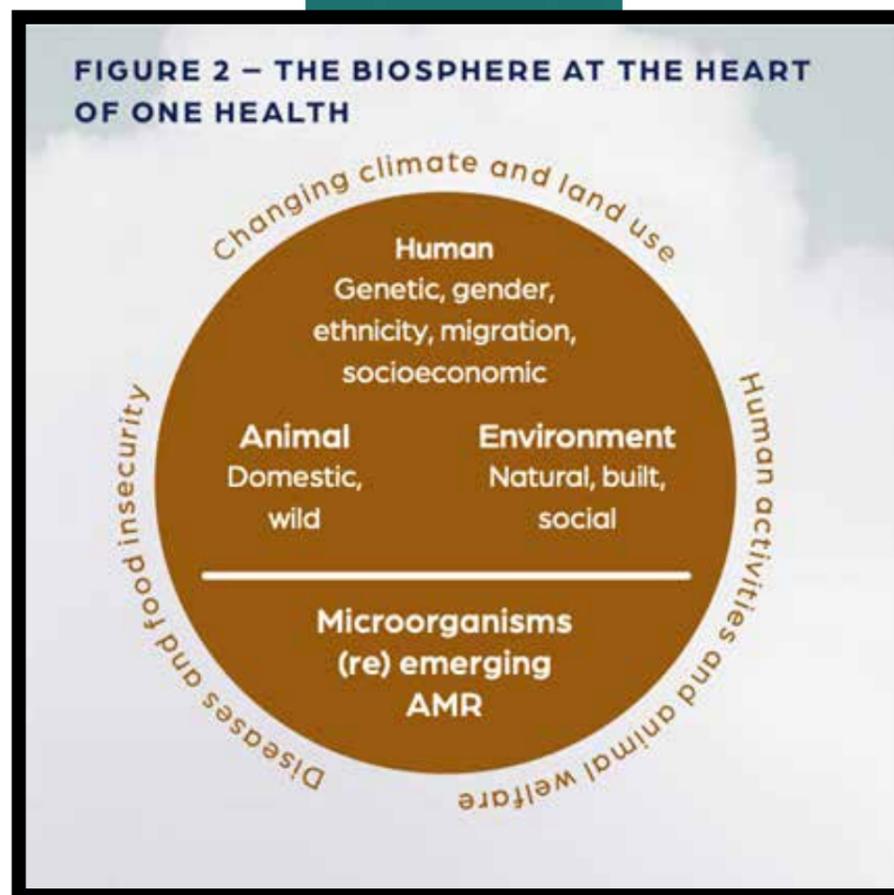
cient testing and contact tracing, limited hospital capacity and intensive care units (ICUs), slow response from public health authorities, misinformed policymakers and a lack of public trust. Furthermore, if we take a closer look at healthcare systems in European countries - we could trace a general decline in public health features in favor of an individualistic patient-centered system of isolated general practitioners ambulances unable to give an adequate response to the pandemic. It is no wonder that The Pan-European Commission on Health and Sustainable Development, an independent and interdisciplinary group of leaders convened by Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, the Regional Director of WHO/Europe, asks world leaders to rethink policy priorities in the light of pandemics. The summary of the recommendations are broadly tied to the seven objectives:

- (1) implementing 'One Health'
- (2) tackling inequalities
- (3) innovating in partnership
- (4) investing in health systems
- (5) creating conditions to invest in health
- (6) improving global health governance, and
- (7) nurturing pan-European health governance.

Source: McKee M, ed (2021). Drawing light from the pandemic: a new strategy for health and sustainable development—a review of the evidence. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe on behalf of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. >>>

In words of Mario Monti, Chair of the Pan-European Commission, the world *"requires awareness of the interconnections between human, animal and plant health and their impact on emerging zoonotic diseases; of the links between climate change, biodiversity and human health; and of the need to reinvigorate and extend our national health services"*. Furthermore, the public health is finally recognized as *"a global public good"* on a highest political level, while the United Nations (UN) launched a \$2 billion appeal for emergency funds to tackle COVID-19, in 51 countries across South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. In light of this, an international response – such as the one being coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO) – requires more than just technical expertise; it also requires political willingness, smart leadership, direct finance to the health system, and both dialogue and support from governments and CSO.

The coronavirus outbreak has brought many truths to light, such as the fact that even advanced economies are not adequately equipped to face global health emergencies. As we embark on this new decade, we must take stock and reassess a global strategy for public health that is sustainable, innovative, and inclusive. And yet, despite this apparent progress toward a smarter and more effective global public health, many are concerned that public health policy remains dangerously fragmented in the face of other global threats. Multilateral efforts aimed at slowing or stopping the spread of communicable diseases are not yet strong enough to withstand the onslaught of new epidemics – or even pandemics. In lack of transnational solidarity to the vulnerable countries and groups of people burdened with the permanent health crises and without international supportive financial agreements, the current mundane public health conception might fail to adequately respond to future outbreaks on a global scale.



neinformisanih kreatora politika i nedostatka poverenja javnosti. Štaviše, ako bolje pogledamo zdravstvene sisteme u evropskim zemljama – mogli bismo da pratimo opšti pad karakteristika javnog zdravlja u korist individualističkog sistema izolovanih ambulantnih vozila lekara opšte prakse koji je usredsređen na pacijente koji nisu u stanju da daju adekvatan odgovor na pandemiju. Nije ni čudo što Panevropska komisija za zdravlje i održivi razvoj, nezavisna i interdisciplinarna grupa lidera koju je sazvao dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, regionalni direktor SZO/Evropa, traži od svetskih lidera da preispitaju prioritete politike u svetlost pandemija. Rezime preporuka je uglavnom vezan za sedam ciljeva:

- (1) implementacija pristupa „Jedno zdravlje“
- (2) rešavanje nejednakosti
- (3) inoviranje u partnerstvu
- (4) ulaganje u zdravstvene sisteme
- (5) stvaranje uslova za ulaganje u zdravstvo
- (6) poboljšanje globalnog upravljanja zdravstvom, i
- (7) negovanje panevropskog upravljanja zdravstvom.

Izvor: McKee M, ur (2021). Pronalaženje svetla u pandemiji: nova strategija za zdravlje i održivi razvoj—pregled argumenata. Copenhagen: Regionalna kancelarija SZO za Evropu u ime Evropske opservatorije za zdravstvene sisteme i politike. <<<

Prema rečima Marija Montija, predsednika Panevropske komisije, svet *„zahteva svest o povezanosti zdravlja ljudi, životinja i biljaka i njihovog uticaja na zoonoza u nastajanju; o vezama između klimatskih promena, biodiverziteta i zdravlja ljudi; i potrebe da se ožive i prošire naše nacionalne zdravstvene usluge“*. Štaviše, javno zdravlje je konačno prepoznato kao *„globalno javno dobro“* na najvišem političkom nivou, dok su Ujedinjene nacije (UN) pokrenule apel od 2 milijarde dolara za hitne fondove za borbu protiv COVID-19, u 51 zemlji širom Južne Amerike, Afrike, Bliskom istoku i Aziji. U svetlu ovoga, međunarodni odgovor – kao što je onaj koji koordiniše Svetska zdravstvena organizacija (SZO) – zahteva više od tehničke ekspertize; takođe zahteva političku volju, pametno vođstvo, direktno finansiranje zdravstvenog sistema, kao i dijalog i podršku vlada i OCD.

Pandemija koronavirusa iznela je na videlo mnoge istine, kao što je činjenica da čak ni napredne ekonomije nisu adekvatno opremljene da se suoče sa globalnim zdravstvenim hitnim situacijama. Dok krećemo u ovu novu deceniju, moramo da sagledamo i ponovo procenimo globalnu strategiju za javno zdravlje koja je održiva, inovativna i inkluzivna. Pa ipak, uprkos ovom očiglednom napretku ka pametnijem i efikasnijem globalnom javnom zdravlju, mnogi su zabrinuti da politika javnog zdravlja ostaje opasno fragmentirana suočena sa drugim globalnim pretnjama. Multilateralni naponi usmereni na usporavanje ili zaustavljanje širenja zaraznih bolesti još uvek nisu dovoljno jaki da izdrže navalu novih epidemija – ili čak pandemija. U nedostatku transnacionalne solidarnosti prema ranjivim zemljama i grupama ljudi opterećenih trajnom zdravstvenom krizom i bez međunarodnih finansijskih sporazuma koji podržavaju, trenutna globalna koncepcija javnog zdravlja možda neće adekvatno odgovoriti na buduće epidemije na globalnom nivou.

Postscript: Letter from home on Covid-19 crisis in Serbia

Serbia's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was heavily criticized by the international community. As a longtime public health activist, I feel that I should offer an honest portrayal of what happened during this period. At the time, I worked for the local government in the City of Šabac as an Assistant Mayor for Youth Affairs.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic found me at the finalization of negotiations on the implementation of a program for active immunization against HPV-related diseases on the territory of Šabac, Serbia's first step toward a national immunization program. When I say "found," I mean we were discussing the implementation challenges while the headquarters of the Airport City, the business district in Belgrade, ordered the emergency closing and evacuation, because of the confirmed patient zero within the building complex. The image of people leaving their tables and busily going out felt like a scene from *The Walking Dead* -- completely dystopian and horrifying. But now I can say that it prepared me on the logic of a national response to a public health challenge. In short: It was immediate, inconsiderate, and panic-generating. But since I am confident in experts' advice to decision-makers and their ability to think clearly through crises—all the following wrong-doings I interpreted as wrong crisis management and tried to summarize it.

Serbia had the excellent basis to respond actively to the public health crisis since the national health system is comprised of:

- (1) *Universal healthcare coverage for all;*
- (2) *Health policies that are shaped by citizens and health professionals, not corporations, and*
- (3) *The primary level of healthcare is a fundamental and central part of the healthcare system. It is provided by state-owned primary health centers (PHC), which cover the whole territory of Serbia.*

Serbia's healthcare system is a Bismarck model in which citizens are covered by the National Health Insurance Fund (HIF) that operates and oversees health services. The purpose of this system is to provide easy and equal access to comprehensive health services for every citizen regardless of their status. Despite that intention, 38% of expenditure for healthcare services in Serbia is not covered by the health insurance plans.

Source: School Based HPV Vaccination Campaign in Serbia, A brief prepared for the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia by J. Kasian, R. Kaul, Y. Sun, B. Sutton, D. Tyagi at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University under the mentorship of J.L. Tobin and the expert consultancy w/ M. Ratkovic et al.

Since the transitional changes from Yugoslav socialism to the contemporary Balkan hybrid capitalism, the health system has never had enough funding to function properly. The COVID-19 pandemic only added to the existing crisis. The scheduled parliamentary elections in 2020 —which were planned for 26 April— worsened the crisis by declaring a state of emergency on 15 March and then introducing unreasonable and panic-generating measures that were contrary to expert advice (total lockdown, early schools closing, canceling non-urgent medical interventions...).



Postskriptum: Pismo od kuće o krizi Covid-19 u Srbiji

Međunarodna zajednica žestoko je kritikovala odgovor Srbije na pandemiju Covid-19. Kao dugogodišnji aktivista za javno zdravlje, smatram da treba da ponudim iskren prikaz onoga što se dogodilo tokom ovog perioda. U to vreme sam radila u lokalnoj samoupravi u gradu Šapcu kao pomoćnica gradonačelnika za pitanja mladih.

Izbijanje pandemije korona virusa zateklo me je na završetku pregovora o sprovođenju programa aktivne imunizacije protiv HPV bolesti na teritoriji Šapca, što je prvi korak Srbije ka nacionalnom programu imunizacije. Kad kažem „zateklo“, mislim na to da smo razgovarali o izazovima implementacije dok je sedište Airport City, poslovnog okruga u Beogradu, naložilo hitno zatvaranje i evakuaciju, zbog potvrđenog nultog pacijenta u kompleksu zgrada. Slika ljudi koji napuštaju svoje stolove i užurbano izlaze delovala je kao scena iz *The Walking Dead* - potpuno distopijska i zastrašujuća. Ali sada mogu reći da me je to pripremiло na logiku nacionalnog odgovora na izazov javnog zdravlja. Ukratko: bilo je trenutno, bezobzirno i izazivalo je paniku. Ali pošto sam uverena u savete stručnjaka donosiocima odluka i njihovu sposobnost da jasno promišljaju kroz krize—sve sledeće pogrešne radnje protumačila sam kao pogrešno upravljanje krizom i pokušala sam da ih sumiram.

Srbija je imala odličnu osnovu da aktivno reaguje na krizu javnog zdravlja jer nacionalni zdravstveni sistem čine:

- (1) Univerzalna zdravstvena zaštita za sve;
- (2) Zdravstvene politike koje oblikuju građani i zdravstveni radnici, a ne korporacije, i
- (3) Primarni nivo zdravstvene zaštite je osnovni i centralni deo sistema zdravstvene zaštite. Obezbeđuju ga državni domovi zdravlja (PZZ) koji pokrivaju celu teritoriju Srbije.

Zdravstveni sistem Srbije je Bismarckov model u kome su građani pokriveni od strane Republičkog fonda za zdravstveno osiguranje (RFZO) koji radi i nadgleda zdravstvene usluge. Svrha ovog sistema je da svakom građaninu, bez obzira na status, omogući lak i jednak pristup sveobuhvatnim zdravstvenim uslugama. Uprkos toj nameri, 38% izdataka za zdravstvene usluge u Srbiji nije pokriveno planovima zdravstvenog osiguranja.

Od prelaznih promena od jugoslovenskog socijalizma do savremenog balkanskog hibridnog kapitalizma, zdravstveni sistem nikada nije imao dovoljno sredstava da pravilno funkcioniše. Pandemija COVID-19 samo je doprinela postojećoj krizi. Zakazani parlamentarni izbori 2020. — koji su bili planirani za 26. april — pogoršali su krizu proglašavanjem vanrednog stanja 15. marta, a zatim uvođenjem nerazumnih mera koje izazivaju paniku koje su bile suprotne savetima stručnjaka (potpuno zatvaranje, prevremeno zatvaranje škola, ukidanje nehitne medicinske intervencije...).

U Šapcu smo bili veoma proaktivni kada je reč o sprovođenju mera — pošto smo jedan od prvih gradova u Srbiji koji je dezinfikovao škole, obezbedili smo besplatne maske i dezinfekciona sredstva za sve građane i održavali sastanke na daljinu. Potrudili smo se da svi znaju šta treba da rade pružajući tačne informacije putem tradicionalnih medija i onlajn kanala. Angažovali smo komunalnu policiju, OCD i volontere da vredno rade kako

In Šabac, we've been very proactive when it comes to implementing measures—after being one of the first cities in Serbia to sanitize schools, we made sure to provide free masks and disinfectants for all citizens and held our meetings remotely. We made sure everyone knew what to do by providing accurate information via classic and online channels. We employed communal police, CSO, and volunteers to work hard to make sure that everyone knew what was going on, so there were no rule violations during long and exhausting lockdowns. The German model of trusting the population to follow safety guidelines with the promise of a return to normal life was proven effective in Šabac. After the state of emergency was lifted, more than 300 companies and individuals were honored for helping us get through the health crisis by volunteering, donating material and funds, etc.

Meanwhile, on a national level, early established daily communication with citizens in the first days of pandemic and total lockdown seemed to work, but soon it turns to the source of panic and unexpected despair. Daily press conferences were a source of the various discussions - from the total number of infections and deaths to randomized mashup of recommendations (closing open markets for instance), formal decisions (prohibition of movements, opening the additional Covid health centers in schools or halls), direct threats ("expect the Italian scenario", "the existing cemeteries will be insufficient") and approximate vignettes ("Retirees will be able to go for a walk three times a week", "From next week, maybe retirees may be able to go for a walk", "We revoke permits for walking pets - walk them at 5:15 and 3 p.m.", "And the parrots? You want to walk them too").

At the time of the introduction of the state of emergency, aside from a number of human rights being suspended, there were an enormous number of publicly discussed cases of heavy human rights deprivations—arrests of journalists and citizens and so on. All these resulted in the loss of confidence in the health system and the strengthening of the anti-vaccine, virus-denying movements, and the birth of the anti-masks fraction. After the abolition of the state of emergency on May 6, parliamentary elections were held in Serbia on June 21. Shortly after, officials started discussing aggravation of measures—mass protests erupted in the capital and several other cities. People from all political sides stood side by side, clearly articulating their resistance to arbitrariness and abuse of power as if Covid-19 had never existed.

Following the aforementioned case studies I would try to sum up the main points of this epic fail of the system response:

- (1) *Health care is underfunded.* The total expenditure on health in Serbia accounts for only 6.7 percent of GDP (in developed countries it ranges from 9 to 12 percent), which is significantly lower than the average expenditure in Europe (8.8%). In recent years, we have seen a trend towards reducing public spending on health care at all levels. In 2019, public spending on health care decreased by almost 6 percent compared to 2018. In the 2020 budget, public spending on health care was reduced by 7 percent compared to 2019 (10 billion dinars less).
- (2) *Early lockdown nationwide was compromised.* The experience of Western Balkan countries shows that, in the absence of total lockdown, all measures to contain the spread of the epidemic would have been undermined. Increased lasting of total lockdown, followed by the abolition of all measures – including held football derby matches – raised questions about the government's decision-making.



bismo bili sigurni da svi znaju šta se dešava, tako da nije bilo kršenja pravila tokom dugih i iscrpljujućih karantina. Nemački model poverenja stanovništva da poštuje bezbedne smernice uz obećanje povratka normalnom životu pokazao se efikasnim u Šapcu. Nakon ukidanja vanrednog stanja, više od 300 kompanija i pojedinaca je nagrađeno što su nam pomogli da prebrodimo zdravstvenu krizu volontiranjem, doniranjem materijala i sredstava itd.

U međuvremenu, na nacionalnom nivou, rano uspostavljena svakodnevna komunikacija sa građanima u prvim danima pandemije i potpuna izolacija delovala je kao da je dala rezultate, ali se ubrzo pretvara u izvor panike i neočekivanog očajja. Dnevne konferencije za štampu bile su izvor raznih diskusija – od ukupnog broja zaraženih i umrlih do nasumične mešavine preporuka (zatvaranje otvorenih pijaca na primer), formalnih odluka (zabrana kretanja, otvaranje dodatnih Covid domova zdravlja u školama ili hodnicima), direktne pretnje („očekujte italijanski scenario“, „postojeća groblja će biti nedovoljna“) i približne vinjete („Penzioneri će moći da prošetaju tri puta nedeljno“, od sledeće nedelje možda će penzioneri moći da idu u šetnju“, „Ukidamo dozvole za šetnju kućnih ljubimaca – šetajte ih u 17.15 i 15 časova“, „A papagaji? Hoćete i njih da šetate“).

U vreme uvođenja vanrednog stanja, osim što su određena ljudska prava suspendovana, postojao je ogroman broj javnih slučajeva teških uskraćivanja osnovnih demokratskih prava – hapšenja novinara i građana i tako dalje. Sve ovo je rezultiralo gubitkom poverenja u zdravstveni sistem i jačanjem antivakcionalnih, virusnih pokreta i rađanjem frakcije tzv. antimaskera. Nakon ukidanja vanrednog stanja 6. maja, u Srbiji su 21. juna održani parlamentarni izbori. Ubrzo nakon toga, zvaničnici su počeli da razgovaraju o pooštavanju mera – izbili su masovni protesti u glavnom gradu i nekoliko drugih gradova. Ljudi sa svih političkih strana stali su rame uz rame, jasno artikulišući svoj otpor samovolji i zloupotrebi vlasti kao da Covid-19 nikada nije postojao.

Prateći gore pomenute studije slučaja, pokušala bih da sumiram glavne tačke ovog epskog promašaja sistemskog odgovora:

- (1) Zdravstvena zaštita je nedovoljno finansirana. Ukupni rashodi za zdravstvo u Srbiji čine samo 6,7 odsto BDP-a (u razvijenim zemljama se kreću od 9 do 12 odsto), što je znatno niže od prosečnih rashoda u Evropi (8,8 odsto). Poslednjih godina vidimo trend smanjenja javne potrošnje na zdravstvenu zaštitu na svim nivoima. U 2019. javna potrošnja na zdravstvo smanjena je za skoro 6 odsto u odnosu na 2018. U budžetu za 2020. javna potrošnja na zdravstvo smanjena je za 7 odsto u odnosu na 2019. (10 milijardi dinara manje).
- (2) Rano zatvaranje širom zemlje je kompromitovano. Iskustvo zemalja Zapadnog Balkana pokazuje da bi, u nedostatku potpune izolacije, sve mere za obuzdavanje širenja epidemije bile potkopane. Produženo trajanje potpune blokade, praćeno ukidanjem svih mera – uključujući i održane fudbalske utakmice – dovelo je u pitanje sve odluke vlade.
- (3) Banalizacijom i zloupotrebom za obračun sa političkim protivnicima narušen je efikasan kanal komunikacije između medicinskih stručnjaka i građana.
- (4) Netransparentna potrošnja. Javna sredstva su korišćena na netransparentan način, izazivajući široku nesigurnost i osećaj bespomoćnosti kod građana.
- (5) Neadekvatan sistem podataka. Nedostatak masovnog testiranja i efikasnog sistema za praćenje kontakata, uključujući korišćenje IT alata (nakon uvođenja Covid-certificate sistema, Srbija se suočila sa jednim od najvećih kršenja GDPR-a, jer su svi zvanični podaci bili vidljivi svakom pojedincu koji je proveravao sertifikat unutar dnevne aktivnosti - javni događaji, posete restoranima i tako dalje)

(3) An efficient communication channel between medical experts and citizens was disrupted by trivialization and abuse for a showdown with political opponents.

(4) *Non-transparent spending.* Public funds have been used in a non-transparent way, causing widespread uncertainty and a sense of helplessness among the citizens.

(5) *Inadequate data system.* Lack of massive testing and an effective contact tracing system, including the use of IT tools (After introducing the Covid-certificate system, Serbia faced one of the major violations of GDPR, since all the official data was visible to any individual checking the certificate within the daily activities - public events, restaurant visits and so on)

In the last two years, the combination of the privatization of natural resources, non-transparent privatization of public institutions (National Institute for Water Management), led to ecological crisis followed by massive blockades and protests in Serbia. The waves of the Covid-19 epidemic were at their peak when citizens opposed health care policies that they saw as instruments of control. These important insights from Serbia lead us to the provisional conclusion that we must seek efficient and effective policies of an interdisciplinary approach. Even though the Ministry of Health welcomed the Pan-European Commission for Health and Sustainable Development's initiative, there were no measures to reconsider priorities and policies, nor any visible improvement of the management of public goods, such as health and the environment. Furthermore, the proposed health care system optimization in Serbia, contrary to hopes, recommends the reduction of public health institution capacities and certainly will cause even greater health problems in Serbia. The ongoing environmental crisis has no official epilogue yet.



U poslednje dve godine, kombinacija privatizacije prirodnih resursa, netransparentne privatizacije javnih institucija (Institut za vodoprivredu Jaroslav Černi), dovela je do ekološke krize praćene masovnim blokadama i protestima u Srbiji. Talas epidemije Covid-19 bio je na vrhuncu kada su se građani usprotivili politici zdravstvene zaštite koju su videli kao instrument kontrole. Ovi važni uvidi iz Srbije dovode nas do privremenog zaključka da moramo tražiti efikasne i efektivne politike interdisciplinarnog pristupa. Iako je Ministarstvo zdravlja pozdravilo inicijativu Panevropske komisije za zdravlje i održivi razvoj, nije bilo mera za preispitivanje prioriteta i politika, niti bilo kakvog vidljivog poboljšanja upravljanja javnim dobrima, kao što su zdravlje i životna sredina. Štaviše, predložena optimizacija zdravstvenog sistema u Srbiji, suprotno nadanjima, preporučuje smanjenje kapaciteta javnih zdravstvenih ustanova i svakako će izazvati još veće zdravstvene probleme u Srbiji. Ekološka kriza koja je u toku još nema zvanični epilog.

Why is a good story important for good ideas? Most people would agree in principle with the thesis that environmental protection is an important topic that should unite all actors. However, the fact is that it is on the margins in many countries. The fight for the environment - air, water and forests - in the region has inspired many, but also set a good path for various actors on how to communicate issues and mobilize citizens to solve them.

Progressive forces on the Balkan Peninsula have been fighting for decades to establish democratic procedures and functional institutions as basic preconditions for further development. Environmental protection as a public policy has been wandering in the public discourse for all that time: from hard-to-achieve standards that are a condition for membership in the European Union, to those policies that allegedly hinder reindustrialization that started the so-called economic recovery. Ecology was a topic for a small number of expert non-governmental organizations and individuals, whose target groups were exclusively institutions, with weak capacities and even less political will to change the situation for the better. Advocating for broader green values was limited to a small circle of dedicated activists, who were fortunate enough to collaborate and learn from their Western European comrades-in-arms with a small audience in their home countries.

The last few years many have witnessed a big green wave in the Balkans. It started when several dozen local initiatives were organized primarily on the topic of defending mountain rivers from harmful projects of mini hydropower plants. These projects, in theory renewable energy, have in practice meant death for water commons that mean life for the local community - protecting nature and providing water for crops and other needs. According to the Save the Blue Heart of Europe campaign, more than 2,500 such projects are planned in the region, which practically means the end of many important watercourses. This fight is one of the first grassroots environmental battles in this part of Europe. It started in the villages of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia and Serbia from people who saw it as a struggle for survival. Blockades of local roads, work actions to return rivers to their beds, physical confrontations with investors, private security and police, active campaign on social networks, legal and institutional struggle, as well as protests, protests, protests. These images attracted a lot of attention and inspired many to fight in their local communities.



GOOD STORIES - NARRATIVES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN THE BALKANS

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DOBRE PRIČE - NARATIVI EKOLOŠKOG POKRETA NA BALKANU



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Zašto je za dobre ideje ključna dobra priča? Sa tezom da je zaštita životne sredine važna tema koja treba da ujedini sve bi se načelno složila većina ljudi. Međutim, činjenica je da je ona u mnogim državama na marginama. Borba za životnu sredinu – vazduh, vodu i šume – u regionu inspirisala je mnoge, ali i postavila dobar put za različite aktere koji im govori na koje načine treba komunicirati probleme i mobilisati građane.

Progresivne snage na Balkanskom poluostrvu se decenijama bore za uspostavljanje demokratskih procedura i funkcionalnih institucija, kao osnovne predušlove za dalji razvoj. Zaštita životne sredine kao javna politika je u javnom diskursu za sve to vreme lutala: od teško dostižnih standarda koje su uslov za članstvo u Evropskoj Uniji, do onih koje navodno kočje reindustrializaciju kojom se krenulo u takozvani ekonomski oporavak zemalja. Ekologijom su se bavile malobrojne ekspertske nevladine organizacije i pojedinci, čije su ciljne grupe bile isključivo institucije, slabih kapaciteta i još manje političke volje da se situacija promeni na bolje. Zagovaranje širih zeleni vrednosti je bilo ograničeno na mali krug posvećenih aktivista, koji su imali sreću da sarađuju i uče od svojih saboraca iz zelenih snaga iz Zapadne Evrope sa malobrojnom publikom u svojim državama.

Poslednjih nekoliko godina svedočimo velikom zelenom talasu na Balkanu. Počelo je kada se nekoliko desetina lokalnih inicijativa organizovalo prvenstveno na temi odbrane planinskih reka od štetnih projekata mini hidrocentrala. Ovi projekti, u teoriji obnovljivi izbor energije, u praksi su značili smrt za vodna dobra koja znače život za lokalnu zajednicu – zaštitu prirode i obezbeđivanje vode za useve i druge potrebe. Po podacima kampanje Save the Blue Heart of Europe, u regionu je planirano čak više od 2.500 ovakvih projekata, što praktično znači ucevljenje mnogih vodotokova. Ova borba je jedna od prvih grassroots ekoloških borbi u ovom delu Evrope. Krenula je u selima Bosne i Hercegovine, Albanije, Makedonije i Srbije od ljudi koji su nju videli kao borbu za opstanak. Blokade lokalnih puteva, radne akcije vraćanja reka u svoja korita, fizički obračuni sa investitorima, privatnim obezbeđenjem i policijom, aktivna kampanja na društvenim mrežama, pravna i institucionalna borba, kao i protesti, protesti, protesti. Ove slike privukle su veliku pažnju i inspirisale mnoge na borbu.

Environmental activism has not stopped at preserving water. The persistent and authentic struggle quickly spread to other accumulated environmental problems, such as growing air pollution. The energy systems of all our countries are largely based on fossil fuels, and very little (or none) has been done on the modernization of thermal power facilities, installation of filters and the phase out. Industrial plants are also obsolete, and new ones are being developed outside the standard because there is no sanction. Energy poverty is on the rise, with as many as three-quarters of Serbia's population having trouble paying their utility bills. For that reason, even coal, wood and other energy sources of very poor quality are used for heating. All this, along with the reduction of greenery and unplanned urbanization, resulted in record values of air pollutants. Everyone could see and feel the air, but due to the lack of official data, it was not possible to prove it on paper. Civil society organizations have developed a network of civic measurement, with simple devices and training, everyone could measure the pollution in their environment. By connecting to the online network and creating applications for phones, trends came very quickly and there was a realistic basis for mobilization. Protests, tribunals and initiatives demanded first to be informed by the institutions about how high pollution is and then, what the causes are, and finally to react to prevent it.

In national parks as well as in urban green areas, there is a struggle for forest conservation. The sad reality is that nature is not recognized as a public good, so it is not surprising that the financing of its so-called preservation is provided by destroying it. Deforestation and timber sales are the basis for financing the services that guard national parks. They are further destroyed by privatization and urbanization for tourism and other purposes. Local activists, mountaineers and other nature lovers have risen up against this. Forests in cities are attacked by unplanned expansion and urbanization that does not take into account not only the environment, but also the health and quality of life of the population in them. Organizations and initiatives organized planting work actions in the areas planned for construction, fought against logging, filed criminal charges, blocked works.

Promptly, these struggles, from the local ones, gained a national and regional character. More than 70 organizations and initiatives across joined in the Environmental Uprising in 2021 by jointly writing and adopting 13 demands - one type of environmental manifesto - addressed to national authorities in a democratic process. "Ecology will no longer be an ornament on the lapel, but the basis of all other policies and development," is the quote from this document. Also, at the regional level, the group Defend the Rivers of Balkans was formed, with organizations from Serbia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. This network has set itself the goal of defending rivers from harmful projects such as mini hydropower plants, but also defending and preserving water commons from increasing pollution, excessive exploitation and privatization. For them, water is a natural good that must be preserved and remain in the public domain.

What can be learned from these fights when we talk about good stories? It is important to analyze what are the key messages that were the basis of the narrative of these struggles, because they are part of the success and can be an inspiration for further green activism.

The first and most important message of environmental struggles is - **"I do not give in"**. This narrative is built on a strong sense of belonging to the local community and defending what is perceived as the only thing left and what is worth fighting for, namely water, air, forests and land. What the former president of The Anti-Corruption Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Jelisaveta Vasilic, brilliantly identified, is the parallel



Ekološki aktivizam se nije zaustavio na očuvanju vodnih dobara. Uporna i autentična borba se brzo proširila na druge nagomilane ekološke probleme kao što je narastajuće zagađenje vazduha. Energetski sistemi svih ovih država u velikom delu zasnovani su na fosilnim gorivima, a vrlo malo je urađeno na modernizaciji termoenergetskih objekata, ugrađivanja filtera i slično. Industrijska postrojenja su takođe zastarela, a nova se razvijaju van standarda jer ne postoji sankcija. Energetsko siromaštvo je u ogromnom porastu, čak tri četvrtine stanovništva Srbije ima problem da plati račune za komunalne usluge. Iz tog razloga se čak i za grejanje koristi ugalj, drvo i ostali energenti jako lošeg kvaliteta. Sve ovo, uz smanjenje zelenila i neplanske urbanizacije, rezultovalo je rekordnim vrednostima zagađujućih materija u vazduhu. Vazduh su svi mogli da vide i osećati, međutim zbog nedostatka zvaničnih podataka nije bilo moguće dokazati ga na papiru. Organizacije civilnog društva razvile su mrežu građanskog merenja, sa jednostavnim uređajima i obukom, svako je mogao da izmeri zagađenje u svojoj okolini. Povezivajući se u online mrežu i kreiranjem aplikacija za telefone, vrlo brzo se došlo do trendova i postojao je realan osnov za mobilizaciju. Usledili su protesti, tribine i inicijative da se stanovništvo prvo obavesti od strane institucija koliko je zagađenje i šta su uzroci, a onda i da se na njega reaguje.

U nacionalnim parkovima kao i na gradskim zelenim površinama prisutna je borba za očuvanje šuma. Tužna realnost je da priroda nije prepoznata kao javno dobro, pa onda i ne čudi paradoks da se finansiranje njenog takozvanog očuvanja obezbeđuje uništavanjem iste. Seča šuma i prodaja drvne građe osnova je finansiranja službi koje čuvaju nacionalne parkove. Oni se dodatno uništavaju privatizacijom i urbanizacijom u turističke i druge svrhe. Protiv ovoga su ustali lokalni aktivisti, planinari i drugi ljubitelji prirode. Šume u gradovima su napadnute neplanskim širenjem i urbanizacijom koja ne uzima u obzir, ne samo životnu sredinu, već i zdravlje i kvalitet života stanovništva u njima. Organizacije i inicijative organizovale su radne akcije sadnje na prostorima planiranim za gradnju, borile se protiv seče, podnosile krivične prijave, blokirale radove.

Vrlo brzo ove borbe od lokalnih, dobile su nacionalni i regionalni karakter. Više od 70 organizacija i inicijativa udružilo se u Srbiji tokom 2021. godine u Ekološki ustanak tako što su zajednički, u demokratskom procesu napisali i usvojili 13 zahteva – jednu vrstu ekološkog manifesta - upućenu nacionalnim vlastima. „Ekologija više neće biti ukras na reveru, već osnova svih drugih politika i razvoja“ citat je iz ovog dokumenta. Takođe, na regionalnom nivou formirana je grupa Odbranimo r(ij)eke Balkana, sa organizacijama iz Srbije, Albanije, Crne Gore, Bosne i Hercegovine i Kosova. Ova mreža je sebi za cilj postavila odbranu reka od štetnih projekata kao što su mini hidroelektrane, ali i odbranu i očuvanje vodnih dobara od narastajućeg zagađenja, preterane eksploatacije i privatizacije. Za njih voda je prirodno dobro koje se mora čuvati i ostati u javnom vlasništvu.

Šta može da se nauči iz ovih borbi kada pričamo o dobrim pričama? Važno je analizirati koje su to ključne poruke koje su bile osnova narativa ovih borbi, jer su one deo uspeha i mogu biti inspiracija za dalje zelene borbe.

Prva i najvažnija poruka ekoloških borbi jeste – **„ne dam(o)“**. Ovaj narativ je građen na snažnom osećaju pripadnosti lokalnoj zajednici i odbrane onog što se percipira kao jedino što je preostalo i za šta je vredno boriti se a to su voda, vazduh, šume i zemlja. Ono što je nekadašnja predsednica Saveta za borbu protiv korupcije Srbije Jelisaveta Vasilic sjajno identifikovala, jeste paralela komodifikacije prirodnih dobara sa privatizacijom ekonomije. Proces transformacije ekonomije iz planske u tržišnu desetak godina ranije, obeležen je korupcijom i drugim kriminalnim radnjama a rezultovao je gubitkom deset-

between the commodification of natural resources and the privatization of the economy. The process of transforming the economy from planned to market one ten years earlier was evidenced by corruption and other criminal acts, and resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs and the sale of public goods and properties. After this process, it was the turn of natural goods to be sold. The message not to give in, marks the red line behind which we do not go, we are ready to do anything to defend our own. Activists often share personal stories - this is the river on which I was swimming as a child, on which I spent the most beautiful moments of my life, and that is why I defend it. The wider audience identifies with that story because we all lost a lot and made great compromises. We all wish for that moment to be enough, for us to put an end to it and defend ourselves at all costs. "Fuck off our rivers" or "March off from the Drina" are not just simple swearwords, but a shout of defense and a call to action.

This narrative spontaneously led the activists to another - **"through water to freedom"**. One of the most famous quotes of activists who fought for the rivers on the Stara Planina is the speech of Aleksandar Panić in the village of Pakleštica in 2018. Speaking about investors in mini hydro power plants and institutions that subsidize those projects, he said: "They think they are wearing ties around their necks. These are not ties, these are chains of slavery. That slavery is called profit at all costs. At best, that slavery is ignorance and disinterest." The strong motive for fighting off all the constraints of corruption, but also capitalism, is very nicely reflected in the fight for the environment. Through their efforts, environmental activists point to violations of the law and the lack of a protection system. Also, they often point to unequal access to and commodification of public and natural goods. The motive of freedom is often linked to social justice, which refers to the already disenfranchised rural population or workers who have lost everything and are now deprived of clean water or air. "A society that is silent while its rivers are being taken away is not a society but a bunch of accomplices" - is the message of one of the activists.

The third strong motive in environmental activism is solidarity and unity depicted in the slogan **"whoever defends water, is on the good side"**. Initiatives and organizations in the fight for the environment are constantly connected and supported in mutual efforts. Although there is a strong sense of ownership over certain struggles, whether territorial or thematic, in crisis situations or key moments people unite. This ranges from sharing materials on social networks, sending mass letters, remarks and complaints to institutions, to attending protests or blockades. "In this fight, it doesn't matter if you are old or young, straight or gay, left or right - when they come to steal our river, we are all together."

These narratives are authentic and are not the result of great reflection, but are a response to real urgency and sincere feelings shared by vulnerable individuals. Full of symbolism and vitality, they should inspire others in the fight for green values, but also wider - for a better society for all.



ina hiljada radnih mesta I rasprodajom javne imovine. Nakon ove rasprodaje, na red su došla prirodna dobra. Poruka da ne damo, obeležava crvenu liniju iza koje se ne ide, spremni smo na sve da odbranimo svoje. Aktivisti često dele lične priče – to je reka na kojoj sam proplivao, na kojoj sam proveo najlepše trenutke svog života i zato je branim. Šira publika se sa tom pričom identifikuje jer smo svi mi izgubili dosta i napravili velike kompromise. Taj trenutak da je dosta, da se sada stavlja tačka i brani se po svaku cenu svi priželjkujemo. „Odjebite od naših reka“ ili „Marš sa Drine“ nisu samo proste psovka, već poklič odbrane i poziv na akciju.

Ovaj narativ je aktiviste spontano vodio do drugog – **„preko vode do slobode“**. Jedan od najpoznatijih citata aktivista koji su se borili za reke na Staroj planini jeste govor Aleksandra Panića u selu Pakleštica 2018. godine. Govoreći o investitorima u mini hidroelektrane i institucijama koji te projekte subvencionišu on kaže: „Oni misle da nose kravate oko svojih vratova. To nisu kravate, to su lanci ropstva. To ropstvo se zove profit po svaku cenu. U najboljem slučaju, to ropstvo je neznanje i nezainteresovanost“. Snažan motiv oslobađanja svih stega korupcije ali i kapitalizma, vrlo se lepo oslikava u borbi za životnu sredinu. Ekološki aktivisti kroz svoja nastojanja ukazuju na kršenje zakona i nepostojanje sistema zaštite. Takođe, oni često ukazuju na nejednak pristup javnim i prirodnim dobrima i komodifikaciju istih. Motiv slobode, često se vezuje za socijalnu pravdu gde se ukazuje na već obespravljeno ruralno stanovništvo ili radništvo koje je izgubilo sve a sada mu se oduzima voda ili vazduh. "Društvo koje čuti dok mu se otimaju reke, nije društvo već gomila saučesnika" - poruka je jednog od aktivista.

Treći jak motiv u ekološkom aktivizmu jeste solidarnost i jedinstvo oslikan u sloganu **„ko vodu brani, na dobroj je strani“**. Inicijative i organizacije se u borbi za životnu sredinu konstantno povezuju i podržavaju u međusobnim nastojanjima lako postoji snažan osećaj vlasništva nad pojedinim borbama, bilo da je to teritorijalno ili tematski, u kriznim situacijama ili ključnim momentima te ograde se ostavljaju po strani i pruža se javna podrška. To ide od deljenja materijala na društvenim mrežama, masovnog slanja dopisa, primedbi i žalbi institucijama, do prisustva na protestima ili blokadama. "U ovoj borbi nije važno da li si star ili mlad, strejt ili gej, levo ili desno - kada ti dođu po reku, svi smo zajedno".

Ovi narativi su autentični i nisu rezultat velikog promišljanja, već su odgovor na realnu urgenciju i iskrena osećanja koja dele ugroženi pojedinci. Puni simbolike i životnosti, oni treba da inspirišu druge u borbi za zelene vrednosti, ali i šire - za bolje društvo za sve.

Green ideas famously include equality, antiracism and antifascism, however context in which it can be manifested is not the same in every corner of Europe. Diversity in the Balkans can be measured by the dozens of ethnic groups across less than ten countries. Yet, the systemic treatment for one of them is an undoubted indicator for the state of the society. Known to be an ever present national minority that has no motherland or native country among European states and beyond, Romani people cannot rely on diplomatic relationships or any statehood advocating for "our cause". Same for the entire millenium, we are left to defend ourselves from the never ending thick end of racism and antigypsism or antiziganism.

The Roma community is the largest ethnic minority in Europe, where more than 12 million Roma live. We are people with a very rich culture, arts, values and are the youngest and fastest growing community with a high potential and determination to make positive societal changes and successes. Besides the painful history and all odds, Roma have always worked hard, tried to participate in the active life of the society and even brought new technologies and arts in Europe.

Romani people are an Indo-Aryan ethnic group that originates from India. It has been more than 1000 years since Roma left India and arrived in the European continent, in the spirit of freedom and peace and with a hope to live and coexist decently in a free and safe land. Escaping from violence, Roma did hope for a different and better place for them and the future of their children. Unfortunately, it went in the opposite way ever since. Our ancestors faced exclusion and violence from the very beginning of their arrival, where even our lifestyle as a community was prohibited. A thousand years later, it seems that many things have been improved for the Roma people in Europe, but on the other hand it feels like many things remain in the status quo.

After many centuries, in the twentieth century, the first Romani congress was being organized and held near by London, 1971. That congress was attended by 23 representatives from different countries who had a common agreement and affirmed the following fundamental decisions: the flag - blue-green with the red 16 chakra; anthem - Gelem, gelem; and the name - Rom/Roma. This event was a crucial part of the story for the Roma because it had sparked the evolution of new Romani institutions, establishing Romani organizations with aspirations for bigger political change of the status of Roma. Today, 50 years later, we can mark with pride that we grew into a much stronger and politically more advanced community that raises its collective voice more than ever before.

STORY OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY IN THE BALKANS

Selvije Mustafi
*Transnational Romani Movement,
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PRIČA O ROMSKOJ ZAJEDNICI NA BALKANU

Selvije Mustafi
*Transnacionalni romski pokret,
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Zelene ideje ponosno uključuju jednakost, antiracizam i antifašizam, međutim kontekst u kojem se to može manifestovati nije isti u svakom uglu Evrope. Raznolikost na Balkanu može se meriti desetinama etničkih grupa u manje od deset zemalja. Ipak, sistemski tretman jednog od njih je nesumnjiv pokazatelj stanja u društvu. Poznati kao uvek prisutna nacionalna manjina koja nema domovinu ili matičnu državu među evropskim državama i šire, Romi se ne mogu osloniti na diplomatske odnose ili bilo kakvu državnost koja se zalaže za „naš cilj“. Isti ceo milenijum, ostavljeni smo da se branimo od beskrajnog debelog kraja rasizma ili anticiganizma.

Romska zajednica je najveća etnička manjina u Evropi, u kojoj živi više od 12 miliona Roma. Mi smo ljudi sa veoma bogatom kulturom, umetnošću, vrednostima i najmlađa smo i najbrže rastuća zajednica sa visokim potencijalom i rešenošću da pravimo pozitivne društvene promene i uspehe.

Pored mučne istorije i svih prilika, Romi su uvek vredno radili, trudili se da budu aktivni članovi društva i čak donosili nove tehnologije i umetnost u Evropu.

1000 godina otkako su Romi napustili Indiju i stigli na evropski kontinent, u duhu slobode i mira i sa nadom da će pristojno živeti i koegzistirati u slobodnoj i bezbednoj zemlji. Bežeći od nasilja, Romi su se nadali drugačijem i boljem mestu za sebe i budućnost svoje dece.

Nažalost, od tada je krenulo na suprotan način. Naši preci su se suočili sa isključenošću i nasiljem od samog početka svog dolaska, gde je čak i naš životni stil zajednice bio zabranjen. Hiljadu godina kasnije, čini se da su mnoge stvari poboljšane za Rome u Evropi, ali s druge strane, čini se da mnoge stvari ostaju u statusu quo.

Posle mnogo vekova, u dvadesetom veku, organizovan je i održan prvi romski kongres u blizini Londona, 1971. Tom kongresu je prisustvovalo 23 predstavnika iz različitih zemalja koji su imali zajednički dogovor i potvrdili sledeće fundamentalne odluke: zastava - plava- zelena sa crvenom 16 čakrom; himna - Gelem, gelem; i naziv - Rom/Roma. Ovaj događaj je bio ključni deo priče za Rome jer je pokrenuo evoluciju novih romskih institucija, osnivanje romskih organizacija sa težnjama za većom političkom promenom statusa Roma. Danas, 50 godina kasnije, možemo sa ponosom da obeležimo da smo izrasli u mnogo jaču i politički napredniju zajednicu koja podiže svoj kolektivni glas više nego ikada ranije.

World pandemic and the ignorance towards Roma

The governments and states very often tend to ignore that and do not take in consideration the potential and capacity of the Roma community, especially the youth. They see us only as a voting machine prior and during elections for their own interest, while in truth they ignore the interests of Roma as citizens who should be equally treated and live a decent life as they deserve. It is ironic to see the politicians and political leaders talk about the stability of the economy, employment or even climate change etc., and remain silent when it comes to issues that really matter like structural racism, exclusion and inequality. These can offer some answers why stability is an issue - if big parts of your population are unstable, no one can stay stable. If we take Covid19 pandemic crisis for instance and the situation in North Macedonia in 2020, we will see that the Roma community was mostly affected by this non-solidarity. It is not a secret that Roma are one of the poorest communities in Europe, and as a result of Covid19crises it has gotten even worse. Very big number of Roma families do work within the informal economy, and it was just an additional burden to be attacked by the pandemic and to prevent Roma families from working and earning in order to make a living and survive. On top of that many essential jobs and roles, especially the ones in public and clinical hygiene, are occupied by the Romani people, where they are on average much more exposed to the virus. Taking all of this in consideration, we can realize that the Roma in Europe face high risk of death, as a vulnerable and poor community, and their situation is getting worse – marked by extreme racism and poverty.¹

Roma were amongst the first to lose the jobs they already had, where the pandemic pushed whole neighborhoods and communities in endangered life conditions towards which the bigotry increased as well as the populism. This is why it is necessary for the EU to include Roma more in their economic plans and provide measures of fair and easier access towards economic empowerment and employment.

So what could the alternative narrative be? Perhaps, if the EU is willing to provide and secure equal job opportunities or skills, and if that may lead towards higher employment, it can be framed as an investment in the labor force and labor market since the Roma are the youngest and fastest growing population in Europe.

Roma community today

It is 2022 and Roma should under no conditions fall behind in terms of education, capacities and qualities as it was a case before. Today, thanks to institutions such as REF (Roma Education Fund) who provide scholarships and different opportunities for Roma students, we have a bigger number of Roma graduates from various spheres willing to continue their education and to contribute and get employed, perhaps in the public institutions. It was a very popular narrative coming from politicians that if Roma want to get employed in public institutions, first they need to complete higher education. I wonder what their response is when we have hundreds and thousands of Roma graduates who never got a chance to shine at these jobs.

¹ <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/roma-in-the-covid-19-crisis>



Svetska pandemija i neznanje o Romima

Vlade i države vrlo često imaju tendenciju da ignorišu ili ne uzimaju u obzir potencijal i kapacitet romske zajednice, posebno mladih. Oni nas vide samo kao glasačku mašinu pre i tokom izbora za svoj interes, a u stvari ignorišu interese Roma kao građana koji treba da budu jednako tretirani i da žive pristojan život kakav zaslužuju. Ironično je videti kako političari i politički lideri govore o stabilnosti ekonomije, zapošljavanju ili čak klimatskim promenama, a čute kada su u pitanju pitanja koja su važna kao što su strukturalni rasizam, isključenost i nejednakost. Ovo može ponuditi neke odgovore zašto je stabilnost problem - ako je veliki deo vaše populacije nestabilan, niko ne može ostati stabilan. Ako uzmemo za primer krizu izazvanu Covid19 pandemijom i situaciju u Severnoj Makedoniji 2020. godine, videćemo da je romska zajednica najviše pogođena ovom nesolidarnošću. Nije tajna da su Romi jedna od najsiriomašnijih zajednica u Evropi, a kao posledica Covid-19 kriza je postala još gora. Veoma veliki broj romskih porodica radi u okviru sive ekonomije, a to je bio samo dodatni teret za napad pandemije i sprečavanje romskih porodica da rade i zarađuju kako bi živjele i preživjevale. Povrh toga, mnoge osnovne (esencijalne) poslove i uloge, posebno one u javnoj i kliničkoj higijeni, zauzimaju Romi, gde su u proseku mnogo više izloženi virusu. Uzimajući sve ovo u obzir, možemo shvatiti da se Romi u Evropi suočavaju sa visokim rizikom od smrti, kao ugrožena i siromašna zajednica, a njihova situacija je sve gora – obeležena ekstremnim rasizmom i siromaštvom.

Romi su među prvima ostali bez posla koji su već imali, gde je pandemija čitave kvartove i zajednice gurnula u ugrožene životne uslove prema kojima je rasla netrpeljivost, ali i populizam. Zbog toga je neophodno da EU više uključi Rome u svoje ekonomske planove i obezbedi mere pravičnog i lakšeg pristupa ekonomskom osnaživanju i zapošljavanju.

Dakle, šta bi mogao biti alternativni narativ? Možda, ako je EU voljna da pruži i obezbedi jednake mogućnosti za posao ili veštine, i ako to može da vodi ka većem zapošljavanju, to može biti uokvireno kao ulaganje u radnu snagu i tržište rada pošto su Romi najmlađa i najbrže rastuća populacija u Evropi.

Romska zajednica danas

2022. je i Romi ni pod kojim uslovima ne bi trebalo da zaostaju u obrazovanju, kapacitetima i kvalitetima kao što je to bio slučaj ranije. Danas, zahvaljujući institucijama kao što je REF (Fond za obrazovanje Roma) koji daju stipendije i različite mogućnosti za romske studente, imamo veći broj diplomaca Roma iz različitih sfera voljnih da nastave školovanje i da doprinesu i zaposle se, možda i u javnim institucijama. Bila je veoma popularna priča političara da Romi, ako žele da se zaposle u javnim institucijama, prvo moraju da završe visoko obrazovanje. Pitam se kakav je njihov odgovor kada imamo stotine i hiljade diplomiranih Roma koji nikada nisu imali priliku da zablistaju u ovim poslovima.

Is this what a fair society for everyone looks like? It is a fact that there is a lack of willingness from the political actors to include and involve the Roma in the public institutions of a democratic system. There is no enough excuse for one who aspires and works in the spirit of equality and inclusion.

That is definitely not a society we want to live in. That can lead to getting more inadequate opportunities, unsafety, poor life conditions and access for the Roma people and that is opposite of the narrative "One society for all". I wonder how it would be when the governments finally understand the perspective of including the Roma and how that would develop not just the economy as a particular aspect, but many other branches. It could be the blueprint for other minorities as well.

New ideas are coming from Romani intellectuals, advocates, organizers, lawyers, and they are evolving more and are often related to internal political organizing, policy solutions, measures and budget not only as individuals but also as collectives, organizations or even movements. It is not only for the advantage of the Roma community, it is a wider picture from which societies can benefit. I hope that the effort that is being put continuously will be finally taken seriously in consideration by the national and local governments.

There is no doubt that Roma have learned many lessons until now. It is inevitable that Roma voters with their votes do make a difference in many elections and are sometimes the decision makers. But let's not forget how the Roma votes are violated and frequently "bought" (with money or food) by political parties who manipulate prior and during elections. Step by step I believe that we contribute to changing that. Roma are getting more aware of the importance and the real value of their votes and are willing to get actively involved in growing Roma policies in Europe and in the Balkans. We, as the other citizens, obey all the civic duties in countries where we live, and want to be treated in the spirit of equality and equity when accessing our rights.

Few communities in Europe were excluded and unwelcomed as Romani were. Taking care of our families, working and surviving under such pressure, bad life conditions and struggles in every life aspect is a story all too familiar to us, the Romani. But we wish to create a new narrative. We care for our society and the countries wherever we live. Just like anyone else, we strive for justice. We have a potential to contribute, now more than ever. We will do our best to be more present in the political arena and leave a legacy in the following years that Europe will be proud of. Meanwhile, the Balkans need to open up towards Roma with opportunities in order to add value to our common European story.



Da li ovako izgleda pošteno društvo za sve? Činjenica je da postoji nedostatak volje političkih aktera da se Romi uključe u javne institucije demokratskog sistema. Nema dovoljno izgovora za onoga ko teži i radi u duhu jednakosti i inkluzije.

Ovo definitivno nije društvo u kojem želimo da živimo. Situacija može dovesti do još neadekvatnijih mogućnosti, nesigurnosti, loših uslova života i pristupa za Rome, a to je suprotno narativu „Jedno društvo za sve“. Pitam se kako bi bilo kada bi vlade konačno shvatile perspektivu uključivanja Roma i kako bi se time razvila ne samo privreda kao poseban aspekt, već i mnoge druge grane. To bi mogao biti plan i za druge manjine.

Nove ideje dolaze od romskih intelektualaca, advokata, organizatora, pravnika i sve više se razvijaju i često su vezane za unutrašnje političko organizovanje, politička rešenja, mere i budžet ne samo kao pojedinci već i kao kolektivi, organizacije ili čak pokreti. To nije samo u korist romske zajednice, to je šira slika od koje društva mogu imati korist. Nadam se da će napor koji se ulaže u kontinuitetu konačno biti ozbiljno shvaćen od strane nacionalnih i lokalnih vlasti.

Nema sumnje da su Romi do sada naučili mnoge lekcije. Neizbežno je da romski birači svojim glasovima prave razliku na mnogim izborima i ponekad su donosio-ci odluka. Ali ne zaboravimo kako glasove Roma krše i često „kupuju“ (novcem ili hranom) političke partije koje manipulišu pre i tokom izbora. Korak po korak verujem da doprinosimo da se to promeni. Romi postaju svesniji značaja i stvarne vrednosti svojih glasova i spremni su da se aktivno uključe u rastuću romsku politiku u Evropi i na Balkanu. Mi, kao i ostali građani, poštujemo sve građanske dužnosti u zemljama u kojima živimo i želimo da se prema nama postupa u duhu jednakosti i pravičnosti kada ostvarujemo svoja prava.

Malo je zajednica u Evropi koje su bile isključene i nepoželjne kao Romi. Briga o porodicama, rad i preživljavanje pod pritiskom, loši životni uslovi i borbe u svakom životnom aspektu, nama su, Romima, previše poznata priča. Ali želimo da stvorimo novi narativ. Brinemo o našem društvu i zemljama gde god da živimo. Kao i svi, težimo pravdi. Imamo potencijal da doprinesemo, sada više nego ikada. Daćemo sve od sebe da budemo prisutniji u političkoj areni i ostavimo nasleđe u narednim godinama na koje će Evropa biti ponosna. U međuvremenu, Balkan treba da se otvori prema Romima sa mogućnostima kako bi dodao vrednost našoj zajedničkoj evropskoj priči.

Already Karl Marx was aware of the effect of ecological degradation on climate, whereby the development of civilizations altered the local climatic environment, causing diminished conditions for existing plant life (Saito 2017, 217). This is why many anti-capitalist movements around the globe incorporate ecology into their critique of capitalism. Eco-activism, including green political parties nonetheless, has shown other faces except the anti-capitalist one in the previous decades. Even though the 'green beginnings' were tightly linked to the more radical anti-capitalism, green movements, as well as the green parties, got their full swing alongside the general shift in critical thought and nature of political action in the 1970s and 1980s. This means that green mobilization started alongside the rise of so-called "lifestyle activism" (Sotirakopoulos, 2016), which was about to overrule the traditional class-based protest and resistance. Instead of class struggle relying on workers' collectives, the focus of the "new left" was on the "post-material" values which, overall, owed pretty much to the relative economic stability and the "30 glorious years". The era of economic stability and prosperity thus paved the way for the development of thought and action beyond every-day existential needs. Certainly, anti-capitalism and radical movements persisted, especially in countries like Italy, Germany or France. Green movements were, on the one hand, incorporated into the "new left", but at the same time persisted as an additional ingredient to the more radical anti-capitalist struggles (depending on the time period and a given political and cultural context).

In the meanwhile, the 1980s and especially the 1990s brought the triumph of a new, neoliberal paradigm which erased the achievements of the "30 glorious years" in the West, as well as the progressive elements of the socialist heritage in countries like (former) Yugoslavia. Even though "predatory neoliberalism" hit the periphery much harsher than the center, the perception of the importance of green politics, which was supposed to limit the ever more rapid expansion of capital to (what remained of) nature, has remained higher in the capitalist center. The periphery – especially its post-socialist part, had a low consciousness of green issues as par excellence political questions. When talking about, specifically the post-socialist periphery (former Yugoslavia included), one must not neglect the factor of transition from real-socialism to peripheral capitalism, whereby the key pillar of such a political

Eco-Mobilizations in Former Yugoslavia: **SYSTEMIC CRITIQUE OR <<< (ANOTHER) NARROW FIELD OF CONTESTATION?**



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Eko-mobilizacija u bivšoj Jugoslaviji: **SISTEMSKA KRITIKA ILI (JOŠ JEDNO) USKO POLJE NADMETANJA?** >>>

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Još je Karl Marks bio svestan posledica degradacije životne sredine i uticaja na klimatske promene, ukazujući na načine na koje je razvoj civilizacija menjao lokalnu klimu prouzrokujući sve lošije uslove za postojeći biljni svet (Saito 2017, 217). Posledično, mnogi anti – kapitalistički pokreti širom sveta uključuju ekologiju u svoju kritiku kapitalizma. Ekološki aktivizam je, uključujući i zelene političke partije, pokazao i drugačija lica osim antikapitalističkog, tokom prethodnih decenija. Iako su "zeleni počeci" bili tesno vezani za radikalni antikapitalizam, zeleni pokreti, kao i zelene partije, dobile su pun zamah uporedo sa opštom promenom kritičke misli i prirode političke akcije sedamdesetih i osamdesetih. Ovo znači da je zelena mobilizacija počela uporedo sa tzv. lajfstajl aktivizmom (Sotirakopoulos, 2016) koji će prevladati tradicionalne klasno zasnovane proteste i otpor. Umesto klasne borbe koja se oslanja na radničke kolektive, fokus "nove levice" je bio na postmaterijalističkim vrednostima, koje uopšte uzev, prevashodno počivaju na relativnoj ekonomskoj stabilnosti i "30 slavnih godina". Era ekonomske stabilnosti i prosperiteta je utrla put razvoju misli i akcije izvan svakodnevnih egzistencijalnih potreba. Naravno, antikapitalistički i radikalni pokreti su opstali, posebno u zemljama poput Italije, Nemačke i Francuske. Zeleni pokreti su, sa jedne strane, uključeni u novu levicu, ali su istovremeno opostali kao dodatna komponenta radikalnijih antikapitalističkih borbi (zavisno od vremena i datog političkog i kulturnog konteksta).

U međuvremenu, osamdesete i posebno devedesete, donele su trijumf nove, neoliberalne paradigme koja je izbrisala dostignuća "30 slavnih godina" na Zapadu, kao i napredne elemente socijalističkog nasleđa u zemljama poput (bivše) Jugoslavije. Iako se predatorski kapitalizam obrušio na periferiju žešće nego na centar, svest o značaju zelenih politika, koje treba da ograniče sve bržu ekspanziju kapitala na uštb (onog što je ostalo od) prirode, ostala je viša u kapitalističkom centru. Periferija – posebno njen postsocijalistički deo, imala je nisku svest o ekološkim pitanjima kao političkim pitanjima par excellence. Kada govorimo o tome, posebno o postsocijalističkoj periferiji (uključujući i bivšu Jugoslaviju, ne može se zanemariti faktor tranzicije iz realnog socijalizma ka perifernom kapitalizmu, pri čemu je stub takvog političkog konteksta bio identitet, koji je postao glavno političko pitanje. Pod takvim okolnostima,

context has been identity, which became the central question of politics. Under such circumstances, systemic limitations to the rise of not only consciousness about ecological issues, but any other political questions apart from identity, seemed to be unbreakable. Additionally, the transitional paradigm boosted the hegemony of the neoliberal ideology, which made a "neoliberal subject" (Brown 2003) the leading conceptual framework of subjectivity, generally speaking. Both the peripheral position and the specific transitional ideology thus, made eco-activism less appealing and, seemingly, less important. In the last decade, however, certain motions on the activist scene on the periphery launched the new wave of contestation and former Yugoslavs were among the most active citizens in this respect.

Mobilizations took place in different fields of contestation, including higher education (Zagreb) and urban development (Belgrade). Other mobilizations occurred on a wider basis and pushed demands for social justice and against corruption and clientelism. Protests and plenums in Bosnia in 2014 and North Macedonia in 2016 illustrate this phenomenon. With the rise of activist consciousness, the horizons of politics have slowly started shifting, as well. The option of incorporation of ecology into a more comprehensive critique of (peripheral) capitalism was thereby opened. Some movements used this chance, but not many decided to make ecology central to their activities. Initially, 'green topics' were either completely left out from the scope of activist interest, or were marginalized and given little attention throughout the biggest activist endeavors. As the activist scene in the region was maturing, the attention given to ecology and sustainable development was increasing. Among the most successful groups and the pioneers of green activism in the former Yugoslavia was "Green action" from Zagreb. The 'ecological impulses' from Belgrade and Sarajevo soon followed this trend. The initiatives such as "Ne da(vi)mo Beograd" (eng: Don't Let Belgrade D(r)own") or "Jedan grad jedna borba" (eng: "One City One Struggle") from Sarajevo pushed forward many ecological issues, both discursively and practically (through direct action). At the moment of their most intense activities, ecology nonetheless took a "backseat", while other topics were the "front-runners".

Among the first ecological mobilizations that achieved an envious level of mobilization capacity in the region of former Yugoslavia, was "Odbranimo reke Stare planine" (eng: "In Defense of the Rivers of Stara planina"). Their struggle against micro-hydropower plants inspired struggles in Bosnia and Hercegovina and Kosovo, since all these countries shared the same concern: the sudden investments in micro-hydropower plants which were about to change the river flows. The peak of social and political relevance was achieved by the protests in Serbia, against the regulation that would allow exploitation of lithium in the Jadar valley, near the city of Loznica. Due to actuality and public recognition and attention, as well as the fact that we are talking about pure eco-movements (hence not movements whose focus is elsewhere and who eventually incorporated green issues into their agenda), one should wonder two things: what are their structural and non-structural opportunities and limitations (taken the transitional context); and what is the discursive nature of these movements (pro-systemic or anti-systemic critique).

Regarding structural obstacles, they are mostly determined by the peripheral position. Periphery is, first of all, characterized by domination of pure existential issues concerning degraded social and economic parameters. Tangible, day-to-day issues hence, keep on persisting as the most important for most people. When



sistemska ograničenja. ne samo svesti o ekološkim pitanjima, već i bilo kog drugog političkog pitanja, osim identitetskog, delovala su nesalomivo. Dodatno, tranziciona paradigma je jačala hegemoniju neoliberalne ideologije koja je iznedrila "neoliberalni subjekt" (Brown 2003), vodeći konceptijski okvir subjektiviteta, uopšteno govoreći. Stoga su, i položaj na periferiji i specifična ideologija, učinile eko – aktivizam manje privlačnim i naizgled manje važnim. Ipak, u poslednjoj deceniji, neki su pokreti, na aktivističkoj sceni na periferiji, pokrenuli novi talas preispitivanja a građani bivše Jugoslavije su bili među najaktivnijima.

Mobilizacija se dogodila na različitim poljima, uključujući visoko obrazovanje (Zagreb) i urbanizam (Beograd). Druge mobilizacije su imale širu bazu sa zahtevima za socijalnom pravdom i protiv korupcije i klijentelizma. Protesti i zborovi u Bosni u 2014. i Severnoj Makedoniji 2016. godine oslikavaju ovaj fenomen. Razvojem aktivističke svesti, politički horizonti su takođe počeli polako da se pomeraju. Mogućnost da se ekologija uvrsti u sveobuhvatniju kritiku (perifernog) kapitalizma je, na taj način, otvorena. Neki pokreti su iskoristili ovu priliku, ali malo ih je odlučilo da ekologiju učini centralnim delom svojih aktivnosti. Inicijalno, zelene teme su bile ili potpuno izvan sfere interesovanja aktivista ili marginalizovane, pa im je malo pažnje posvećivano u okviru većih aktivističkih poduhvata. Kako je aktivistička scena u regionu sazrevala, ekologiji i održivom razvoju se poklanjalo sve više pažnje. Među najuspešnijim grupama i pionirima zelenog aktivizma, u bivšoj Jugoslaviji, bila je Zelena akcija iz Zagreba. Ekološki impulsi iz Beograda i Sarajeva, uskoro su se nadovezali na ovaj trend. Inicijative poput "Ne da(vi)mo Beograd" ili "Jedan grad jedna borba" iz Sarajeva, stavili su na agendu mnoga ekološka pitanja, kako na planu diskursa, tako i praktično (kroz direktnu akciju). U momentima najintenzivnijih aktivnosti, ipak, ekologija je bila sekundarna, dok su druge teme bile u prvom planu.

Među prvim ekološkim mobilizacijama koje su postigle zavidan nivo mobilizacijskog kapaciteta u regionu bivše Jugoslavije, bio je pokret Odbranimo reke Stare planine. Njihova borba protiv MHE, inspirisala je borbe protiv MHE u BiH i na Kosovu, jer je sve zemlje snašla ista briga – iznenadne investicije u MHE koje će izmeniti rečne tokove. Vrhunac društvene i političke relevantnosti je dostignut protestima u Srbiji protiv odluka koje bi omogućila eksploataciju litijuma u dolini Jadra u blizini Loznice. Zbog aktuelnosti, prepoznatljivosti u javnosti i zadobijene pažnje, pri činjenici da govorimo o čisto ekološkim pokretima (ne o pokretima čiji je fokus na drugim temama a koji su postupno usvojili ekološka pitanja u svoju agendu), moramo se zapitati dve stvari: kakve su njihove strukturalne i nestrukturalne prilike i ograničenja (uzimajući u obzir tranzicioni kontekst) i kakav je karakter diskursa tih pokreta (prosistemska ili antisistemska kritika).

U odnosu na strukturne prepreke, one su mahom determinisane perifernim položajem. Periferiju, pre svega, odlikuje dominacija čisto egzistencijalnih problema koji se tiču degradiranih socijalnih i ekonomskih parametara. Konkretni, svakodnevni problemi, stoga istrajavaju kao najvažniji za većinu ljudi. Kada govorimo o ekologiji, često smo skloni da govorimo o njima na globalnoj ravni, što je, za mnoge iz zemalja periferije, suviše apstraktno i manje važno nego svakodnevni socijalni i ekonomski problem. Stanovište o potčinjenosti periferije razvijenim kapitalističkim državama koje, uzgred imaju i najveću odgovornost za ekološke katastrofe i klimatske promene, navodi mnoge na zaključak da udeo periferije u odgovornosti za ovu planetu na prvom mestu treba da bude srazmeran odgovornosti za ugrožavanje ekološke ravnoteže.

talking about ecology, on the other hand, we often tend to talk about the global scale, which is, for many in the countries on the periphery, considered as too abstract and less important than day-to-day social and economic problems. The perception of subordination of the periphery vis a vis the most developed capitalist states which, by the way, bear the biggest responsibility for ecological disasters and climate change – leads many, moreover, to conclude that the proportion of the periphery's responsibility for this planet should correspond to its responsibility for endangering ecological balance in the first place.

Among the most obvious non-structural obstacles are the factors of age (or generation) and class. When talking about green activism more generally, even in the most developed countries where the political consciousness about global ecology has reached an envious level, it is the young that prevail in both the level of consciousness and willingness to mobilize and act. Footages and pictures from rallies organized by the movement famous as "Fridays for Future", for instance, illustrate this trend. The same movement shows that the issue of class cannot be neglected either. We are all witnessing the most recent global mobilization against climate change, which recently skyrocketed under the symbolic leadership of a teenager from Sweden, who famously proclaimed that the politicians "stole her childhood". For many on the periphery, and especially the post-conflict zones like the region of former Yugoslavia, this metaphor of 'stolen childhood' is not only a metaphor – it is a real and tangible experience of warfare, economic and social degradation and poverty. Pollution of air or rivers, problems with drinkable water or dangerous projects such as "Jadar" are indeed suitable for politicization. Countries where people have their childhood or youth literally stolen and suffer from day-to-day existential unmet needs, jobless and unable to secure food on the table each day, cannot worry about polluted air – because polluted air shortens their living, but it does not endanger it immediately as material deprivation does.

Opportunities, on the other hand, can again be assessed from a structural and a non-structural perspective. Structurally speaking, the contestation of the neoliberal transitional paradigm has, so far, proved to be ineffective. Left-wing groups failed to address problems in a convenient way for the citizens, who obviously do not believe that any of the postulates upon which our societies have been built in the last 30 years should or could be challenged and/or transformed. Ecological mobilizations shifted attention from this frontal critique of nationalism or the privatization process and found (at least temporarily) a suitable focal point through which a transitional paradigm could be challenged from the "green side". In countries like Serbia, where authoritarian rule has destroyed public space and factual discussion generally, ecology appears as the only field of contestation that has a respectable mobilization capacity. From the non-structural perspective, we can see that the above-discussed non-structural obstacles could be, at least to some extent, overcome. Unlike mobilizations that take place in the economic capitalist center, countries like Serbia or Bosnia gave birth to cross-generational mobilizations that also erased the dividing line between the urban and the rural. As a matter of fact, activist endeavors of rural and older inhabitants, who are directly endangered by projects such as Rio Tinto's "Jadar", represent a unique inspiration for the younger urban activists.

Finally, we may wonder whether these structural and non-structural obstacles, as well as the opportunities, affected the nature of ecological consciousness and ecological narratives on the periphery of Europe and whether they affected the extent to which green issues were, or were not, understood as a part of the broader



Među najočiglednijim nestrukturalnim preprekama su faktori starosne dobi (ili generacijski) i klasni. Kada se uopštenije govori o zelenom aktivizmu, čak i najrazvijenije zemlje u kojima je politička svest o globalnoj ekologiji dostigla zavidni nivo, mladi su ti koji dominiraju na planu osvešćenosti i volje da se mobilišu i delaju. Snimci i slike sa skupova koje je organizovao čuveni pokret "Fridays for Future" npr. odslikavaju taj trend. Isti pokret pokazuje da se ni klasno pitanje ne može zanemariti. Svi svedočimo najskorijoj globalnoj mobilizaciji protiv klimatskih promena koja je nedavno eruptirala pod simboličkim vođstvom tinejdžerke iz Švedske koja je političarima uputila čuvene reči: "Ukrali ste mi detinjstvo". Za mnoge na periferiji, a posebno u postkonfliktnim zonama poput bivše Jugoslavije, ova metafora "ukradenog detinjstva" nije samo metafora – ona je realno i opipljivo iskustvo ratovanja, ekonomskog i društvenog propadanja i siromaštva. Zagađenje vazduha i reka, problem sa pijaćom vodom ili opasni projekti poput Jadra su zaista pogodni za politizaciju. Zemlje u kojima je ljudima bukvalno ukradeno njihovo detinjstvo i mladost pate od nezadovoljenih svakodnevnih egzistencijalnih potreba, nezaposlenosti i nemogućnosti da se ima hrana za stolom svakog dana, ne mogu da brinu zbog zagađenog vazduha, jer im zagađeni vazduh skraćuje životni vek, ali ih momentalno ne ugrožava koliko siromaštvo.

Prilike se, s druge strane, mogu oceniti iz strukturalne i nestrukturalne perspektive. Strukturalno, osporavanje neoliberalne tranzicione paradigme se do sada pokazalo neefektnim. Levičarske grupe se nisu pozabavile problemima na način pogodan za građane koji očigledno ne smatraju da bilo koji od postulata na kojima su naša društva građena tokom poslednjih 30 godina treba ili mogu da se menjaju i/ili preobražavaju. Ekološka mobilizacija je preusmerila pažnju sa ove frontalne kritike nacionalizma ili procesa privatizacije i pronašla (makar privremeno) prikladnu žižu preko koje tranziciona paradigma može biti izazvana sa zelene strane. U zemljama poput Srbije u kojima je autoritarna vlast razorila javni prostor i pravu diskusiju uopšte, ispostavlja se da je ekologija jedino polje nadmetanja koje ima respektabilni mobilizacijski kapacitet. Iz nestrukturalne perspektive, možemo videti da se, prethodno pomenute nestrukturalne prepreke, mogu bar do neke mere, prevazići. Za razliku od mobilizacija koje se odvijaju u ekonomskom kapitalističkom centru, zemlje poput Bosne i Srbije su iznedrile trans-generacijske mobilizacije koje su takođe obrisale liniju podele između urbanog i ruralnog. Zapravo, aktivistički poduhvati ruralnih i starijih stanovnika koji su neposredno ugroženi projektima poput Rio Tintovog Jadra, predstavljaju jedinstvenu inspiraciju mlađim, urbanim aktivistima.

Konačno, možemo se zapitati da li su ove strukturalne i nestrukturalne prepreke, kao i prilike, uticale na prirodu ekološke svesti i ekoloških narativa na periferiji Evrope i da li su ili nisu uticali na razmere razumevanja ekoloških problema kao dela sistemskog problema perifernog (neoliberalnog) kapitalizma. Uzimajući u obzir demonizovanu i poniženu levicu u specifičnom postsocijalističkom kontekstu, ekološki narativi su se inicijalno suzdržavali da jasno pozicioniraju ekološke borbe u kontekst levičarskih borbi. Polako, saradnja različitih ekoloških organizacija iz regiona bivše Jugoslavije, počela je da potiskuje nacionalizam. Na manje neposredan način u odnosu na svoje antinacionalističke prethodnike, utisak je da se kod ekološkog antinacionalizma više radi o zajedničkoj međunarodnoj akciji nego o sloganima. U tom smislu, ekologija se dokazala da je prikladan okvir za tretiranje osetljivih tema na nekonvencionalan način, ne kroz saopštenja i kićenje, već kroz zajednički rad aktivista iz Bosne, Srbije, Crne Gore, Kosova i dr.

systemic problem of peripheral (neoliberal) capitalism. Considering the demonized and humiliated left in the specific context of post-socialism, ecological narratives were initially shy about positioning green struggles clearly in the context of the left-wing struggles. Slowly, cooperation between different ecological organizations from across the region of former Yugoslavia, started contesting nationalism. In a less direct way than its anti-nationalist predecessors, the impression is that ecological anti-nationalism is more about common international action, than about slogans. In that sense, ecology proved to be a suitable framework for addressing sensitive topics in a non-conventional way, not through statements and flosses, but through joint work of activists from Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and other countries.

At the same time, green narratives in the former Yugoslavia were less colored with red than one could expect given the opportunities listed above. From time to time, they even played on a "NIMNBY" ("not in my neighborhood") card, claiming the right of the inhabitants of a certain village or city to be free from ecological devastation and catastrophes. This strategy could, however – especially when having many struggles in several different places accumulated, produce a "roof" for the more systemic critique. In spite of that, the reformist agenda prevailed. Even when they had a chance to become more radical – like in the case of Rio Tinto in Serbia, the critique was somewhat more particular in nature. The case of Rio Tinto, in other words, did not make it to the level where the critique of peripheral, post-socialist, neoliberal capitalism could become an important part of the green agenda. Of course, the greed of multinational companies or governments was criticized through the narrative about "interest of profit instead of the interest of people". The roots of such logic were nonetheless not openly addressed.

Probably, taking the post-socialist reality, this is more difficult to do, than to say. Be it systemic or anti-systemic, green activism and green parties, in any case, have always been more represented in the center of the "world economic system" than on its periphery. The bare fact that this kind of politics gained legitimacy and support on the periphery is a great achievement. Ecological struggles, yet, suffer less from structural and non-structural obstacles due to the fact that they have not been made the object of serious demonization by the hegemonic paradigm, so far. This is a great chance for green politics to become an "empty signifier" and articulate other struggles of the deprived and marginalized through itself. If there ever was an actor who could contest peripheral neoliberal capitalism and nationalism effectively in the past 30 years, this is the green actor. This is not because green politics is superior to other ones, but because no one expected it to occur and especially not at this level of organization and public support. The system of systemic defense has not been developed yet. The goal is empty, in other words - one just needs to score.



U isto vreme, zeleni narativi u bivšoj Jugoslaviji su manje crveni nego što bi se moglo očekivati s obzirom na navedene mogućnosti. S vremena na vreme, igrali su i na "NIMNBY" ("not in my neighborhood" – ne u mom dvorištu) kartu, tvrdeći da je pravo stanovnika nekog sela ili grada da budu pošteđeni devastacije životne sredine i katastrofa. Ovakva strategija bi mogla, posebno kad se mnogo borbi na nekoliko različitih mesta uzme skupa, da obezbedi krov za veću sistemsku kritiku. Uprkos tome, reformistička agenda je prevladala. Čak i kad su imali priliku da postanu radikalniji, kao u slučaju Rio Tinta, u Srbiji, kritika je bila partikularne prirode. Drugim rečima, slučaj Rio Tinta, nije dostigao nivo na kome bi kritika perifernog, postsocijalističkog, neoliberalnog kapitalizma mogla postati važan deo zelene agende. Naravno, pohlepa multinacionalnih kompanija i vlada je kritikovana kroz narativ o interesima profita umesto interesima naroda. Ipak, koreni takve logike nisu adresirani.

Verovatno, uzimajući u obzir postsocijalističku realnost, ovo je teže učiniti nego izreći. Bili oni sistemski ili antisistemski, zeleni aktivizam i zelene partije su u svakom slučaju bile reprezentovanije u centru „svetskog ekonomskog sistema“ nego na periferiji. Sama činjenica da je ova vrsta politike stekla legitimitet i podršku na periferiji je veliko dostignuće. Ekološke borbe su manje suočene sa strukturalnim i nestrukturalnim preprekama zbog činjenice da nisu učinjene predmetom ozbiljne demonizacije od prevladavajuće paradigme za sada. Ovo je velika prilika za zelene politike da postanu „prazni označitelji“ i da kroz sebe artikulišu druge borbe lišenih i marginalizovanih. Ako je ikada postojao akter koji bi mogao da efektivno izazove periferni neoliberalni kapitalizam i nacionalizam tokom poslednjih 30 godina, to su zeleni akteri. Ovo nije stoga što su zelene politike superiorne u odnosu na ostale, već zato što niko nije očekivao da se to dogodi i posebno ne s ovakvim nivoom organizacije i javne podrške. Sistem sistematske odbrane još uvek nije stavljen u funkciju. Na голу, nema nikog; drugim rečima – samo treba poentirati.

THE **GOOD STORY**

Green narratives for the Balkans



DOBRA PRIČA

Zeleni narativi za Balkan



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