Authoritarianism, Conspiracy Theories and Covid 19 Pandemic in Serbia

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Abstract

By placing two key narratives about the origin and the implications of Covid-19 in the global context, the author analyzes their media representations in Serbia in order to highlight their potential correlation with widely understood authoritarianism. Conspiracy theories in Serbia are present in several interrelated and interdependent forms: 1. Theory of experimental totalitarianism; 2. Economic-political conspiracy; 3. Theory of the Third World War/New Order. Tensions and conflicts between the proponents of the official and unofficial versions of pandemic are visible, mostly on social media, and resemble other forms of filtering and dosing aggression against labeled enemies. In the moments of social crisis this becomes one of the basic characteristics of the authoritarian structure of personality. "Enemies" are stigmatized by various formulations, from "the masters of the new order", to "the servants of the world pharmacomaphy." Therefore, the aim of this paper is to make an overwiew of the most common conspiracy theories about Covid 19 in Serbia and to analyze them in the frames of theories that emphasize the importance of dogma within the authoritarian personality structure.

Keywords: authoritarianism, dogma, conspiracy theory, Serbia, Covid-19.

Introduction

Personality theories which start from the assumption that strong parental authority is associated with the repression in the family, and result in the particular psychological structure, until recently were considered a culturally insensitive theoretical 20th Century heritage (Adorno, 1950, p. 22). Since 1940s to the 1970s, when the notion of authoritarianism met its first relativization, numerous studies enabled its improvement, or pointed out the unreliability of instruments that measured authoritarianism. At last, in the late 1990s this approach faced postmodern trends of political correctness and relativity of the terms *left/right*; *domination/submissiveness* (Bojanović, 2004, p. 14). Weeks after the Covid-19 pandemic was declared and the principles of so-called lockdown were introduced, governments of the countries around the world prescribed mandatory wearing of protective masks, physical distancing and limiting the number of people indoors (Susumu, 2021). Public figures have mobilized the discourse about the history of epidemics coming from Asia, drawing attention to the practices of restrictions, undemocratic discourse and surveillance techniques, expressing concern for the human rights of the citizens of China, Korea, Turkmenistan, Zimbabwe and Turkey (Carothers and Wong, 2020). A few months later, protests that addressed similar issues affected both the United States and many European countries, while the practice of lockdown was used by the goverenments opponents as a starting point for the critique of violations of human rights and freedom.As an opposition to the mainstream discourse, two representations arise: 1. Covid-19 is not a potentially dangerous virus, which results in a respiratory disease, but a global (narrative, discursive, media and legal) platform for establishing a totalitarian society that requires health passports, travel restrictions and various forms of suppression of socializing; 2.

Covid-19 has health implications, althought they are not the result of a respiratory infectious disease, but a consequence of the usage of the 5G network and the global dominance of technology giants. Both narratives are based on a simple, cognitively accessible structure and operate with notions of enemies, dangers and potential outcomes. They are marked by skepticism in relation to the dominant, public discourse and based on polarized concepts of power and powerlessness, especially, on the map of symbolic geography. These narratives replicate and split, allow re-inclusion of new elements, parameters, actors and symbols, but they retain a similar structure and semantics. Therefore, the following representations that oppose the dominant/mainstreaim interpretation of events related to the pandemic are observed in Serbia:

1. The theory of experimental totalitarianism, according to which Covid-19 is a form of seasonal (harmless) respiratory influenza, and can be cured by the so-called natural remedies, while the actual reason for spreading panic and concealing the information on the cure for Covid -19 is considereda global experiment of 'pharmacomaphia.' The 'cure' is approached environmentally - it is found in the sun, fresh water, air, or in traditional cuisine, endemic plants, authentic species and everything that is restricted to the humanity, exposed to the trends of industrialization and transformation of natural resources into the global capital. Defense is considered to be the unity against enemies (globalist, satanic groups, powerful corporations, and their satellites in Serbia). A discovery ofreality according to which 'virus is not isolated' i.e. 'does not exist', consists of detecting and exposing the small, domineering group of enemies that seek to 'enslave' the rest of the world ('Us').

2. Economic-political: behind the invention/imagining the virus or, behind a potentially real virus, are anonymous corporations who tend to profit from the real or fake illness.

3. Theory of World War III/Third World Order, according to which Covid-19 is caused by sarin or some other deadly poison released from the air. Depending on the political views (ideological position) of the group distributing these representations it could be Germany or the US, while Serbia in this conflict occupies a significant symbolic and geostrategic position (Lazarević Radak, 2011, p. 77).

Theoretical frame

Encouraged by Freud's ideas and taught by the experience of World War II, researchers constructed the F-scale and reconstructed nine traits of anti-democratic personality, among which anti-intraceptiveness, propensity for stereotyping and thinking in black and white categories stand out (Adorno, Horkheimer, 1980). Following the historical experience and trends in which the concept of anti-democratic personality emerged, Adorno (1969) and his co-workers pointed out that authoritarian personality is thinking in rigid categories, uses projection mechanisms and is conservative in political attitudes and beliefs. This group of scientists based their research on the detection and reconstruction of F-factor, as an aspect that makes a person receptive to ideologically produced notions of nation, right-wing and conservative ideology. Erich Fromm (1984, p. 80) took a step further towards understanding these concepts, pointing out the mechanism by which one's thoughts and concepts are placed in the service of socialization. Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* as the culmination of a critical theory of society, synthesizes resistance to capitalism and the

bureaucratic state and points out the dangers of replacing one form of authoritarian government with another one (Marcuse, 1964, p. 40). Hans Eysenck (1998) singles out two opposing temperaments as the root cause of the formation of opposing attitudes and beliefs: *tender-minded* and *tough-minded*. While the former implies an open cognitive structure and the latter a closed one, tought-mindedness is associated with the authoritarian tendencies (Eysenck, 1984, p. 51). Eysenck's conclusion that a higher degree of authoritarianism was found among individuals committed to the left-wing, ideology was criticized, although accusations of concealing quantitative results did not challenge or discredit his work (Christie, 1956a, pp. 411-430). The later linkage between the intelligence and verbal aggression with the left, and submissiveness with the right, remained some of the numerous empirically unprovable notions (Christie, 1956b, pp. 439-451). Although Altemeyer (1981) avoided linking ideology with authoritarianism, his instrument for measuring authoritarianism RWA (righ wing authoritarianism scale) shows submissiveness in a relation to authority, general submissiveness and conventionality of right-wing. Striving to separate ideology and authoritarianism, Milton Rokeach (1960, p. 75) opened a new chapter in these theories, replacing the notion of authoritarianism with a closed cognitive structure. Dogmas, and with them conspiracy theories, do not have to be tied to one political, religious or theoretical point of view, but form a general tendency to rely firmly on closed cognitive structures as opposed to open cognitive thought processes. Modern theorists left the ideological divisions to the past, so Hayek and Oakeshot associate the authoritarian personality with skepticism, cynicism and the aspiration to cognitively accessible solutions (Leslie et al. 2012). Kerlinger (1958, pp. 141-142) starts from the assumption that maintaining the status quo and fear of social

change indicates authoritarian tendencies, so modern researchers depart from the classics of these theories, showing that rigidity, suspicion and dogmatism transcend ideological divisions and arise in a complex interaction of socialization elements and experience.

Conspiracy theories

Whether they claim to defend/critique the right-wing or the left-wing, these theories allow the construction of a general model of belief system based on a structured legitimizing narrative (Douglas, et al., 2019). Relying on Georges Sorel, Raul Girarde concludes that, although conspiracy theory is a fictional, distorted, unreliable, and controversial explanation of reality, the conspiracy narrative holds an explanatory value (Žirarde, 2000, p. 13). Although similar to myth, conspiracy theory belongs to the more general and wider space of political culture (Losev, 2000, p. 10). While conspiracy rhetorics prevails during the 19th century, with its anti-Masonic, anti-right wing and anti-Jesuit forms on the left, they maintaint their dynamic throughout the twentieth century through the Dreyfus affair, the protocols of the Elders of Zion, the influence of the Vatican, the CIA, KGB, fear of the Illuminati, Jesuits, Communists or social control.

Conspiracy theories seem to occupy political and economic power, alter institutions, and threaten established norms, claiming to reveal secrets, relying on experience as much as on imagination in an effort to 'explain' the key causes of significant social and political events and circumstances of secret agreements between two or more influential subjects (Dai, Handley - Schlacher, 2015, pp. 1-16). Understood in this manner, conspiracy theory function as a legitimizing narrative, according to which all important, especially political events

occur as a result of behind-the-scenes actions of powerful groups and individuals (Bojanović, 1998, pp. 327-342). Thus, conspiracy theory awakens fears from the childhood, temporary and cognitively displacing them into adulthood and allowing them to become a representation of reality. Although, conspiracy theories address official institutions (governments), their supporters can accuse any group of malicious efforts, attempts or agreements, thus explaining seemingly cognitively, unrelated subjects and events.

This is how the assumptions about the controllers of the world capital, false landing to the Moon, the real assassin of John F. Kennedy, the seventy-four identities of Josip Broz Tito, and the global fiction – Covid-19 – arise. Conspiracy theorists claim that mislead and uninformed subjects are frighten by health hazards and forced to obey the most abstract and unnamed master (Grzesiak-Feldman, Irzycka, 2009, pp. 389-393). From Lipman to Rokeach, researchers agree that a complex and chaotic reality must be cognitively summarized in order for an individual to orient itself in the multitude of facts that surround him (Rot, 1972). The problems of justice, injustice, truth, lies, good and evil, were defined and determined at an early age, while the acceptance of uncertainty, existential insecurity and suffering, becomes the psychological and social challenge of every individul. The consolation and redirection of existential frustration is provided by the 'discovery of the real enemy' and the 'real', 'hidden' truth. At this point, the conspiracy rise as a narrative of a clichéd plot approachable and acceptable for the largest number of individuals in a modern society (Grzesiak-Feldman, 2015).

Nowadays, conspiracy is associated with the perception of powerful groups as a source of danger, while the world is recognized as a dangerous place full of hidden threats. Conspiracy theory in the form of one's own opinion is

motivated by the need for symbolic satisfaction of relational, epistemological and existential needs, and ensures avoidance of feelings of fear, insecurity, helplessness (Van Prooijen, Nils, 2012). The illusion of knowing the truth about what is happening behind a set of events compensates the lack of power due to the inability to control the situation one faces during the crisis. The assumption and a belief in one's own opinion based on a conspiracy are psychologically and functionally polyvalent (Pipes, 1997). It meets the different needs of people and groups: the need to attack, protect, defend; the need to connect with other people, the need for identity, but also the need for deindividuation and de-indentification; the need to gain power and the need for obedience; the need to be released from responsibility and the need for idolatry all in the name of the highest moral principles (Kecmanović, 1995, p. 128).

The global threat and its context

Quantitative and qualitative research on conspiracy theories related to Covid-19 in the UK such as the one conducted by Hartman et al. (2021) reveal three factors that enable the reconstruction of the conspiracy narrative: 1. The virus originated in the market in Wuhan; 2. It was developed in a Wuhan laboratory; 3. It is caused by a 5G network. Highlighting key elements of authoritarian logic: a. the enemy; b. the motives; and c. the goals, Hartman tests the cognitive abilities and motivation that affect susceptibility to (mis)information. His conclusions suggest motivational and political dispositions and sources according to which there is a strong link between right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), orientation towards social domination (SDO) and a tendency to take information from tabloid sources.

In Serbia, since Covid-19 pandemic was declared, forms of conspiracy theories correspond to current political and economic trends and historical experience. They are available and visible on social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, on the YouTube channel, in the tabloid press and widely available in media that offer a range of television shows, special reports, exclusive guests, alleged and self-proclaimed experts. Insight into this information palette leaves the impression of being overwhelmed by irrelevant information and numerous misinformation. The cacophony of voices in the journalistic market confuses non-experts more often than it educates them. The proliferation of irrelevant, fragmentary news, although manifestly acting as a part of freedom of speach and nurturing democratic discourse, points to the porous pillars of democratic institutions (Fromm, 1984, p. 172).

As a consequence of the production of side news, the multiplication of plots, the private discourse of the citizens of Serbia, reveal general distrust in the available information, especially when they come from national television and institutions associated with the state. Presumably, this is an effect produced by a multiplication of unselected information, which is an opposition to the widely prevailing opinion about 'hiding the real truth about Covid-19'.

The theory of experimental totalitarianism

The first conspiracy theory allegedly includes anti-globalist views and criticizes the government measures against coronavirus as 'a part of the pharmaceutical mafia's plan'. It is characterized by the frequent use of pronouns, change of statements, first person plural, and avoidance of concretization in terms of subjects, temporal and spatial determinants and regarding the figure of the provoker of the covid crisis. They

are based on the abstractions, reffering to titles, recognitions, awards and names of persons which have allegedly 'exposed' the enemy. Arguing her claims, one of the advocates of what I am reffereing to as an experimental totalitarianism, psychologist Mila Alečković (2020a), insists on her knowledge and experience, naming it *French*, which latently opposes 'our', ie domestic (Serbian). She explains her expertise with the knowledge she has 'acquired in the world, referring to the names of 'world science', occasionally using foreign words and expressions in the Serbian language (community/društvo, science fiction/naučna fantastika), names of the organizations, associations, memberships, personal contacts, alleged influence, while pointing out the*real* threat that comes from the *world* – the bearer of globalist tendencies, cruel and immoral profiteering. Pipes (1997) named this kind of conspiracy *the sophistication of the uneducated*, referring to subjects who start from the assumption that they are addressing the uninformed world and reveal them the unknown causes of events or facts that are below several layers of reality. As a result, they feel superior to other people (Pipes, 1997).

> This is a banal virus, indisputably dangerous for certain population, but everything else is inflated, false, the statistics are false, the test is false. I said without any facts and without data in March, based on my clinical intuition that I had been building for decades in France and America, where I have lived, that this was an experiment, a variant of Stanley Milgram's experiment. (Alečković, 2020a).

Dichotomizations in the discourse exclude neutrality implying the introduction and multiplication of demarcations. In the stereotypical manner of conspiracy theory, the defender of justice has a moral obligation to discover the truth, in order to save the group (regional, ethnic, national, confessional). As

Rade Bojanović (1998, pp. 327-342) concludes, according to conspiracy theorists, the centers of conspiracy are individuals with their powerful organizations who want to take over the world or destroy it, and they are opposed by the best examples of the human race.

> What I said, I did not say. I transmitted that, because my field is the human psyche, that is, psychology and psychiatry. And what I said about the viruses, about ribonucleic acid, about the new vaccine, we all know what it is; about the drugs that were taken here, bought, obtained, ordered criminally. It was my moral obligation to convey what the best French medicine... (Alečković, 2020a).

Conspiracy is based on the simplifying image of social reality and ignoring the fact that events have numerous causes. All events are related to the deliberate decisions of the conspirators. As the assessment of events as threatening and fatal progresses, individuals intensify their search for drastic causes, for the evil machinations of a small number of individuals or groups (Kecmanović, 1999, p. 22). The necessity of demarcation functions as the supreme principle of relations between people, and a small number of enemies. It helps "our" group to formulate arguments more easily, make them more convincing and emotionally colored by referring to their traits as evil, ill-intentioned. Negative assessment acts as a cognitive scheme of "our" (positive, good) perception of "others" who are bad and evil. Such a structural expansion of negativity implies a series of projections, externalizations, and distortions:

At the begining, we said that in this so-called covid affair, in fact, covid crime, this covidgate as it is popularly called, all is connected. It's like you have a paranoid mind, but in this case, it's the bright mind that connected it all because it's about economics, bank thieves, pharmaceutical thieves, satanic

criminals and of course, political criminals. So they are all connected into one small, world, minority, globalist minority, as opposed to us, the sovereign peoples, below, who are the vast majority. (Alečković, 2020a).

Conspiracy theories usually contain three basic elements: a powerful secret evil group, which strives for global hegemony; a naive population - agents who expand these influences and a brave group of people capable of preventing a catastrophe. But the most common form of conspiracy does not have such a complex form and could be defined in a simple way: "someone must be behind it" (Bojanović, 1998). The ultimate consequence of accepting conspiracy theories is the reality of a behind-the-scenes action that calls into question the existence of the world around us. As conspiracy theories start from the assumption that the entire reality is an illusion, the very conspiracy seems absurd. Within this image of the world, nothing is accidental and meaningless, while the explicit or implicit view is that all the events were planned by centers of power, and that behind the world stands a hidden hand that unmistakably manages everything. Popper (1963) calls this perception of the world quasi-determinism. The victims of the conspiracy are the whole world, nations, and larger and smaller ethnic and other groups. Victims of conspiracy can be, in a more or less indirect way, individuals as well.

Catastrophic predictions make it possible to express the belief that an individual has a special mission and a special place in the fight against conspiracy theorists. Although it begins with claims that the pandemics threatens sovereign people, the vulnerability and awareness of the necessity of conflict is shifting outside the region, revealing a belief in the struggle for principles that have broader meanings, implications, and repercussions. Representing and constructing an "internal enemy" reveals the representations that are

deposited along historical discourse as elements of a traumatic narrative and the associated with a tendency to return to common places and past events (Žirarde, 2000). Like any other mythic struggle, this one becomes one in a series of folklore representations about the conflict between the forces of light / good and evil / darkness. Within the framework of this representation on the pandemic, the geo-symbolic position of Serbia is reversibly approached, to restore its power and the central symbolic role inherent to the Balkanist discourse (Lazarević Radak, 2011). This finally mobilizes the image of an "enemy". Although the link between an enemy and the virus is not as direct as the one within the representation of the "Chinese virus" in the United States, it supports the images of vulnerable society/nation, and strengthens the image of its citizens as the victims. Therefore, the thesis is replaced - the virus is not the enemy, the enemy is the (confessional, national, ideological, economic, symbolic) Other. The position of the enemy is fluid and displaceable. While in the previous quotes, it has been embodied in the "servants of globalism", "satanism", "world crime", or the "government" that implies dangerous, malicious "measures" against the people of Serbia, his position becomes external. The "external" and "internal" enemies thus become one, universal figure on which emotions can be projected. The conspiracy between the internal and external enemy becomes implicit:

> The vaccine, it's a weapon, it's a Kalashnikov, it's a needle that tortures you every day. Every day, an ordinary person opens a computer and immediately sees a needle and spacesuits. It is a modern Nazi. It is, in fact, that World War II rifle. It's a new weapon. And that gun to the forehead. I came from Kosovo. They take Serbs out

of the bus at 5 in the morning, there...Shqiptar.[1]{...] What is the symbolism of a gun to the forehead? It's a film, a Goebbels script. (Alečković, 2020b).

Manichaean logic establishes the desire to oppose the "enemy" who embodies the danger (Todorov, 2010, p. 150). Since "we" are in danger of being victims of "criminal aspirations", an "invisible enemy", which is, presumably, ontologically unstable (unprovable) by the very identification of an ontologically stable "enemy", the aspiration to win over "evil forces" is legitimized (Todorov, 1989, p. 92).

'Economic-political' virus

One of the functions of conspiracy theories is to reduce frustration and to reduce the fear. Detecting malignant groups that threaten society and the individual, no matter how abstract they may be, enables the reduction of anxiety and their alleviation during the crisis such as a pandemic. As a representative of "natural immunity", a pediatric pulmonologist and a retired professor of medicine, Branimir Nestorović transfers epidemiological, virological and health issues onthe political, nationaland popular-historical field:

> You see, when this has been (Covid 19), we have learned that some populationare hypersensitive to certain diseases... For example, when this coronavirus began, then it turned out that Italians are very sensitive and Spanish, Mediterranean people, so for a long time they didn't know what it was about, so it turned out that they have a receptor for that protease that this virus uses to enter the cell much more often than other people. So

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[1] She uses the term *Šiptar* for Albanian and referring to measuring body temperature.

there's a lot of genetics here. Let's say we have one evolutionary advantage. We, Serbs have suffered a lot from tuberculosis. Those who have suffered a lot from tuberculosis, they have developed resistance to many infections. (Nestorović, 2020).

The belief that the members of "our" national group are in any sense stronger, more valuable, more successful, than the members of other group, is linked with the representation of ethnic superiority. Crises are usually marked by insecurity and anxiety about one's own existence and require a sense of togetherness, belonging and security. The discourse of consolation is transferred to the economic plan where vaccination is presented in terms of the global race for a capital, which enables the transfer of the objects of fear, anxiety, uncertainty and aggression on a platform where these emotions can be released. The space of the economic and financial, as represented by Nestorović, is abstract, while the "enemy" is symbolically and physically distant:

> The current topic is vaccine. There is a lot of money in the game. It's a huge amount of money. Especially now with these millions of doses they mention, 50, 100, 150… I mean, that's pure politics. (…) It has nothing to do with the vaccine anymore. Lobbying – financially, politically, as you wish – interest. (Nestorović, 2020).

The issue of vaccination is shifting from the economic to the political level, which introduces some of the key figures in conspiracy theories. This allows, albeit latently, the process of re-imagining a conflict in which one group becomes a victim. As one of the common themes of conspiracy theory, the "sacrificial lamb" has three most important aspects: the theme of damage, endangerment and the theme of the culprit (Wallerstein, 1983). In accordance with the first one, the

economic, social and cultural development of a community is systematically hindered. Real or imagined degradation of the narcissistic image, real or assumed threat or damage that has already been done, in the moments of crisis leads to narcissistic excitement and a loss of an optimal image of the community (Kecmanović, 1997, p. 134). In accordance with the second theme, the one about endangerment, there is a narrative about exposure to an undesirable situation. Encouraging feelings of vunerability can increase group cohesion and remove attention from personal, health, economic, and other aspects of life. The theme of the culprit is supported by various mechanisms by which the "other" becomes the target of aggression. Labeled as the culprit for "accidents" and "troubles", it enables the redirection of aggression through a reversible representation of "us – the guilty ones":

> I like what is happening, because we constantly hear how primitive we are, guilty. In our country elections are stolen; in our country elections are irregular. If we look further, now, the most democratic country in the world that has been teaching us lessons for fifty years. Today is the twentieth day of the election and the winner is unknown and there is no indication of who will be. The other day I heard from a friend of mine from America and she says:' here they forgot about the coronavirus, here is Trump and Biden, I mean, that's the main news. (Nestorović, 2020).

The assumptions about Covid 19, are permeate by ambiguities in the reflections on US policy, as well as on the place of Serbia on the geo-symbolic map of the world. The topic of the pandemic is less medical but more political: "I'm glad it's going on like that there. I'm always glad when they forget

about us. (...) When the Twin Towers fell, I thought they would accuse the Serbs again" (Nestorović, 2020).

Theory of the New World Order

Alek Račić claims that Covid-19 is a war poison. He re-examines his thesis, enables the creation of an atmosphere of doubt, multiplies dangers and ambiguities, but, returning to the framework of the history of memory, defending knowledge, institutions, structure and discipline, which in his opinion were encouraged in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:

> Then, what is Covid 19, why classify it as a coronavirus?" (…) It could only be the war poison sarin (…) Maybe some more war poison, because that is it. One has to wear gas masks, because poisons are inhaled. We had civil protection exercises, I remember, all over Yugoslavia. They forced us to do that and showed us such pictures. So, it's as if the younger internet population, which doesn't know, is chosen here… We don't have the data that we learned forty years or thirty-five years ago… Because, these poisons could have been released during, say, the third world war. (Račić, 2020).

At the very beginning of the pandemic, within the history of memory, in Serbia, the comparison of "once" and "now" becomes striking. Yugoslavia was represented as an "efficient state", while Josip Broz Tito was represented as a "good" dictator who protected the population of Yugoslavia from a number of infectious and potentially deadly diseases. One of the examples was the vaccination against small pox in 1972. A return to a nostalgic and idealized past has a calming effect on individuals facing a health and, consequently, social crisis (Žirarde, 2000).

Representatives of the "theory" according to which great powers are fighting for dominance by poisoning the inhabitants of Serbia are Velibor Vukašinović and Dejan Lučić who similar to Alečković recalls representation of World War II:

> Anyone can kill Serbs. They can poison us, they can infect us with covid, they can poison us with covid because covid is obviously, also a poison. It's not just foreigners who do that, before the start of this show, a friend of mine from Zajecar called me and said; a two-engine plane is flying above us and dusting us. (Lučić, Vukašinović, Stefanović, 2020).

While Vukašinović uses the thesis of global domination and HARP technology, the latter mobilizes repressed discourses from World War II – Serbs / Germans, victims / executioners, barbarism, the necessity of struggle and violence). In the meantime, Lučić also introduces the figure of the "inner enemy":

> These are not German planes; this is someone from here who is poisoning. I received the following information: Operation Covid has the goal in creating the Fourth Reich. The Germany is the promoter of the new world order. What is the ideology of killing people on the planet? It is an ideology of eugenics that originated in Great Britain, and which was fiercely implemented by Adolf Hitler, who was trained in Britain in 1912. The Fourth Reich is being created. In 2008, they (the Germans) announced what they will do with the corona virus when it appears. You can check in their Bundestag. But, according to Lučić, the "external plan" has a wider implication. The goal is a liberation from the occupation of the United States, conquest of economically failed Europe, destruction of Great Britain and, of course, positioning, independently in China, Iran and Japan (…) Germans are our enemies, they committed genocide

against us three times in the twentieth century, they are barbarians, they are criminals, they never stopped killing us. I would like to remind you that Serbia, that is, Yugoslavia, did not sign peace with Germany. We are still officially at war with Germany. (Lučić, Vukašinović, Stefanović, 2020).

Fear of the "known" enemy is one of the most common in dogma, myth and conspiracy theory. As a part of traumatic experiences and, consequently, long-lasting narratives, old enemies can easily become "new" hidden provokers of conflict. Because of their universality, they easily provoke hostile feelings against any national, confessional group, international, regional organization, or, political party.

Conclusions

The onset of the global covid crisis was marked by concerns about the absence of democratic discourse, the consolidation of totalitarian regimes and the threat to human rights and freedom. Along with these trends, interest in the largely neglected theory of authoritarianism was renewed in sociology and social psychology and gave results in the representative research of the attitudes and beliefs of British and US citizens. By placing key narratives about the origins and implications of Covid19 in the global context, their most frequent forms adapted to local circumstances in Serbia were analyzed. As a consequence of uncertainty, conspiracy is present in many countries affected by the covid crisis. Variations on the theme of conspiracy depend on local circumstances, on the history of memory, on culturally constructed fears, and are widely available in modern, democratic societies. Nowadays, conspiracy theories fulfill a dual role. Namely, their proponents and supporters are mostly politically passive subjects. They

express their dissatisfaction on social networks, in a torrent of side news, in the framework of peaceful and meaningless protests, and enabling the functioning and reproduction of the existing system and its institutions. Modern and post-industrial democratic societies have replaced concrete ones with anonymous authorities, and the atmosphere of anomie is repeatedly affected by the theatralization of rebellion. Having in mind changes in values patterns in Serbia in the last thirty years, its Yugoslav socialist and pre-Yugoslav patriarchal past, authoritarianism with its inseparable elements of fear, aggression, imagining the alles and enemies seems as a logical consequence that becomes visible during the covid crisis. In the past decades, empiricial researches exposed high levels of authoritarianism, while, since 2003 – 2018. Findings reveal a growing support to general authoritarianism and organic nationalism, as a result of unfavorable economic and political situation (Petrović and Radoman, 2019). The feeling of endangerousnessand insecurity as inseparable part of the covid crisis include some of the key figures of dogma as a part of authoritarian perception.

The exposed and analyzed conspiracy narratives, in different, although similar ways, single out the basic components of authoritarian logic (enemy, plot / myth / theory and imagining the outcome), but their replication and adoption remain in the service of maintaining the status quo, obedience, reproducing borrowed opinion and the squandering of productive critical thought.

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