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Table of contents

Original Article

Overweight, obesity, and reality television: Exploring health data and the popularity of local versions of *The Biggest Loser* in the European context

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Abstract
With rates of overweight and obesity on the rise around the world, there have been numerous reality television shows dedicated to this complex and enduring issue. This exploratory contribution outlines the global epidemiological situation relating to overweight and obesity in the European context, before seeking to discover whether there is any linkage between the rates of overweight in a given European country and the popularity – as demonstrated through the number of seasons broadcast – of the local version of the weight-loss reality show *The Biggest Loser*. Through the analysis of online sources, preliminary data is gained, providing useful information for further research on the topic at a later date.

Keywords: *The Biggest Loser*, weight loss, obesity statistics, BMI, obesity rates, reality television

Introduction

Although the world is currently in the grip of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, another serious epidemiological situation remains a threat to the planet. According to figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO), global rates of overweight and obesity have skyrocketed over the last four decades, with almost 2 billion people recorded as being overweight and 650 million suffering from obesity (World Health Organisation, 2021). Indeed, the current coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the challenges faced by a world that is growing increasingly fatter, with obesity listed as one of the major risk factors for COVID-19-related complications and fatalities (see, for example Mahase, 2020; Alberca et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2021).

Humanity's growing waistline has been well-documented not only in the medical domain, but also in various fields of the humanities and social sciences. This has included historical, cultural, and sociological approaches as well as new fields of interdisciplinary research such as fat studies and critical weight studies (for example, see Gilman, 2008; Monaghan, 2013; Monaghan, Colls, & Evans, 2013; Pausé & Taylor, 2021; etc.). Outside of academia, as outlined by Peltier & Mizock (2012, p. 93), society's increasing preoccupation with overweight and obesity has also attracted the attention of the media and entertainment sectors. This has led to the development of related reality television shows, many of which originated in the United States and have subsequently been adapted and remade in various countries and languages across the globe.

The genesis for the current contribution develops from the author's previous research (Hoyte-West, 2020) on strategies used to translate the title of the internationally popular weight-loss reality show *The Biggest Loser* in its various European versions. The findings noted that there were certain geographical and linguistic similarities between the translated titles. In addition, there was a demonstrated link between the English proficiency of a given European market and the decision to either translate the title into the local language or retain the original English-language title, complete with its inherent wordplay. During the course of that research study, it was noticed that there were demonstrable national differences in the popularity of the show, even between neighbouring countries and/or nations with similar linguistic or cultural backgrounds. For example, in some countries, only one season was shown, whereas in other countries the show was much more popular and multiple seasons were broadcast. Accordingly, it was noted there was sufficient scope for further exploratory research on the topic.

Though it was recognised that there are many factors at play both in the spheres of entertainment media and of public health, in the first instance it was decided to conduct a small-scale exploratory study to examine if there were any links between the rates of overweight in a given country and the popularity of *The Biggest Loser* television series. In the first instance, therefore, the current epidemic of overweight and obesity in the European context will be outlined, before the televisual concept of *The Biggest Loser* is introduced and contextualised. Subsequently, the contribution's methodological approach will be outlined, before the relevant health-related data is presented and analysed.

Obesity, overweight, and *The Biggest Loser*: an overview

Although the WHO notes that obesity has grown to epidemic proportions (World Health Organisation, 2021), some believe that the situation has worsened to pandemic level (e.g. Egger & Swinburn, 1997; The Lancet Gastroenterology & Hepatology, 2021). Indeed, in several European countries around two-thirds of the population suffer from overweight or obesity (European Commission, 2021), with the issue concerning enough for the European Parliament to recently launch an MEP interest group on obesity and health systems resilience (European Association for the Study of Obesity, 2021). This year, the European Commission also officially recognised obesity as a chronic disease (Burki, 2021).

With overweight and obesity defined by the WHO as "abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health" (World Health Organisation, 2021), the commonly accepted major scale to measure the condition is the Body Mass Index (BMI). Originally developed by the Belgian statistician and social scientist Adolphe Quetelet in the nineteenth century (Eknoyan, 2008), the index defines a BMI of 25 as overweight, and a BMI of above 30 as obese (World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe, 2021). The physiological impacts of overweight and obesity are well-known (for example, see Must et al., 1999; Pi-Sunyer, 2009) and these include chronic conditions such as diabetes mellitus type 2, as well as cardiovascular and circulatory issues such as elevated risks of hypertension and strokes. As has been previously mentioned, obesity has been noted as one of the main risk factors for COVID-19 complications (Alberca et al., 2021; Gao et al., 2021). Research has also indicated that obesity can also negatively impact mental health and psychological well-being (for example, see Romain, Marleau, & Baillot, 2018; Chauvet-Gelinier et al., 2019).

As noted previously (Peltier & Mizock, 2012), growing popular interest in the obesity crisis led to corresponding interest from the media and entertainment sector, especially in the United States, where the first season of *The Biggest Loser* premiered in 2004. Its success meant that the original show was broadcast in almost a hundred countries around the world, with more than two dozen local versions subsequently made for European and other markets (Zimdars, 2021, p. 60). In essence, the show is based on a straightforward competitive "up or out" format. Over the course of a series, a group of obese participants are isolated from the outside world in the "Biggest Loser" camp. Under the supervision of personal trainers, they vie with each other to lose the largest percentage of their initial bodyweight through intensive exercise, group challenges, and healthy eating. The drama is maximised through competitive weekly weigh-ins and the elimination of a poorly-performing candidate. At the show's finale, the winner gains the coveted title of "Biggest Loser" and a substantial financial reward.

Although the show generally proved popular with viewers (in the US it has had eighteen seasons), and numerous contestants successfully lost vast amounts of weight (see Greenwood-Robinson, 2008, pp. 1-37), the series has also proved controversial. In the first instance, some observed that the intensive exercise regimes and rapid weight loss displayed by contestants on the programmes were unrealistic and possibly dangerous (for example, see Hall, 2013; Klos et al., 2015), and that these may have profound effects on participants' metabolic systems (see Kolata, 2016 and Fothergill et al., 2016; although these findings were debated by Kuchnia et al., 2016). As also noted elsewhere, the series has been criticised by former participants for the way they felt they were treated during their time on the show and for fat-shaming and stigmatising overweight and obese people in general (e. g. Yoo, 2013; Callahan, 2015; Fell, 2016; Greenleaf et al., 2019). In response to criticisms about the unsustainable nature of the weight loss portrayed in *The Biggest Loser*, a spin-off show, *The Big Fat Truth*, which featured former contestants who had regained the weight they had originally lost, was also broadcast (Brodwin, 2017). In addition, the original American version of *The Biggest Loser* took a four-year hiatus between the seventeenth and eighteenth series, returning in 2020. Accordingly, though this most recent series promised to address these concerns via a new and updated format (e.g. Dehnart, 2020; USA Network, 2021) the show's return also came in for criticism (e.g. Bernyk, 2020; Gilbert, 2020).

In the European context, however, local versions of *The Biggest Loser* have enjoyed significant levels of popularity in certain countries but not in others. In Europe, too, the programme has received criticism, including with regard to the long term effectiveness of the weight loss regimen portrayed (for example, see Hamann, 2016; Köhler, 2019). However, the criticism has generally not been so sustained and intense as in the US, and the show remains popular in certain markets and several contestants who successfully lost weight have been profiled (e.g. Nový Čas, 2019; Roeder, 2019; Helmbrecht, 2021). Over a decade after their first broadcasts, local versions are either still shown or are planned in Germany, Finland, Sweden, and Ukraine.

As has been outlined briefly above, *The Biggest Loser* has been the object of both scholarly and popular attention, including examinations from sociological, communication, and public-health-related perspectives. As noted previously, these have largely focused on the American version of the show, as well as on the Australian incarnation of the series (for example, see Thomas, Hyde, & Komesaroff, 2007; Monson, Donaghue, & Gill, 2016; Smith & Bonfiglioli, 2019). However, it appears that comparatively little research has examined local versions of *The Biggest Loser* with regard to the wider European context, especially with a focus on exploring any possible links between the show's popularity and macro level topics such as rates of overweight or obesity in a given country. Accordingly, this small-scale exploratory study is both novel and relevant.

Research question and methodology

In the light of the preceding overview, it was decided to conduct exploratory research relating to possible links between the percentage of overweight people in a given country and the popularity of the relevant domestic version of *The Biggest Loser*. Accordingly, the following research question was devised:

- Is there any link between the percentage of people with a BMI >25 in a given country and the number of seasons broadcast of its version of *The Biggest Loser*?

Building on the author's previous study, it was decided to limit the countries analysed to those European countries – and selected candidate countries – which had developed local versions of the show and which also had reliable and consistent health data available.

Regarding national levels of overweight, a variety of potential data sources were considered. In the first instance, data from the OECD was considered (OECD, 2021), but was not chosen because not all of the countries that made domestic versions of *The Biggest Loser* were covered. Data from the WHO, though comprehensive, came from 2016 (World Health Organisation, 2021). As such, it was decided to use relevant statistical data from the European Commission (2021a) which referred to the year 2019 and covered all of the countries selected.

In terms of the local versions of *The Biggest Loser*, the relevant Wikipedia page was used as a starting point (Wikipedia, 2021a), and the information there was then verified and cross-checked with the official websites of television channels and local media to determine whether the programmes formed part of *The Biggest Loser* concept in appearance and format. As noted in the author's previous study (Hoyte-West, 2020, p. 78) this stage was crucial as there are several weight-loss-focused television programmes listed on the Wikipedia page that are not part of the show (for example, see *La Báscula* in Spain (Canal Sur, 2021); *De Afvallers* in The Netherlands (Wikipedia, 2021b)). In addition, the collaborative nature of Wikipedia means that there were some errors listed, particularly regarding the number of seasons; this also proved challenging to verify, given the time that had elapsed in some cases and the multilingual nature of the source material. Nonetheless, every effort was made according to the best of the researcher's ability to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained.

Data and analysis

Building on the review of the relevant literature and the methodological approach outlined above, this section presents the data and analysis regarding the research question.

Table 1: Number of seasons by country

Country	Title of local version(s)	Seasons broadcast
Croatia (HR)	*Život na vagi*	4
Finland (FI)	*Suurin pudottaja*	4
Germany (DE)	*The Biggest Loser Germany*	13
Hungary (HU)	*A Nagy Fogyás*	1
Latvia (LV)	*XXL*	1
The Netherlands (NL)	*The Biggest Loser Holland*	1
Norway (NO)	*Biggest Loser Norge*	1
Poland (PL)	*Co masz do stracenia?*	1
Portugal (PT)	*Peso Pesado*	3

Romania (RO)	*Marele câştigator*	1
Slovakia (SK)	*Supertelo; Najväčší vitaz*	2
Slovenia (SI)	*The Biggest Loser Slovenija*	3
Sweden (SE)	*The Biggest Loser Sverige*	11 (10 + 1 celebrity version)
Turkey (TR)	*Yeni Bir Hayat*	1

Source: Elaboration by the author, based on Wikipedia (2021a)

As noted in Table 1, the scope of the study encompassed fifteen local versions of *The Biggest Loser* in fourteen different countries (two versions with different names were made in Slovakia). Multiple seasons of the show have been broadcast in half of the countries. The highest number of seasons have been shown in Germany and Sweden, where special celebrity versions of the show have also been made. However, in the remaining seven markets just one seasons was shown.

Table 2: Percentage of overweight population (BMI >25) by country

Country	**% Population with BMI >25**
Croatia (HR)	65
Finland (FI)	59
Germany (DE)	54
Hungary (HU)	60
Latvia (LV)	58
The Netherlands (NL)	50
Norway (NO)	51
Poland (PL)	58
Portugal (PT)	56

Romania (RO)	59
Slovakia (SK)	59
Slovenia (SI)	58
Sweden (SE)	51
Turkey (TR)	59

Source: European Commission (2021)

Table 2 shows the relevant data on rates of overweight among the population of a given country. It is notable that all of the countries surveyed record more than 50% of the population as having a BMI greater than 25. The highest figures, were noted in Croatia and Hungary. The highest figures were noted in Croatia (60%) and Hungary (59%), and the lowest rates in The Netherlands (50%) as well as the two Scandinavian countries featured, Norway and Sweden (both at 51%).

Chart 1: Number of seasons of local versions vs percentage of overweight population

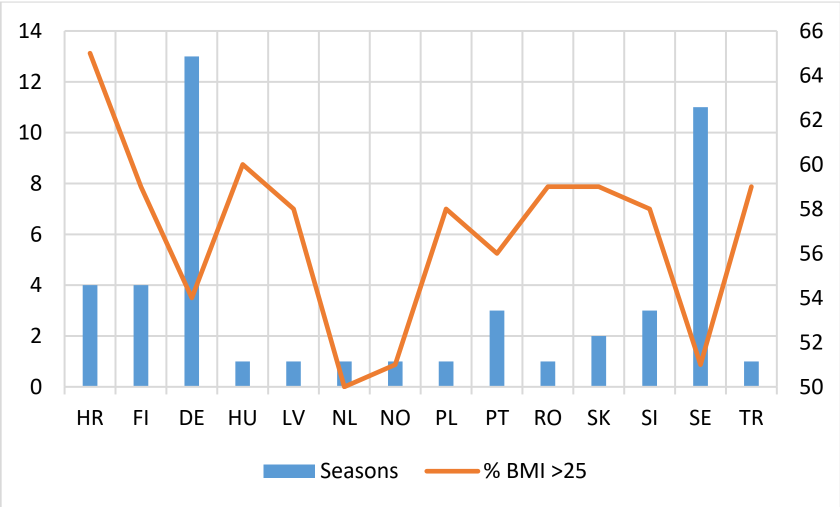
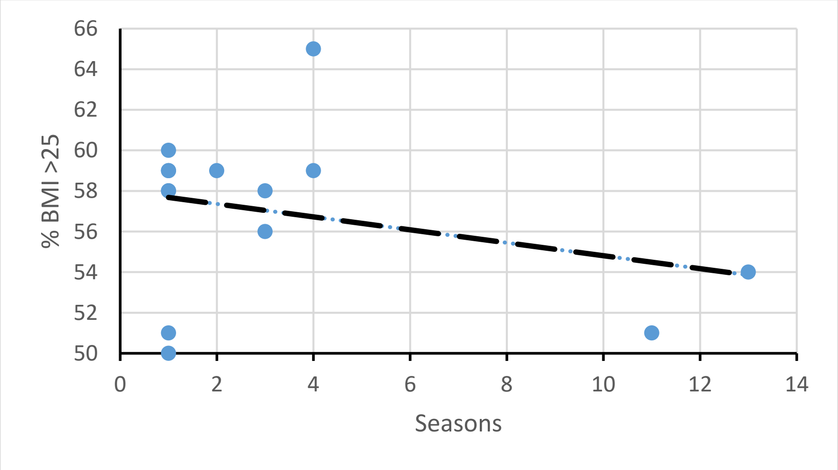


Chart 2: Scatter graph presenting the number of seasons of local versions vs percentage of overweight population



The above two charts analyse the data outlined in Tables 1 and 2. As presented in Chart 1, the number of seasons for each nation is plotted as bars, and the corresponding percentage of overweight is shown as a line graph. Chart 2 plots the values of both the number of seasons and the corresponding percentage of overweight in a scatter graph, which has allowed for a trend line to be drawn.* In broad terms, this illustrates that for the twelve nations where there have been four or fewer seasons, there is a range of rates of overweight among the population; however, the overall average of the overweight population for these countries is several percentage points higher than for the two countries (Germany and Sweden) where substantially more seasons have been broadcast. Accordingly, this demonstrates that there is a possible correlation between the rates of overweight in a given country and the number of seasons

*Two of the points on the scatter plot in Chart 2 contain the data for two countries.

shown of the relevant local version of *The Biggest Loser*. It should be noted, however, that this initial analysis has only looked at the percentage of overweight population in absolute terms based on the data from 2019 (European Commission, 2021).

Accordingly, it is clear that there are other factors which may be at play. Further work could usefully examine whether nations with many seasons of the series had experienced national-level reductions in their overweight percentages over this period. Additionally, factors relating to the production, broadcasting, and the reception of the show by audiences could be investigated. Indeed, as Duthie & Brown (2015) observe, there are myriad factors involved in creating and casting a reality television series, and furthermore, as noted by Webster & Ksiazek (2012), the general media landscape has changed significantly over the past few years, a development which has led to increasing audience fragmentation. As such, data on audience size may need to be accommodated at a future point in the research study; for example, a media article about the Polish version of the show highlighted the low viewing figures it received (Rutkowska, 2008). In addition, a further factor explaining the absence of any clear linkage may be the availability of other weight loss-based reality television shows. For example, only one season of the local version of *The Biggest Loser* was made in The Netherlands and in Romania, and just two in Slovakia. However, shows with a similar premise were renewed for multiple seasons, including the aforementioned *De Afvallers* and also *Obese (NL)* in The Netherlands (RTL, 2021), *Ajutor! Vreau să slăbesc!* in Romania (Prima TV, 2021), and *Extrémne premeny Slovensko* in Slovakia (Televízia Markíza, 2021).

Concluding remarks

Having analysed the relevant background and data, the findings of the study appear to indicate that there does appear to be a potential correlation between the popularity of the local versions of *The Biggest Loser* – expressed through the number of seasons broadcast – and the rates of overweight in each country. However, given the preliminary nature of this exploratory study, significant further research will be required. This includes a deeper examination of the televisual landscape of each of the relevant countries, thus providing a panorama which includes reference to other weight loss-related shows. In addition, data regarding viewing figures, as well as qualitative analyses of relevant coverage in traditional and online media sources, might offer further contextualisation and deeper scope for analysis. With regard to potential limitations of the study, the choice to use the EU-based data sources meant that countries such Iceland, Russia, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom were excluded from the analysis, even though local versions of the show had been made there and had run for several series. It was recognised, though, that due to the exploratory nature of this study, relevant data regarding these countries could be incorporated into a later stage of the research project. Accordingly, in providing a foundation for further work, this exploratory overview has offered several possibilities for development which may prove to be impactful in the future. Indeed, as levels of overweight and obesity continue to rise across Europe and the world as a whole, the topic will certainly remain important over the years and decades to come.

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Original Article

Negotiating Identity During the Macedonia's Name Change Period in Media Discourse

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Abstract
The name is an essential mark of one's identity, and if someone is pressured to change it under any circumstances it would naturally lead to feelings of uncertainty, fear, anxiety and doubt, because it is not only important how people see themselves, but also how they want to be seen by others, as well as how others see them. This paper analyses the discursive processes used by the media sources to negotiate and construct the identity of Macedonians in the period before and after the change of the name of the country from the Republic of Macedonia into the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019. Taking interaction and language as central to the construction, enactment and negotiation of identity, a corpus of 20 articles of both pro- and anti-governmental newspaper outlets, written before, during and after the name change were analysed and parallels were drawn in terms of the language used by both media sources to discuss the identity of Macedonian people. The analysis showed that while the pro-governmental media were attempting to portray a new identity of Macedonians in the EU, the anti-governmental ones presented the name-change as a threat to a complete identity loss (Trajkova, 2020). This situation left the Macedonian citizen confused, scared and in doubt of what was the right or wrong path to take.

Key words: *identity construction, name-change issue, newspaper outlets, discursive processes*

Introduction

This paper was inspired by the change of the name of my country from Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia at the beginning of 2019, after the Government signed an agreement, known as Prespa Agreement (Преспански договор, Συμφωνία των Πρεσπών), with Greece, to end a three-decade-long dispute over the name between the two countries. Although the negotiations between the two involved parties were followed and aided by foreign mediators, they were unsuccessful for a long time, and, consequently, Greece vetoed Macedonia's accession to the EU and NATO.

During this time, especially during the last year of negotiations, people's dissatisfaction and frustration with the whole situation was often expressed on the social media (Trajkova and Neshkovska, 2018, Neshkovska and Trajkova, 2020a; 2020b). According to Neshkovska and Trajkova's findings (2020a, p.48), the social media (SM) users' posts and comments were abundant with negative lexis (swear and curse words, threats) and rhetorical figures (metaphors and irony), as well as expressive and assertive speech acts. The SM users mostly assumed the roles of analysts and judges of the whole political situation. In addition, the media constant reports on the negotiations' progress influenced people's opinions, especially in the final year of negotiations when a change in media reporting as well as in people's attitude could be noticed. Some media sources started promoting the idea that if the name was changed, the country's integration in the EU and NATO was guaranteed, and EU and NATO were associated with a positive change for the better, in a direction of social and financial prosperity. As a result, while most of the Macedonian citizens were still resistant to the idea, some started to accept the "inevitable fact" that if the name was changed, the country will prosper as a new member of the EU and NATO (Trajkova, 2020, p.68). According to Trajkova (2020), both pro- and anti-government oriented media sources created threat frames to portray the name issue from completely opposing perspectives, which contributed to this division among the people. The main issue, however, floating on the surface as an unresolved query for everyone, especially for those against the name change, was whether the country and its citizens will preserve their Macedonian identity or it will maybe be forever changed and lost. The pro- and anti-government oriented media seemed to have a different understanding of the future prospects of the country and its identity and their perspectives were reflected in their articles.

Therefore, this paper aims to investigate how the identity of Macedonian people was discursively constructed and negotiated in both pro- and anti-government oriented media in the last year of negotiations. In line with the research presented in Trajkova (2020), the current analysis also focuses on data gathered from media sources published before, during and after the name change. More precisely, it analyses articles gathered in three different periods: 1) the period right before and after the signing of the so-called Prespa Agreement by the authorities of the two countries, on 12th June 2018; 2) the period right before and after the referendum, which took place on 30th September and at which the Macedonian citizens were supposed to express their opinion for or against the name change, and 3) the period right before and after the Prespa agreement was ratified by the Parliament, and the name was officially changed on 11th February, 2019.

Identity construction: A discourse perspective

Historically, identity has been associated with the concept of the self (De Fina, 2011, p.265), and viewed as an isolated, self-contained entity. However, in the last few decades, the studies of identity within discourse focus more on the role of interaction in the creation of personal and social worlds and the contribution of language to socio-cultural processes (De Fina, 2011, p. 264). As a result of this shift of focus towards the social nature of self, a new paradigm, known as social constructionist paradigm, has emerged (see De Fina, Schiffrin and Bamberg, 2006). Critical towards the traditional view of identity, it sees individuals as situated in and constituted by the social and cultural contexts in which they find themselves (Wertsch 1997).

Bamberg et al. (2011, p. 180) differentiate between two opposing views within discourse-focused approaches to identity - one, which sees a person as constructed in and through existing discourses, which, following Gee (1999), they call 'capital-D discourses', and the other one in which a person constructs who they are by use of discourse, or in Gee's terms, the 'small-d discourses'. According to Bamberg et al. (2011) these two conceptualizations differ in terms of agency and control and have led to different ways of doing discourse analysis. The theorists whom they associate with capital-D discourses, Habermas, Foucault and Lyotard, view discourse in the form of "discourse ethics" (Habermas 1979), "regimes of truth" (Foucault 1972), or "discourse genres" (Lyotard 1984), as central for the interface of society and individual actions. For Foucault, people have no "real" identity within themselves, and he refers to "technologies of the self" as ways in which individuals, through their engagement in communal practices, produce particular modes of identity. Social practices are imposed on individuals by culture, society and communal norms and thus identities derive from already existing repertoires (Foucault, 1988, p. 11). On the other hand, the theorists associated with the 'small-d discourses' (e.g. Harris, 1952, Levinson, 1983, Schiffrin, 1994) are more interested in the actual choices made by the speakers as manifestations of how they make sense of the social context, that is in what they call "presentation of the self in everyday interactions" (Kopytowska, 2012, p. vi).

So, the focus shifted from "being" to "doing" (De Fina et al., 2006, Bamberg et al., 2011; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005) i.e. identity is not something that one has but something that one does or performs and recreates through interaction (Butler, 1990, De Fina et al., 2006, Bamberg et al., 2011; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005; Widdicombe, 1998). Identity is thus discursively created, complex, and dynamic depending on the roles and contexts in which people display themselves (see, for example, Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson, 2005; Stets and Burke, 2000; Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995; Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). It is a *process*, which is always in a state of *negotiation* (McMillin, 2009; Bauman, 2004) and a state of *being* and *becoming,* it is constantly (re)created and co-constructed in interactive relationships (Wodak, 2012, p. 216).

As interaction and language are central to the construction, enactment and negotiation of identity, language and identity have a dialectic relationship. People define reality through language and language manifests the reality of people's identity. Or, explained through Pennycook's (2000, 2003) concept of "performativity", this means that people do not use language based on their identity but, instead, perform their identity using language. According to De Fina et. al. (2006, p.3), it is the researcher's aim to "look into this dynamic process of interlocutors moving in and out of different identities as they are - performed, enacted and embodied through a variety of linguistic and non-linguistic means in discourse".

In today's globalized world, the society and communication are subject to constant change (Kopytowska, 2012). Mediatization has transformed society through the technological development of communication media, and the "networked public sphere", which has created as a result, "became a new (virtual) space where identities can be constructed, negotiated and contested" (Kurtes and Kopytowska, 2014, p.5). Often, people's observation and enactment of their own individual and collective identity is impacted by the way the mass media constructs and presents it.

Types of identities

Identities are contingent, multiple and malleable (Giddens, 1991, Bauman, 2004), they are plural and complex (De Fina, 2011). Tracy (2002), for instance, distinguishes among four types of identities: *master identities*, which are relatively unchanging; *personal identities*, which also unchanging but unique to the individual; *relational identities*, that are enacted with a particular interlocutor in conversation; and *interactional identities*, i.e. related to role distribution in each specific interactional context (in Parini and Granato, 2013). Merchant (2006), on the other hand, distinguishes between *anchored* and *transient* identities: the first ones relate to aspects of people's lives over which they have little control and are least likely to change like gender, position in family, religion, age, social class and geographical location, while transient identities change over time, being influenced by maturation, changing cultural conditions and peer group affiliations. These identities are defined in relation to media narratives, ideologies, popular culture, iconic objects, social activities and networks.

De Fina (2011) distinguishes between *individual* and *collective identities*, depending on whether people reflect and negotiate their own identity as individuals or the identity of the group or the community they represent; then between *personal* and *social identities*, depending on whether they refer to the moral and physical characteristics that distinguish one person from another, or to large categories like race, gender, and political affiliation; and he also identifies *situational identities,* which reflect the roles related to specific roles of interaction.

Discursive processes

Identities are communicated in different ways; they may be openly discussed or indirectly and symbolically conveyed (De Fina, 2011, p. 269). In this paper, the discursive processes defined by Bamberg et al. (2011) and De Fina (2011) are taken to be central to the construction and communication of identity, as they consider identities to be constructed in discourse and negotiated among speaking subjects in social contexts, which is in line with this author's social constructionist understanding of identity as created in relation to other identities.

According to Bamberg et al. (2011, p. 178) the processes of identity construction refer to navigation between different positions or dilemmas. They identify three: 1) *agency and control*, 2) *difference and sameness* between me and others and 3) *constancy and change across time*. They base the discursive process *agency and control* on the idea that speakers are agents in control who have power. The other end is when they lose control and become less accountable. The speaker is powerful to construct the way the world is or the speaker has no power whatsoever and is constructed by the way the world is. The second discursive process distinguishes between interlocutors, by enabling the speaker to identify themselves with others through self-integration or to differ from others through self-differentiation. In that sense, the speakers are positioning in relation to others in terms of proximity and distance, in a sense that they either feel similar and, in that sense, close to other people, or different and distant from others. And finally, *constancy and change across time* is based on the idea that speakers position themselves in terms of two ends of the continuum, continuity or discontinuity in the formation of identity, from no change to complete change of identity.

De Fina summarises four discursive processes, identified to be central to the construction of identity within the interactionist paradigm: *indexicality, local occasioning, positioning and dialogism* and *categorisation* (2011, p. 264). The process of *indexicality* is based on the idea that symbols, linguistic or not, communicated either explicitly or implicitly, index or point to elements of the social context and identify certain social identities. The notion of indexicality captures the use of particular specific language forms and styles, which reflect particular stances which are associated with certain identities (Ochs, 1992, p. 341). The concept of *local occasioning* captures the idea that the way people present their identity or ascribe identity to others, depends on the context in which discourse is taking place but also shapes that context. For instance, we identify ourselves differently in different groups by choosing what we are going to say about ourselves in a specific group. The *positioning* and *dialogism* discursive process is a concept which enables speakers to position themselves, be positioned by others and position others. It distinguishes people among each other - who they are not and who they are similar to. Positioning has been used by some social theorists to describe the process through which discourse constrains identity (Fairclough, 1992). *Categorization* refers to the inventory of identities available in a situation as well as the kinds of identities more generally in use in a given society and historic moment (Fairclough, 1992).

Research Methodology

This paper aims to investigate how the Macedonian identity was discursively negotiated and constructed by the media in three specific periods vital to the name change. For that purpose, 30 articles were gathered and analysed, 15 from 5 online pro-government media sources (i.e. *Nova, Sloboden Pechat, CivilMedia, Naroden Glas* and *Fokus*) and 15 from 5 anti-governmentally oriented media sources (i.e. *Kurir, Ekonomski Lider, Vecher, Republika* and *Nova Makedonija*). So, overall, 29,589 tokens were extracted, and three articles per newspaper outlet were analysed. The articles were collected from May 2018 to February 2019, i.e. during three important periods: 1) first half of 2018, May and June, right before and after the signing of the Prespa agreement on 17 June, 2018; 2) September-October 2018, around the referendum, on 30th September, 2018 and 3) January and February 2019, right before and after the ratification of the agreement by the Parliaments of both countries on 25th January 2019, which went into force on 12th February 2019.

So, the analysis focuses on identification of the discursive processes based on which the journalists of both pro and anti-government oriented media negotiate and construct the Macedonian identity (that of the country and its people) in these three separate periods. A qualitative approach was adopted, because the focus was not on the isolated posts, but on understanding the repetitive use of identity processes which emerged in each separate period in both types of articles. Therefore, in the section which follows, the most typical examples found in both types of articles are presented and analysed.

Findings

In this section, the analysis of the data from the three different periods is presented separately and relevant conclusions are drawn.

Period 1: May/ June, 2018 (Prespa Agreement)

The first analysed period is the one right before and after the Prespa Agreement was signed, in May and June 2018. After a 30-year-long debate the newly elected Government at the time decided to take a different position from all previous Governments and accept the name change. The prime ministers and ministers for foreign affairs of both countries signed the so-called Prespa Agreement or the Treaty of Prespa, which obliges Macedonia to change its name into the Republic of North Macedonia and Greece to stop obstructing Macedonia's progress in the EU and NATO.

A. Identity construction in anti-government media sources

The analysis of the anti-government oriented newspapers show that journalists use indexicality as a discursive process to point to elements of the social context that would lead to or contribute to self-destruction and a complete loss of the Macedonian identity. In example (1)[1], for instance, the signing of the agreement by the Macedonian government (or as the author says, by ourselves) is associated with a suicide of the nation, or in example (2) a complete erasure of the Macedonian national character and identity. Obviously, the rhetoric journalists use attempts to alarm readers of complete loss of

[1] All examples presented in the paper have been translated by the author who is a certified judicial translator and interpreter

identity after the signing of the Prespa Agreement. In (4), on the other hand, the author uses indexicality to point to government officials who signed the agreement by asking the reader who those people are, what kind of people they are and what their aims or intentions are, questioning their moral and ethical values. Obviously, the information about their identity puts it under a question mark, so the readers, consequently, should not be gullible and trust such people with vague identity.

In addition, constancy and change over time is used as a discursive process by authors to refer to the change of identity over time. For instance, in example (1), the author expresses their fears that the signing of the agreement will lead to alteration of the country, the Constitution and the whole legal system as well as to a complete loss of identity.

> (1) ...with this, allegedly reached international agreement, the country and the Constitution and the whole legal system will not only be altered, but will completely lose their identity. We will not be in a position to defend the name, the language and the identity any longer under any circumstance because we signed the agreement ourselves i.e., we ourselves agreed to it. That will be a public, collective identity suicide on stage of a whole nation and a whole country. (Nova Makedonija, 05/04/2018)
>
> [*...со ваквиот евентуално постигнат меѓународен договор не само што ќе мора да се променат туку целосно ќе се обезличат и државата и Уставот и правниот поредок. Името, јазикот и идентитетот веќе нема да можеме да ги одбраниме по ниедна основа, бидејќи сме потпишале, т.е. сами сме се согласиле. Тоа би било јавно колективно идентитетско самоубиство на отворена сцена, на цел еден народ и цела една држава.*]
>
> 2) My dear Macedonians, do you know what this is? Literally complete erasure of the Macedonian national

character and identity of the Macedonian nation...(Kurir, 02/06/2018)
[*Мои мили Македонци, знаете ли што е ова? Буквално целосно бришење на македонскиот национален карактер на државата и на идентитетот на македонскиот народ ....*]

Very often journalists use inclusive pronouns to self-integrate with other Macedonians and point to their same identity, as in (1) and (3), for instance, when the journalist identifies with all the Macedonians who will not be in a position to defend their identity after the agreement is signed, and he/she points out that it is they themselves who signed it. The authors also sometimes position themselves as friends to the readers, the Macedonians, by addressing them as in example (3) with "my dear Macedonians". However, sometimes a clear difference is made by the author between themselves and "the others" by applying self-differentiation as a discursive strategy. For instance, in (4) the author distances from those who want to sign the agreement, naming them as unbelievers, people with no ethics and moral values. Here, we can see the usage of categorization as a discursive process to distinguish between two different categories of people: us (those who love the country) vs. them (those who do not). This can be considered a very persuasive technique, because by using the inclusive *us* to self-integrate with the readers and true Macedonians, the journalist serves to the readers the obvious conclusion that they should reach – that if they are true Macedonians, they would never accept the position of "the others". In (3), another categorization is made: Macedonians are biblical people with a biblical name, which is threatened to be drawn to a country with no name and therefore no identity.

(3) The name is not written in the agreement. We all know that it is actually our country Republic of Macedonia, but strangely, following some international

law the name has been omitted. We all know why: Macedonia is the biggest world and biblical name – brand name, and this does not suit the first party in the agreement, Greece, and it is managing to draw this world biblical brand to a NO NAME brand.(Kurir, 02/06/2018)
[*Името не е напишано во договорот. Сите заеме дека се работи за нашата држава Република Македонија, ама еве чудно некое меѓународно договорно право, името ни е изоставено. Сите знаеме зошто: МАКЕДОНИЈА е најголемо светско и библиско име – бренд име, што не и одговара на, првата страна во договорот Република Грција, и таа успева овој светски и библиски бренд да го сведе на БЕЗИМЕН-NO NAME бренд*.]

(4) I wander, who are these people who signed this agreement, what kind of people are they, what kind of character ornaments them and what are their aims and intentions? More precisely, what kind of democracy are they building in the second decade of the 21st century? And most precisely, what kind of law (international law) is this with no justice and reciprocity. This reminds me of Socrates's dilemma: what is law without truth, and what is man without God? I believe that such agreement can be made and signed only by unbelievers, people who know no ethics, and their moral values are light-years away. And now, it is not that Socrates did not warn <u>us</u> about this, but who cared? (Kurir, 02/06/2018)
[*Се прашувам кои се луѓето кои го потпишале овој договор, какви се тие како личности, што карактер ги краси и кои и какви им се целите и намерите? Поконкретно, каква демократија спроведуваат во втората декада од 21от век? Најконкретно, какво е ова право (меѓународно јавно) без правда, правдина и реципроцитет. Тука ми текнува на дилемата на Сократ што е закон без вистина, и што е човек без Господ? Чинам дека ваков договор можат да направат и потпишат само луѓе безбожници, луѓе на кои етиката им е непозната, а*

моралот далечен со светлосни години. И сега, не дека Сократ не нé опоменуваше за сето ова, ама кој да слуша?]

B. Identity construction in the pro-government media sources

As for the pro-government-oriented newspapers, the authors mostly use *indexicality* to create an association between EU and NATO and stability and prosperity. Their arguments, as it can be seen in example (5) were mostly oriented towards persuading the people to accept the name change as it will open the doors to EU and NATO, and that has the ability to cure all their illnesses and secure an eternal life. Along the same line, the author in (5) uses *constancy and change across time* as a discursive strategy to build "a stable and prosperous" identity of Macedonians in the future. By using the inclusive *we*, the journalist attempts to self-integrate with the readers and position themselves as one of many who suffer, and need change: the lack of action will lead to failure and years back in the process.

(5) The integration with the EU and NATO, that modern formula for stability and prosperity, that social panacea– the imaginary remedy which has the potency to cure all illnesses and secure eternal life – is always within reach, but never reached. The moment we reach the light at the tunnel, bum-bum-tras-bum!, and some new social-political cataclysm takes us away from the desired objective and gets us years back in the process. (CIVILMEDIA, 06.06.2018)[2]

[*А интеграцијата во ЕУ и НАТО, таа современа формула за стабилност и просперитет, таа општествена панацеа*

[2] Upon request from CIVILMEDIA (the online newspaper) we provide the reader with the link to the article: https://civilmedia.mk/lulashkata-na-koja-se-nishame/ June 6, 2018, Free zone section: Добро утро со Ордановски, author Saso Ordanovski, name of article: Лулашката на која се нишаме.

– имагинарниот лек кој има моќ да ги залечи сите болести и да обезбедни вечен живот – ни е секогаш на дофат, но никогаш достижен. Таман ќе дојдеме до светло на крајот од тунелот – бупете-бапете-траaас-ка-бууум!, и некоја најнова општествено-политичка катаклизма ќе нè оддалечи од посакуваната цел и ќе нè врати со години назад во процесот.]

So, as it can be seen from the examples from both sets of articles, *indexicality* and *constancy and change over time* appear to be central discursive processes in negotiating the identity of future Macedonians – either complete loss of the existing identity or new prosperous identity in the EU and NATO.

Period 2: September/October 2018 (Referendum)

The second set of data consisted of articles published in the period around the referendum, when the citizens were asked to state whether they accept the name change or not. However, it must be mentioned that the referendum question was a trick question as it asked people the following: *Do you want the country to enter the EU and NATO by accepting the Agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and Greece?,* which indirectly and falsely led people to believe that if they voted for the change of the country's name, the country will be granted entrance in these two associations. The referendum was unsuccessful because the name change failed to reach the threshold. The next few examples feature how identity was built at the time in both sets of newspapers.

A. Identity construction in the anti-government media sources

The anti-governmental newspaper articles written around the period of the referendum use *categorization* to construct two different types of identities: the identity of real Macedonians, or those who love their country and the betrayers, or those who want to change the name and therefore do not love their country. For instance, in (6) and (7) the author distinguishes between cosmopolitans, who are already in the EU and NATO and conservatives, who do not accept the name change, and "were taught wrong to love their country", as in (7). The use of irony and sarcasm contributes to the clear division between "us" and "them", leaving the reader with a clearly defined option that should obviously be the one chosen – to not accept the name change.

> (6) We will have a referendum and a voting-election battle on 30th September. According to the plan brought from abroad, the battle will be between the cosmopolitans, who are already part of the EU and NATO, and the conservative Macedonians, who do not want to change the name and taste the world pleasures right after. (Nova Makedonija, 21/09/2018)
>
> [*На 30 септември ќе имаме референдум и гласачко-избирачка битка. Според планот увезен од странство, бој ќе бијат космополитите, кои се веќе дел од ЕУ и од НАТО, против конзервативните Македонци, кои не сакаат да си го променат името и веднаш да ги вкусат белосветските благодати*.]
>
> (7) The conservatives do not have echelons. They are everywhere and nowhere, and they are mainly Macedonians whose parents educated them wrongly, to love their country... They should be careful what they speak, because if they do not speak holy and right, they will be arrested for hate speech. They do not have a leader.... And not only do they not have a leader but conservative Macedonians still surprised at how a serious country and serious people can work for their own misery. (Nova Makedonija)

[*Конзервативците немаат ешалони. Распрскани се секаде и никаде и главно се Македонци чии родители им дале лошо воспитание, да си ја сакаат татковината. ... Треба да внимаваат што зборуваат, зашто ако зборуваат небожно и наопаку ќе бидат апсени за говор на омраза.Немаат водач... Ај што немаат водач, конзервативните Македонци уште се чудат како може сериозна држава и сериозен народ, сами да си работат во полза на сопствената штета.*]

In addition, some newspaper articles were summoning people for boycott by using the concept of *agency and control* as a discursive process. For instance, in (8) the author appears as an agent in control, who, by the usage of the inclusive "we" self-integrates with the other citizens: *Macedonia boycotts, we all boycott*. By positioning the readers and himself/herself as agents in control, the author summons people to boycott the referendum and protect themselves and future generations.

(8) The Macedonian citizen must stop working in favour of their own misery, the referendum should be boycotted, because with the big 'yes' and big 'no' the country that we considered older than the sun will stop existing... Macedonia boycotts, we all boycott in order to protect ourselves as Macedonians, to protect our future generations and to justify ourselves before our ancestors. (Nova Makedonija, 21/09/2018)
[*Македонецот мора да престане да работи во полза на сопствената штета, референдумот треба да се бојкотира, затоа што со големото „да" и со големото „не" ќе престане да постои државата за која со гордост велевме дека е постара од сонцето. ...Македонија бојкотира, бојкотираме сите за да си се заштитиме себеси како Македонци, да го заштитиме нашето поколение, а да се оправдаме пред нашите предци.*]

B. Identity construction in the pro- government media sources

The pro-government-oriented newspaper articles were using similar discursive processes to construct the identity of what they consider "true Macedonians". Journalists, here, used the concept of *agency and control* to construct an identity of fighters, people who will take their future in their hands and vote for the name change as true Macedonians, using this unique opportunity to open the door of the EU (9) and have their own country (10). In addition, through observing the discursive process *constancy and change across time*, the authors imply that the future will be bright if Macedonian citizens use this historic opportunity.

> (9) In his interview for MIA, the European commissioner says that if the opportunity for acceptance of the agreement with Greece fails at the referendum on 30th September, the door of the EU will be closed 'for decades' (Lider, 14/09/2018)
> [*Еврокомесарот за проширување во интервју за МИА вели дека доколку се пропушти можноста за прифаќање на Договорот со Грција на референдумот на 30 септември, вратата за ЕУ ќе се затвори „за децении"*]
> (10) Few last generations of ethical Macedonians have that historical opportunity to have (together with their numerous co-citizens from other ethnic communities) THEIR OWN country. Let me repeat, a sovereign country with only 193 other members of the UN.(CIVILMEDIA, 03/09/2018)[3]
> [*Неколку последни генерации етнички Македонци ја имаат таа историска среќа да имаат (заедно со своите бројни сограѓани од другите етнички групи) СВОЈА*

[3] Upon request from CIVILMEDIA (the online newspaper) we provide the reader with the link to the article: https://civilmedia.mk/kon-vinozhitoto-ili-do-zalezot-na-sontseto/ September 3, 2018, Free zone section: Добро утро со Ордановски, author Saso Ordanovski, name of article: *Кон виножитото или до залезот на сонцето.*

држава. Да повторам, современа суверена држава меѓу само 193 други членки на ООН.]

So, the analysis of the data from this second period shows that journalists make clear division between the identity of those people who accept the name change and those who do not by categorizing them in two separate groups. Furthermore, the concept of agency and control is used to construct an identity of fighters – either for or against the name change.

Period 3: January/February 2019 (change of name)

Finally, the third period encompasses the one around the official name change. Besides the failed referendum, the Parliament ratified the agreement in January 2019 and finally on 11th February, 2019, the name was officially changed. The following examples feature the general disposition of journalists in both pro- and anti-government media outlets.

A. Identity construction in the anti-government media sources

During this period, January and February 2019, the tone in anti-governmental media outlets becomes very pessimistic. The journalists use indexicality to associate the official ratification of the Prespa agreement as a final act of the dark and shameful scenario of the Government (see example (11)). They point to the authorities (the prime minister Zoran Zaev and his party SDSM) as being most guilty for the change of the identity of the country. They also distance from the act by using the discursive process of self-differentiation.

(11) The Republic of Macedonia finds itself faced with the final act of the dark and shameful scenario of Zoran Zaev and SDSM to change the name of the country, the identity, the language, culture and history. Zoran Zaev

and SDSM sold the national and state interests and trampled on the Constitution, the laws and the will of the Macedonian citizens. (Kurir, 10/01/2019)
[*Република Македонија се наоѓа пред финалниот акт на црното и срамно сценарио на Зоран Заев и СДСМ за промена на името на државата, идентитетот, јазикот, културата и историјата. Зоран Заев и СДСМ ги продадоа националните и државни интереси и ги погазија Уставот, законите и волјата на македонските граѓани.*]

B. Identity construction in the pro-government media sources

In comparison, the tone in the articles of the pro-government media outlets becomes rather optimistic. The rhetoric from the previous periods is preserved. The concepts of *indexicality* and *constancy and change over time* is preserved in identity construction: NATO and EU are associated with security and balance the country will find now (12).

(12) The entrance in NATO will solve the country's security, the nationalists believe that the economy needs to be solved first, and then the security, but it is the other way round. The Prespa Agreement is exceptionally good, the agreement is an absolute balance. (CIVILMEDIA, 07/02/2019)[4]
[*Влезот во НАТО ќе ни ја решни безбедноста во државата, националистите сметаат дека прво економијата треба да се реши, а потоа безбедноста сама ќе си дојде, но не е така туку обратно. Преспанскиот договор е исклучително добар, договорот е отиден до максимален баланс.*]

[4] https://civilmedia.mk/od-klekni-stani-kila-dobivme/ June 7, 2018, Free zone section: Добро утро со Ордановски, author Saso Ordanovski, name of article: Од клекни-стани, кила добивме!

Conclusion

This paper set out to investigate how pro- and anti-government oriented media sources negotiated and constructed the identity of Macedonians during the last year of negotiations between Macedonia and Greece and the official change of the name of the country in February 2019. Taking into consideration the great impact that media in general has on building people's opinions on important issues, it played the main role in influencing the people's opinion in this concrete situation. The results showed that the two sets of media sources used more or less the same discursive processes to construct a different identity for Macedonians.

In the first and third analysed period, the one around the signing of the Prespa agreement and the one around its ratification, the central discursive processes they used to construct people's and country's identity were *indexicality* and *constancy and change over time*. By pointing to different elements of the social context, associating the Prespa agreement (Period 1) and the change of name (Period 3) with self-destruction and loss of identity in the anti-government oriented articles, and stability and prosperity in the EU and NATO in the pro-government-oriented ones, both media sources constructed a different identity of the country and its people in the future. Similarly, during the time of the referendum (Period 3), both media outlets built a different identity for people who support the name change and those who not through the discursive process *categorization*, thus making a clear difference between "us" and "them". In addition, they summoned people to either vote at or boycott the referendum by applying the *agency and control* discursive process.

So overall, the analysis showed that the media did impact the atmosphere in the country and the people's opinion in this specific situation, especially during the last year of the process and the official name change. Although a great number of people were against it and the referendum failed, some people did begin to accept the idea as something inevitable. The identity built in the EU and NATO is still something Macedonian citizens strive for, two years from then.

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Original Article

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

[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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Review article

Unmasking the Exception: Covid and the Creation of Enemy in India

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Abstract

In the contemporary political context, a state of exception refers to the ways by which the major liberal democracies are driven by the growing accretion of discriminatory executive power, increasingly evading existing legislative and juridical institutions. Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben's work becomes more relevant here. Agamben theorizes the state of exception and claims that it has become a dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics. Agamben challenges the responses the state had while immediately dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, which is merely normalizing the state of exception as it actually produced a policification of the municipalities and areas in the guise of tackling the virus. The Indian state, like others, has upholded the concept of lockdown as the only measure to fight the pandemic but the interesting aspect is the designing of enemies to deal with the problem. The paper argues that the Indian state has used the pandemic to blatantly create the "other" in a way pursued the agenda of exception. The method is qualitative, especially focusing on discourse analysis. The conclusion demonstrates that the measures taken by apparently the largest democracy in the name of fighting Covid establishes Agamben's argument that the world is transforming into a gigantic concentration camp.

Keywords: *Covid 19, Indian State, State of Exception, Otherization, Enemy*

The events which unfolded post 9/11 incident and the declaration of “war on terror” bears the hallmarks of what Carl Schmitt, an anti-liberal German philosopher of the 20th century, describes as “state of exception”. It has now been widely argued that the state of exception is becoming a permanent feature of governance across nations. In current political scenario, a state of exception can be defined as the ways by which democratic states are driven by the growth of discriminatory executive power, increasingly evading legislature and judicial institutions. To understand the state of exception becoming a widespread phenomenon in democracies, the political treatise of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben becomes relevant. Agamben (2005) theorizes the state of exception from the Foucauldian perspective of biopolitics and claims that it has become “a dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics” (p. 2).

Understanding the state of exception

The concept of the state of exception has a long history that can be traced from the French Revolution. It defines a special condition in which the juridical order remains suspended due to an emergency or a serious crisis threatening the state. In such a situation, the sovereign (Executive in democracy) prevails over the others and basic norms and laws can be violated by the state while facing the crisis. The adjacency between the state of exception and sovereignty was established by Schmitt in his book *Politische Theologie*, which was published in 1922. Schmitt (2005) defined the sovereign as “he who decides on the state of exception” (p. 5) and has been widely commented and discussed. Schmitt followed the Hobbesian concept of sovereignty which is the secularization of a theological concept but not as a rational theology but a decisionist one.

Sovereignty is not a mere technical concept in state theory; it is about decision and domination. Rather a personal privilege of the ruler. David Held (2000) was much more technical in his understanding of sovereignty as he differentiated between internal and external aspects. But what is it to decide on the exception? The answer contained in the stature of the sovereign. Schmitt had mentioned that sovereignty as a "borderline concept", "one pertaining to the outermost sphere" but he moved on to argue that though the sovereign "stands outside the normally valid legal system, he nevertheless belongs to it" (Schmitt, 2005, p. 7). He belongs to it based on his ability to decide on the exception. As Tracy B. Strong pointed out in his forward to the 2005 edition of *Political Theology*, for Schmitt (2005) "it is the essence of sovereignty both to decide what is an exception and to make the decisions appropriate to that exception" (p. xii). But Bruno Gulli (2009) comes up with a question: What enables the sovereign to decide on the exception and thus be sovereign? Which he himself rephrased as follows: What provides the sovereign that special capacity to see that there is an exception, a state of emergency and subsequently decides on it? Does the sovereign become sovereign because he can decide on the exception, or he can decide on it because he is already a sovereign? (Gulli, 2009, p.23) The answer to these questions may not be found distinctly in Schmitt's work but in Walter Benjamin's writing. Benjamin (1978) had stated that the violence always "implicated in the problematic nature of the law itself" (Benjamin, 1978, p.287). Gulli (2009) argues that any person with special powers could be recognized as sovereign but objectively a sovereign is that person who can identify the exception and deal with it. But Schmitt (2005) does not mention about any sense of recognition and judgement, but only of decision.

Agamben (2005) challenges Schmitt's logic of sovereignty and sides with Benjamin. He quotes Benjamin from the *Theses on the Philosophy of History* that “The Tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the state of emergency in which we live is not the exception but the rule” (Benjamin, 1968, p.257). Agamben (2005) mentions as follows: “it not only appears increasingly as a technique of government rather than an exceptional measure, but it also lets its own nature as the constitutive paradigm of the juridical order come to light” (Agamben, 2005, p.7). Agamben (2005) argues that “the transformation of a provisional and exceptional measure into a technique of government threatens radically to alter or has already altered the structure and meaning of the traditional distinction between constitutional forms. From this point of view, the state of exception appears as a threshold of indeterminacy between democracy and absolutism” (Agamben, 2005, pp.2-3).

The state of exception allows an exclusive interaction between sovereign states and its laws. In time of national crisis, such as natural disasters or war, government suspend the law to maintain order. This suspension has varied names across nations- the “State of Seige” in France, “Martial Law” in Canada (Kisner, 2007, p.223), “Armed Forces Special Powers Act” in India or the USA Patriot Act issued by the US Senate on 26 October, 2001 after the 9/11 incident which allowed the Attorney General to take into custody any foreigner suspected of activities that endangered the national security of the United States (Patriot Act, 2001, p.11). Though they have different names but they are fundamentally same thing, a state of exception. The state of exception is often enacted under the pretence of suspending laws and rights to ensure the protection of citizens, so they may be reinstated once normality is restored. On this point Agamben (2005) criticizes both Schmitt and Carl Friedrich theory of dictatorship and argues that “all such theories remain prisoner in the vicious circle in which the emergency measures they seek to justify in the name of defending the democratic constitution are the same ones that lead to its ruin" (Agamben, 2005, p.8). The laws which undermine the ability of the state to maintain control, such as right to free movement or rights of privacy are ceased during the crisis until normalcy is restored. This sublimation of law by the executive allows the state to act unhindered by legal accountability, bestowing it with power and stripping rights from citizens (Durantaye, 2005, p.182). The state of exception is the state's means of self-preservation while sacrificing the law and citizens' rights.

Agamben (2005) argues that the state of exception has become a norm for Western and other liberal democracies across the globe. The gradual erosion of the legislative powers of parliament and simultaneous increase in the power of the executive led to the liquidation of democracy. Agamben (2005) traces many instances of its implementation from the First World War and through to the beginning and the continuation of the 21st century. To quote Agamben, "from this [the] perspective, World War One (and the years following it) appear as a laboratory for testing and honing the functional mechanisms and apparatuses of the state of exception as a paradigm of government. One of the essential characteristics of the state of exception– the provisional abolition of the distinction among legislative, executive and judicial powers– here shows its tendency to become a lasting practice of government" (Agamben, 2005, p.7). Through various examples Agamben demonstrates how the state of exception has become a frequently used political tool. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the construction of the camp. For Agamben, the camp, be it Auschwitz, Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib or Nauru, is the "spatial arrangement" of "the absolute space of exception"

(Ross, 2012, p.423). As Bourke (2012) argued that it is a physical space outside the juridical sphere where inhabitants are indefinitely detained and at the mercy of an unrestrained sovereign power (Bourke, 2012, p.443). The Australian Migration Amendment Act of 1992, Amendment of Citizenship Act of 2003 in India, the United States Military Order of 2001, and the Patriot Act etcetera undermines personal freedom and thus turns the exception into a norm. This order radically erases any legal status of the individual, in a way producing a legally unnameable and unclassifiable being leading to the birth of the "Homo Sacer" (Ray, 2012, p.3). Agamben (2005) states:

> The immediate biopolitical significance of the state of exception as the original structure in which law encompasses living beings by means of its own suspension; emerges clearly in the 'military order' issued by the President of the United States on November 13, 2001, which authorized the 'indefinite detention' and trial by 'military commissions' (not to be confused with the military tribunals provided for by the law of war) of noncitizens suspected of involvement in terrorist activities. (p. 3).

The state of exception is no longer used as a sole reactionary measure to restore order. It is rather used as a pre–emptive means of preventing potential disorder from arising. The camp is no longer the only indicator of the naturalisation of the state of exception. The pre-emptive measures are exemplified by the creation of temporary Protective Security Zones. These are policification or militarization of a particular area where these agencies have additional powers to search individual houses and vehicles in the name of security. Gulli (2009) pointed out that this suspension of citizens' rights in the face of potential emergency is an indicator of the state of exception becoming a norm (Calarco et al., 2007, p. 220). It diminishes the potential for political action as it anticipates the disturbance of sovereign order. The creation of these Protective Security Zones demonstrates how sovereign states use the state of exception to suspend laws and rights as per their convenience.

While assessing the normalisation of the state of exception in liberal democracies, Agamben (2005) argues that through this normalisation of exception liberal democratic nations descend into totalitarianism. He argued that "modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system" (p. 2). Agamben (2005) postulates his concept as the quintessence of the sovereign right to kill and let live. At the political level the very life of the subject is at stake, not the intrusion into the processes of living. The political status and function of the legal exception is the core to Agamben's understanding of biopolitics and it is through this he identifies the contemporary condition of politics which he characterizes as abandonment and nihilism.

Pandemic and the state of exception

Reportedly, SARS–CoV2 originated in China and spread to several countries around the world. Faced with the frenetic epidemic of coronavirus, the majority of liberal democracies declared lockdown as the prima facie technique to deal with it. Authorities and media pressed the panic button as a means of security which Agamben argues provoked the state of exception. Agamben (2020b) identified that it manifests a tendency to use a state of exception as a normal paradigm for government. As per a World Health Organization (WHO) report, cases of pneumonia of unknown cause were reported from Wuhan City on 31 December 2019. A novel coronavirus was identified as a cause by Chinese authorities on 7 January 2020 and was temporarily named "2019–nCoV" (World Health Organization, 2019). On 17 February, 2020, besides China, 25 other countries had been affected by Covid-19 outbreak with 794 cases reported with three deaths (World Health Organization, 2020). On 27 January 2020, a case was registered in a general hospital in Thrissur, Kerala where a 20-year-old female who came back from Wuhan city had a history of dry cough and sore throat. But she was released and asked to visit medical facilities if she developed any severe symptoms. Later, on 30 January 2020, her swab result was reported positive and on 31 January 2020 she was admitted to a government hospital in Kerala (Andrews et al., 2020, p.490). But the Government of India appeared casual in dealing with it and allowed several large-scale events with huge gatherings. "Namaste Trump" was held in Gujarat on 24-25 February 2020 and an attendance of over 100,000 people was reported (Reuters, 2020). Though opposition parties claimed that corona cases were registered after the event, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dismissed it as "baseless" (Press Trust of India, 2020). As virus became rampant in Europe and other parts of the world, Non-Resident Indians (NRI) started coming back and surprisingly they were not tested or quarantined and allowed to travel to their resident states. Reportedly, the surge of comeback began around the beginning of March and on 18 March 2020; Bengal recorded its first case in Kolkata where a teenage youth with a travel history to the United Kingdom has been tested positive. On 5 May 2020 when the menacing lockdown had already began, Kerala Chief Minister wrote a letter to Prime Minister Modi urging the Centre to ensure that the NRI's undergo Covid tests before emplaning for the respective state (The Economic

Times, 2020). The government allowed the Tablighi Jamaat event from 10–13 March, 2020 and later the ruling party and its ministers blamed them as a principal cause behind the spreading of coronavirus. Though on 13 March, the Union Health Ministry said that "coronavirus is not an emergency" and people should not panic. The WHO declared Covid–19 a pandemic on 11 March, 2020 (Radhakrishnan, 2020).

The government, which was almost napping at the dangers of Covid declared a complete lockdown on 24 March 2020. In a televised address to the nation in the evening a stringent lockdown was declared for 21 days without allowing any preparation for the common people. Modi remarked that "this war" against coronavirus would take three more days than the Mahabharata war that had taken eighteen days to win (N. Pandey, 2020). After the announcement, stringent restrictions were imposed; areas were turned into fortified zones, torture and harassment by police increased over common people even leading to deaths in certain cases. Agamben (2020a) points out that a state of exception is established as normal paradigm through a legislative decree immediately approved by the government for "hygiene and public safety reasons" which actually produces an authentic militarization [policification] "of the municipalities and areas in which at least one person is positive and for whom the source of transmission is unknown, or in any case in which there is a case not attributable to a person coming from an area already affected by the virus" (Agamben, 2020a). While calling out the Italian government, Agamben mentions the serious limitations of freedom the decree contains, which are as follows: "a) a prohibition against any individuals going out of the affected municipality or area; b) a prohibition against anyone from outside accessing the affected municipality or area; c) the suspension of events or initiatives of any nature and of any form of gatherings in public or private places; d) the closure of kindergartens, childcare services and schools of all levels, as well as the attendance of school, higher education activities and professional courses, except for distance learning; e) the closure to public museums and other cultural institutions and spaces; f) suspension of all educational trips; g) suspension of all public examination procedures and all activities of public offices, without prejudice to the provision of essential and public utility services; h) the enforcement of quarantine measures and active surveillance of individuals who have had close contacts with confirmed cases of infection" (Agamben, 2020b). This decree has been superlative and varied in several other countries including India. But the interesting aspect is that Agamben artfully provokes two aspects which he calls "ideal pretext". The first, he says as terrorism worn out as a cause for exceptional measures, an epidemic offered the ideal pretext for scaling them up beyond any limitation. The second disturbing factor is the fear that has spread among individual consciences and translated into a situation of collective panic for which the epidemic provides another ideal pretext (Agamben, 2020b). In this vicious cycle the restrictions on freedom imposed by governments have been accepted in the name of safety that was created by the same governments that are now intervening to satisfy it.

At the heart of Agamben's argument is how the range of measures adopted by the government in liberal democracies has reduced humans squarely to cling to mere "naked life" leading thereby nearly abolishing or reorienting all that is considered social and humane. The "naked life" is a bare life concept theorised in Agamben's *Homo Sacer* which in Italian means "nude vita" (Agamben, 1998, p. 6). Unlike the *Homo Sacer*, the translators of the book *Means Without End: Notes on Politics* render it as "naked life" (Agamben, 2000, p. 8). The concept of naked life originates from the Greek distinction of *Zoē* and Bios. *While* Zoē refers to life characterising of all living beings (including animals), Bios signifies a qualified and collective life in a polis. In ancient Greece Zoē was a mere biological life while Bios referred to life in political community. Agamben (2000) neatly demonstrates the separation between the domain of naked life and the sphere of political life which has beclouded into "a zone of irreducible indistinction" (p. 9). For Agamben the figure of the Jew in a concentration camp analogised as "der Musselman" (literally means the Muslim in Yiddish) is the paradigm of naked life– a life bereft of political status and stripped of any protocol of citizenship. Agamben (2012) maintains that this indistinction of life and law is real for both life under "a law without significance" and life in sovereign exception (Ray, 2012, p. 10). While re–inscribing Bios into Zoē, the sovereign power decides which life to dispense and which life to protect or let live. Though for Agamben, the Nazi extermination camp was the most grotesque example of state of exception but it is not simply one bad moment or event, it has gradually lost its exceptionality after the Second World War and has turned into a norm.

Agamben (2020) thinks that the attenuation of human life (Bios) to mere naked life (Zoē) after the state of exception has been introduced to deal with Covid; its semblance with the camp is observable in various ways. The similarity is not that the naked life in post–Covid world is prone to extermination in the same way as it was in the Nazi camp. Instead, the semblance lies in shattering the collective life in a community characterised by solidarity based on sociability. This is how the Bios get reduced to Zoē and the obsession with the Zoē singularly triumphs over the Bios. This social paradigm as an idyllic of one's relationship with the polis concerns Agamben and gets reflected in his anxiety about the disposition of the living towards the dying and the dead (I. Ahmad, 2020). There is a simultaneous relation between the diminution of human beings to a naked life and the state of exception that various nations have established in the pretext of the pandemic. For Agamben one of the worst and terrifying examples of naked life is the abandoning of the sick by the healthy, the dead by the living and people by the government. The naked life manifests in nameless corpses simply burnt, disposed of or buried and often allowing animals to prey on it without even a proper funeral in a minimalist sense. The right to be cremated respectfully is a right that everyone acquires but even this has been snatched away by the state in the pretext of a pandemic. The ground for this is a state of exception and for Agamben it is the new pandemic.

Agamben (2020b) has not been dismissive about the severity of the SARS–CoV2 virus. He made it clear in his set of *clarifications* published as a sequel to his writing on Covid on 26 February, 2020. But Covid as a disease and Covid as a tool of fear are two different aspects. Agamben is interested in the latter; where states have taken a series of measures through which they are radically transforming our identity as human beings, our very sense of relation to one another. The prime contention of Agamben is to reveal that human beings are reduced to "naked life" for the measures adopted by the states and the power elites (corporates) while claiming to "save" the people in whose very name the extraordinary measures have been taken and the state of exception established across all states. In India, Modi hurriedly declared the lockdown in the evening, giving people very little time before its enforcement. In imposing the lockdown, the union government did not consult any state governments, let alone the public. The government was aware that a lockdown out of the blue would be detrimental for thousands of toiling masses especially those engaged in the unorganised sector. The continuing plight of the migrant labourers in several cities and brutality inflicted upon them is the ultimate sign of the fact they were barely of concern to the government.

The taboo, fear, abandonment, violence and neglect which generated through the series of governmental measures only worsened the situation. Agamben (2020b), while reflecting on the dead, observes that they "have no right to a funeral and it is not clear what happens to the corpses of our loved ones". In India, piles of bodies of our fellow citizens, our loved ones did not even receive a cremation; they were left to rot in gutters, thrown into the waters or hurriedly buried allowing the animals and birds to prey on them. The very argument of viral contagion, under the garb of which the Indian state implemented stringent measures, got compromised. Agamben (2020b) argues that this practice of disposing of the cadavers or burning them without funeral "had never happened before in history". The paranoia which the state and the media have generated even led to the abandonment of the spiritual message that one of the most virtuous acts is to visit and attend to the sick. The fear of death and losing what is already a naked life blinded and separated the human beings. In his *clarification* published on 17 March, 2020, Agamben poses a moral question: "What is a society with no other value other than survival?" (Agamben, 2020b).

The harrowed tales of people confined within four walls; rise in domestic violence; loss of livelihood; suffering of the migrant workers; death due to lack of oxygen, unavailability of hospital beds, dearth of medicines due to black marketing and scarcity of vaccines etcetera reveals the state of exception that Indian state has instituted in the pretext of a pandemic. Another critical aspect of this state of exception is the "war" which the Indian Prime Minister had vouched to wage against the virus but in reality, it unmasked the "other" who is portrayed as the super spreader and thus the enemy of the nation.

Creating the enemy

The war against Covid in India is in many ways a war waged against Muslims, the Northeastern people and then the migrant labourers. The vilification of these communities and terming them as the enemy of the nation is the designing of "Homo Sacer '' and then "der Musselman". Agamben theorizes the relationship between the sovereign and the subject as two sides of a puzzle. On one side, there is the functioning of democratic politics which necessarily has assume the issue of rights based on liberal consensus. On the other side, there lies the incessant production of naked life through sovereign nexus that reduces life to its minimum essentials; a "spectral lump" devoid of all rights, but who at the same time has to be located in the interstices of the juridical (Ray, 2012, p. 4). Agamben excavates ancient Roman law to find the figure of Homo Sacer ('sacer' here means both sacred and cursed: the Latin sacrificium/sacr/sacer). Borrowing the concept from the Roman writer Pompeius Festus, Agamben theorises the Homo Sacer as the epitome of extreme marginality, one who cannot be sacrificed to the gods, as his death is of no value to them, but who can be killed with indemnity because he enjoys no legal protection. For Agamben, the figure is neither merely historical nor a residuum, but a generalised trope for included exclusion of modern life, "an epitomic site of the social markings and symbolization of the workings of the sovereign'' (Lemke, 2005, p.6). It is basically a limit concept, the source of sovereign power. Homo Sacer is both sacred and accursed as it is located exterior with respect to human order. Annihilation of such life does not mean homicide. As killing here does not involve law, it does not indicate lawlessness. The three communities that have been categorised as the enemy of the nation are the ideal Homo Sacer for the Indian state.

Agamben's epitomic figure of Musselman in the camp also fits in the scheme of otherisation in India. For Agamben, the Musselman of the Nazi camp were the group of walking dead: "an anonymous mass continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labour in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to really suffer. One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death, in the face of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand " (Levi, 1991, p.96). Arguably, seeing the Musselmäner (the plural of Musselman) from afar, one had the impression of seeing Arabs in prayer.

Interestingly, the enemies in the war against coronavirus changed from time to time. The first enemy was the direct outcome of islamophobia in which the ruling elites and its obedient media houses began to spin the narrative that Muslims were spreading the virus to harm the nation. In March 2020, the topics like "Corona Jihad" and "Muslim means terrorist" trended on Twitter (FPJ Web Desk, 2020). The official discourse legitimised the narrative that corona curve was fine until Tablighi Jamaat; a non–political Muslim organisation radically changed it. Even one of the reputable newspaper house the Times of India linked Tablighi Jamaat with terrorism (The Times of India, 2020). Though, it was later debunked by other media houses. M.P. Renukacharya, a Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker from Karnataka, equated coronavirus with terrorism and issued a clarion call "to shoot them [Tablighi followers] with a bullet" (The Wire, 2020). The Tablighi followers had been fearful of undergoing medical tests due to the stigmatization of the disease in general and the mass vituperation of Muslims as a deliberate spreader of the virus in particular. Rumours were framed and spread through social media branding the Muslims as “coronavirus terrorists” and accusing them of spitting in food and even infecting water supplies (Bose, 2020). Based on these rumours violence were initiated against several Muslim families and in majority of cases legal actions were not taken. “If we file a police case, the Hindus will not let us live in the village” were words of one of the victims of violence (Peterson and Rahman, 2020). BJP leaders even compared the Tablighi followers with suicide bombers. One of the renowned youtuber from Tamil Nadu, named Maridhas uploaded a video on 2 April, 2020, titled “Maridhas answers: Terrorism+ Corona = India’s New Problem | Tablighi Jamaat Issue'' (Thirumurthy, 2020). The political demonization of the Muslim as an enemy deliberately spreading the virus to harm the Hindus became the dominant narrative. These narratives were manufactured to design the enemy while deliberately eliminating similar gatherings by Hindus, Sikhs and other communities. A set of media deliberately used different words in describing the similar conditions of Hindus and Muslims after the announcement of the lockdown by the government. As Prof. Rizwan Ahmad (2020) had pointed out “Muslims in Nizamuddin were reported to have been hiding. But Hindus returning from a temple and Sikhs in a gurdwara were said to have been stranded” (R. Ahmad, 2020). It is worth noting that on 2 April, 2020, amid the lockdown, with already 2000 Covid cases in India, Telangana minister attended Ram Navami celebrations and in Bengal, on the same day, amid chants of Jai Sri Ram thousands of devotees assembled in temple in various parts of the state. Even after national lockdown was imposed, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath blatantly participated in a puja with many other people to shift the idol of Ram Lalla (Mannathukkaren, 2020). Agamben’s theorisation of "militarisation" and the exceptional measures adopted by the states to deal with coronavirus became glaring when Ajit Doval, India's National Security Advisor, visited the Tablighi headquarters to "evacuate" its residents (ABP, 2020).

After former US President Donald Trump called the coronavirus the "Chinese Virus" (Chiu, 2020) and later defended the use of that phrase, the gamut of racism shifted to India. A new enemy was identified and people from Northeast states residing in the mainland were targeted. As India's tussle with China increased, the verbal and physical violence against the North-eastern people increased on the ground that they are "Chinese" and the carrier of the virus. In the words of Suhas Chakma (2020) of Rights and Risk Analysis Group, "Apart from being called 'Corona', 'Chinese', 'Chinki', India's Mongoloid looking people were spat on and called 'coronavirus', forcibly quarantined despite showing no Covid–19 symptoms because of their looks, denied entry into the apartment complex, forced to leave the apartment, threatened with eviction from their apartment, forced to leave a restaurant to make others comfortable, none wanting to share transport with them" (Karmakar, 2020). On 22 March, 2020 in New Delhi, a picture went viral where a middle-aged man was spotted spitting on a Manipuri woman and calling her "Corona". On the same night, a group of Northeast students were allegedly attacked and beaten by their neighbours who demanded they leave the premises (Sirur, 2020). After the fiasco with the people from the Northeast, the third enemy appears on the scene; the migrant workers. The downtrodden who suffered the most due to this unplanned lockdown were literally forced to return from cities to their native places and the absence of any mode of transportation, the labourers embarked on long perilous journeys on foot, walking thousands of kilometers, often without food and water. Several died due to heat stroke, some due to hunger and thirst and few of them ran over by the train while sleeping on the tracks (Banerjee and Mahale, 2020). While the government arranged planes for the NRIs, thousands of Homo Sacer walked and died on the roads of India. Such scenes, unheard of in independent India, drew criticisms from all quarters and forced the union government to arrange "Shramik Express" trains but the respective state governments had to pay for it (Dhingra, 2020). When these labourers reached their home state after travelling thousands of kilometers on foot they were made to wait on the borders and tagged as "super spreaders"; sprayed with sodium hypochlorite, a disinfectant used to sanitise places and non-living objects. Chief Fire Officer of Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh in an interview agreed that "the chemical is hazardous. It has its own properties, naturally it can cause harm but until it comes in direct contact with human ears or eyes" (Rashid, 2020). Many workers suffered burning sensations after spraying but apart from some hue and cry no legal protection has been guaranteed (S. Pandey, 2020). The Indian example reveals the striking convergence between the biopolitics of Foucault and the definition of politics as friend-enemy dualism by Schmitt. Agamben just engages with these theories.

Conclusion

It is not only in India that attacking the stigmatised populations has happened; their alleged links to the disease has occurred in many places. In the alibi of tackling Covid, Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary, has become a dictator to rule by decree until he deems it fit. Shades of state of exception are also visible in Sri Lanka and Ghana. Bangladesh and Kenya intensified crackdowns on journalists and activists followed by India as well. So, the state of exception which Agamben theorised is in front of all of us. To create a state of exception, an enemy has to be designed and as Agamben suggested–"with terrorism exhausted as a cause for exceptional measures, the invention of an epidemic offered the ideal pretext" (Agamben, 2020b).

When Agamben points out that states' response to Covid-19 is lopsided, he does so from the genealogical knowledge of the practices of government; it is not a result of paranoia, conspiracy theories or an irrational approach. From that perspective, governments' authoritarian attributions are only the most recent radicalization of the forms of complete domination over social life that has characterized western cultures since its inception.

For Agamben, modern biopolitics is expressed in the pandemic of how the disease reinforces a status of obligation. Control over human life is grounded on in-determinacy and un-founded power. The indeterminacy of the "place" and foundation of power is more belligerent concerning the control that can be exercised in "totalitarianism" and "dictatorship." The state of exception that we experience in the liberal democracies "is not a dictatorship but a vacuum space of law. That is a zone of anomie in which all legal determinations-and above all the very distinction between public and private-are deactivated" (Agamben, 2005, p.50). As a result of perverse and "intimate solidarity between democracy and totalitarianism" (Agamben, 1998, p.10). So, the state of exception generated by states' responses during the pandemic is a continuity of that order.

It cannot be denied that Agamben has been wrong on the point that Covid-19 is not a mere regular flu but most important of all the flu affecting millions of people. Agamben comparing vaccine passes in Italy to Nazi "Juden" stars has been widely criticised (Bratton, 2021). These wrongs can be ignored as French Philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy wants us to; only if one considers the larger picture. Covid as a disease and Covid as a mechanism of fear are two different sides of a coin. Agamben wanted to focus on the latter which is the harsh reality that forces us to experience biopolitical decisions and also allows us to understand why the world for Agamben has become a "place where the state of exception perfectly coincides with the rule and where the extreme situation becomes the very paradigm of everyday life" (Silva and Higuera, 2021). The critics, who have denounced Agamben's critique of Covid management as irrational and reactionary, obviously ignore the larger picture of the state of exception which is operational in India and in other countries. Agamben allows us to observe how and why the world is transforming into a gigantic concentration camp and it will not be surprising if the state of exception intensifies in the post-Covid world.

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Original Article

Documenting architecture. From 3D simulations to virtual restoration

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Abstract
The *Casa del Mutilato (House of the Mutilated)* in Ancona, Italy, is a significant example of twentieth-century architecture and the current initiatives aimed at its recovery and restoration can represent a useful and interesting test bed for experimenting with the most innovative IT methodologies for documenting the history and state of conservation of the building. This contribution therefore intends to propose some possible strategies for the design and implementation of a new concept of digital information system to preserve all the documentation relating to the *Casa del Mutilato*, make it accessible online also to citizens and the wider public, create a useful service for the management of the building itself, and enhance the asset, making known its history, constructive and artistic characteristics, and the possibilities of use. The results so obtained can then be usefully utilized for the documentation and planning of the recovery of monumental buildings of the twentieth century of historical and artistic interest in Europe.

Introduction

For a few years the *Casa del Mutilato* in Ancona (fig. 1) has been the subject of renewed attention, including media, after a long period of neglect (Munafò & Pigliapoco, 2018; Biagi Maino, Cassani Simonetti & Maltoni, 2019). Therefore, it was possible to recover an important amount of archival, historical, artistic, planning information on the *Casa del Mutilato* and many others will be added also during the desirable restoration; it is essential that this documentary heritage is not lost or dispersed, it can be easily consulted and available above all to interested citizens and not only to scholars and the public administration. An opportunity to experiment a new type of approach to the documentation of the architectural work that must not be wasted, that can become a prototype model for other significant applications to the monumental heritage and serve for a shrewd and sensitive policy of scheduled maintenance of the buildings.

This paper therefore intends to propose some suggestions, possible ways for the design and implementation of an innovative digital information system to preserve the documentation, make it accessible also online, create a useful service for the management of the building, and enhance the asset by exploiting the enormous potential that current computer technologies, hardware, and software, make available to us.

Fig. 1. The *Casa del Mutilato*, Ancona, Italy.

The science of acquiring and processing information in digital format is now an all-encompassing and omnipresent element in our society and pervades, largely determining them, our lifestyles. Digital technologies, hardware, and software are an integral part, for better or for worse, of our lives and no discipline can ignore them. Above all, the extraordinary advances in image processing and pattern recognition techniques and in the development of sophisticated and innovative instrumentation for the acquisition of high and very high-resolution digital images, even in the multispectral diagnostic field, have allowed previously unthinkable applications, for example in the field of documentation and knowledge of cultural heritage (Biagi Maino & Maino, 1999).

Information technology (IT) tools, just think of the use of Computer Aided Design (CAD) software, in architectural design, in the conception of exhibitions and installations, etc., have now replaced traditional drawing techniques with undoubted advantages in the quality of work and in the saving of required time, in the ease of revisions, in the rapid transmission and communication of results via the internet.

On the other hand, digital data, due to their intrinsic characteristic, allows for the homogeneous management of heterogeneous multimedia information, coding texts, images, sounds and videos in bits and storing the related data on a single special device. support - DVD, cloud, etc. - for any type of information. The digital medium consequently allows the integration of all the different sources of information and documentation on the historic building, its context, the city, and the territory to which it belongs.

Furthermore, the reconstructions of three-dimensional virtual reality - now within the reach of common computers, including laptops - lend to numerous innovative applications relating to the study of historic buildings and monuments. First, virtual reality allows one to move freely in the external and internal spaces of the architecture, observing the building from multiple points of view, including the aerial one, in a dynamic way and without apparent continuity. In this way, the future expectations of Bruno Zevi (1950, 1962) are accomplished now, finally having at disposal an instrument capable of "exhausting the representation of a building" and above all of making possible "that process that we could call musical of continuous succession of points of view that the observer experiences in his motion within and around the building " (Zevi, 1962).

As this scholar and historian of architecture noticed, “if the main character of architecture is the interior space and if its value derives from living all its spatial stages successively, it is evident that neither one nor a hundred photographs will be able to exhaust the representation of a building, and this for the same reasons for which neither one nor a hundred drawn perspectives could do. Each photograph embraces the building from a single point of view, statically, […] is a detached sentence from a symphonic poem or a poetic discourse whose essential value is the synthetic value of the whole” (Zevi, 1962, p. 49).

Virtual reality simulations, especially in the extended definition of augmented virtual reality, are not limited to proposing three-dimensional representations that can be travelled at will, but together with virtual restoration techniques allow to view reconstructive hypotheses of archaeological sites, damaged and degraded monuments or even destroyed and no longer existing and, finally, to produce real 4D representations, where the temporal dimension is added to the three spatial ones. The 4D simulations are therefore diachronic representations of the development of a building over time, which can thus be visited in its various evolutionary phases, reuses, renovations and changes that have occurred throughout its history.

IT in the architectural field becomes a precious, indeed unique aid, not only for the design and documentation of a historic building, but to create a permanent multimedia archive that can continuously be updated, indispensable for the necessary knowledge and understanding. Last but not least, IT and the web allow to reach a wider audience to disseminate and enhance a priceless cultural heritage, often difficult to access and little known except to professionals.

But the key word underlying these considerations remains the integration of information in a single (digital) support.

Theory

The historic building is obviously always part of a built context, lived in, modified by human intervention and, in general, integrated into a very large territorial system, whose historical evolution cannot be ignored. Consequently, knowledge and real understanding of a building or monument require the acquisition, storage and management of a large amount of data of all kinds. Databases meet these needs exactly (Maino, 2019).

Furthermore, digital databases can be integrated into general information systems and, for example, be combined with 3D and 4D reconstructions, so as to constitute interactive software that allows querying the database starting from the individual building elements, from the decorations, from the paths, simply by activating the appropriate points with the mouse in such a way as to bring up descriptive cards of the detail in question or by opening scrolling menus from which to choose the possible options for consultation.

In this way, a single computer system can manage all the information relating to the historic building, including surveys, maps, archival documents, restoration reports, historical data, any films, photographs, engravings, as well as allowing the (virtual) visit of the external and internal spaces from multiple points of view and according to paths chosen by the user.

On the scale of the single building, it is essential - in addition to the retrieval and archiving in digital format of the classic documentation - to be able to apply the BIM (*Building Information Modelling*) methodology for the optimization of processes which, introduced in the 1970s, thanks to the subsequent developments of the related IT, is now widely practiced (Del Curto & Grimoldi, 2017). A BIM model is a sort of centralized digital archive (repository) of information relating to the physical and functional aspects of a project, which evolves and enriches with information during the related life cycle of the project itself. BIM uses intelligent parametric multidimensional modelling to record and share information about a building, relating both to design and construction, and to the management and maintenance of the asset. Basically, the virtual model of the constituent works of the building is created, but - unlike a CAD software that represents data starting from geometric elements such as points, lines and surfaces - a software underlying the BIM methodology is of the object type based on a representative scheme modelled around the different entities of the project, such as walls, pillars, windows, etc., and their mutual relationships. In fact, geometry constitutes only one of the various properties of these objects (Del Curto & Grimoldi, 2017).

Therefore, BIM becomes a fundamental digitization tool to support the sharing and management of information, also in view of scheduled maintenance. In fact, it is precisely the knowledge of the inventory and inspection data of the works that lays the foundations for an effective scheduled maintenance system and the ICT technology available to BIM allows its practical implementation: The integration between webGIS systems (territorial, context urban) and BIM (premises, individual buildings) would finally allow to have all the necessary tools for a valuable and effective policy of planned maintenance of cultural heritage (Logothetis & Stylianidis, 2016; Logothetis, Karachaliou, Valari & Stylianidis, 2018).

Finally, it should be remembered that the BIM methodology is a process originally introduced for new constructions, where the industrial production of building components plays an important role in the integration of the parts. But the advantages of the information management offered by BIM have suggested its application even in the context of the already built, however, implying approaches and tools with different characteristics than those commonly used for the design of the new buildings. Recently, to define this precise scope of intervention on historic buildings, the acronym *HBIM* has begun to spread: *Historic Building Information Modelling* (HBIM) is a novel prototype library of parametric objects, based on historic architectural data, in addition to a mapping system for plotting the library objects onto laser-scanned survey data. The HBIM term was proposed in 2009 by Maurice Murphy, of Dublin Polytechnic, and then picked up in his PhD work (Murphy, 2012).

The HBIM model therefore introduces a technical procedure of geometric modelling first, and then of information storage: The existing historical buildings, regardless of their function, are detected by 3D laser scanners and the resulting measurements, consisting of point clouds, are compared with models (objects) contained in special digital libraries and superimposed on the cloud until the similarity is satisfactory (Böhler, 2005). The results are simplified models, 'light' from an

IT point of view to which data can be associated for documentation or numerical simulations. The HBIM methodology therefore does not mean applying BIM to buildings already built but obtaining simplified models starting from a survey.

Then, the HBIM methodology provides us with the necessary ingredients to be able to develop 3D and 4D virtual reality models. The problem to deal with therefore becomes that of the necessary integration between the three main information moments in the life of the historic building, represented by GIS, (H)BIM and virtual reality methodologies.

Methodology and results

The term open source indicates a software whose source code is made accessible to anyone and of which the holders of the relative rights allow and favour the free study and the introduction of modifications by other independent programmers. Among the best known and appreciated open-source software, at least the Unix-like FreeBSD, GNU (recursive acronym for "GNU's Not Unix") and the Linux kernel should be mentioned.

Open source is a powerful IT resource as it does not involve purchase and use costs, it is also continuously tested, verified, updated and enriched by the contributions of users and programmers around the world. This tool is therefore very useful for designing and developing low-cost but high-tech applications, such as the one we propose for the integrated documentation of the history and restoration of the *Casa del Mutilato* in Ancona. As an example, GIMP, *GNU Image Manipulation Program* (https://www.gimp.org/), is a powerful digital image processing software, capable of managing, modifying, producing visual information both raster or bitmap, and vector one, for the creation of a multimedia database and a GIS system.

The processes of planning and territorial development now show more and more clearly how any action or intervention that has as its objective the conservation, enhancement and promotion of a site of historical and artistic interest cannot fail to consider the geographical identification at the base of the knowledge of the asset itself. Therefore, the availability of tools such as GIS makes it possible to disseminate contextualized information on cultural heritage and plays a fundamental role. The understanding of individual historic buildings and monuments cannot take place without a simultaneous consideration of the building-urban fabric and of the landscape and environmental context that produced them and with which they have been or are related.

Territories, landscapes, cities, roads, rivers, monuments, buildings, sites, every spatially identifiable and codable element can be inserted and represented in a GIS. The canonical image of the GIS is in fact a multi-level representation of superimposed themed maps in the same spatial system (see fig. 2). A sort of collection of transparent glossy sheets arranged in overlapping layers (information layers) that contain any type of spatial information: Aerial photos, geophysical and satellite data, databases, and any type of information that can be represented in spatial coordinates. These layers can be modified and updated in real time following the historical evolution of a territory and dynamically providing its representation.

There are two types of data that can be stored and consulted in a GIS system:

1. raster data, consisting of cell arrays that generate an image whose content is linked to specific quantities but cannot be interrogated in an alphanumeric way. This system is mainly used for image management;

2. vector data that represent the fields through points, lines, surfaces that define geographic objects, to which alphanumeric attributes are associated.

However, the most important functions of a GIS reside in its ability to visualize, interrogate, and cross-reference data, creating new relational contexts and original information. In the case of GIS, the query includes the possibility of querying the system by associating the relational databases (alphanumeric archives) to the various cartographic bases, themes, aerial photos, etc. base of the fields (fields) present in the databases.

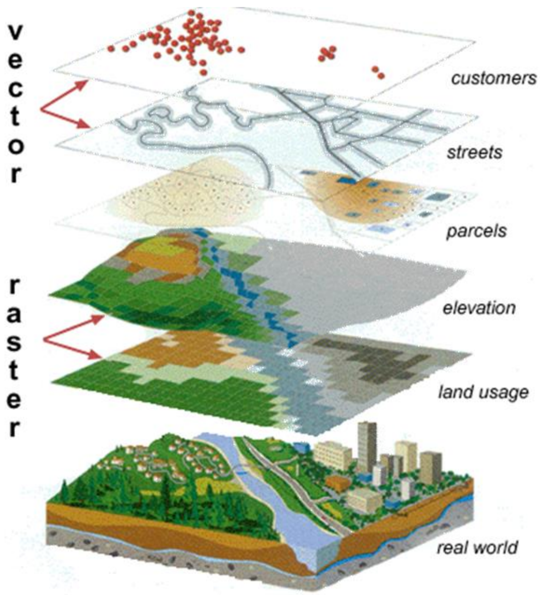

Fig. 2. Some of the possible layers of a GIS containing images and floor plans

In fig. 3, relating to the GIS system we have prepared for the territory of the municipality of Finale Emilia, for example, the different levels of damage suffered by the historic buildings of the town following the two earthquakes in 2012 are shown in different colours.

The results of the GIS search appear both in the cartographic window, as in fig. 3, and in the database tables according to the adopted criteria. It is worth considering a GIS not as the landscape, but - in accordance with Bruno Zevi's considerations on architectural representation - as a tool for interpreting space, describing it with a new language and at the same time returning to perceive it in different dimensions and through appropriate simulations.

The reference open-source GIS software is certainly GRASS (*Geographic Resources Analysis Support System*, https://grass.osgeo.org/); another open-source software recommended for reasons such as ease of interpretation and use of the interface and compatibility with different platforms is *Quantum GIS* (https://qgis.org/en/site/). Finally, the *OpenGeo* suite should be mentioned, which unfortunately is no longer updated (the website http://opengeo.org/ is no longer active) as the new versions (Boundless Server) are not freely available according to the open-source logic. The *Ushahidi* application (http://ushahidi.com/) is an open-source software for collaborative mapping, useful for collecting and displaying the information provided by users and relating them through feedback mechanisms and approval workflows, to create a real work in progress.

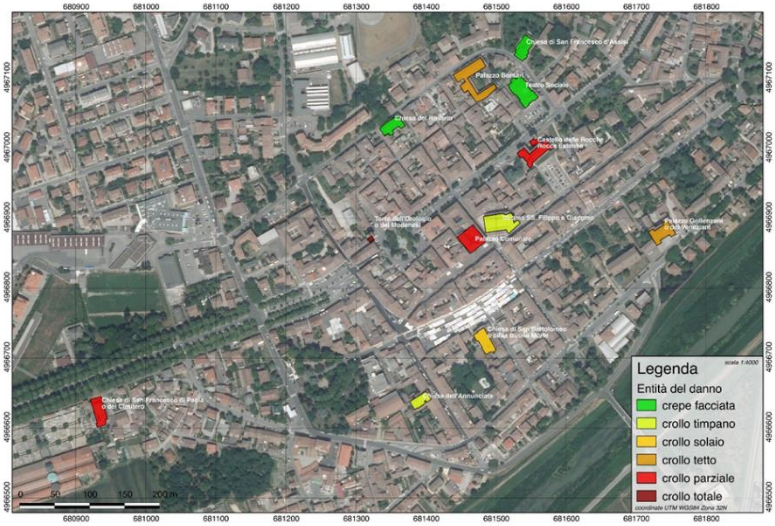

Fig. 3. GIS image relating to the mapping of the historic buildings of Finale Emilia (Italy) which suffered damage following the Emilia-Romagna earthquakes of May - June 2012.

Usually, the official cartography is in DXF (Drawing Exchange Format), which is an ASME/ANSI standard for CAD/CAM platforms, used for the communication of vector data and 2D and 3D graphic images. To be inserted into a GIS system, this information must be converted into the GIS acquisition format (ESRI shapefile), an operation that can be carried out with an appropriate open-source software with GNU GPL license such as *DXF to Shapefile Converter*.

Also as regards the (H) BIM methodology, open-source software of excellent quality and constantly updated is available. Recently, exhaustive critical reviews of existing products have been published and available on the net and therefore reference should be made to these bibliographical references (Logothetis & Stylianidis, 2016; Logothetis, Karachaliou, Valari, & Stylianidis, 2018) for all information relating to computer programs to create BIM models for cultural heritage; of particular interest is the innovative use of cloud-computing technologies.

In the specific field of the documentation of restoration interventions, we have created a descriptive sheet of all the aspects related to restoration (diagnostic investigations and surveys of decay and of the state of conservation, techniques, materials, managerial and economic, legal and administrative aspects, etc.) and implemented an IT system - TECHNÈ - for image processing, diagnostic imaging and virtual restoration, which includes a prototype for the constitution of hypertextual and multimedia computer archives where to store and trace information relating to restoration, diagnostics, dating interventions on finds and artefacts of historical and artistic interest. Multimedia information systems were thus developed and validated for the efficient and easy-to-use classification and conservation of all the documentation on important restoration interventions carried out by private companies for local public bodies and for the State (Biagi Maino & Maino, 1999; Maino, 2003).

Two types of databases have been created: one more purely scientific, for use by art historians, conservators, restorers, the other more strictly technical and economic, which allows you to enter all the technical and executive information on the interventions of restoration, of specific interest to businesses.

The last piece of the prototype information system that is proposed in this paper concerns 3D and 4D modelling with virtual reality simulations, including augmented ones.

It should be emphasized that, until a few decades ago, the technique mainly used for the survey of cultural heritage was photogrammetry (De Luca, 2011), combined with the topographic support survey for the acquisition of control points. Then, with the advent in the last decades of the last century of the first scanning lasers actually usable in this field (Maino, 2007), the enormous amount of data acquired using this methodology, which has since undergone substantial progress in terms of precision, reliability of measurements and portability of the equipment (essential the combination between laser scanner instrumentation and GPS technology), together with the acquisition speed, initially suggested a possible replacement of the two previous techniques (Böhler, 2005). In fact, today it is recognized that the optimal solution for an accurate survey from a metric point of view and with the wealth of details necessary to fully describe an object involves the integrated use of the two techniques, photogrammetry and laser scanning.

Therefore, starting from the information acquired in this way, with appropriate software - possibly, as pointed out, open source - it is possible to develop 3D models of the building and possibly also of its urban context, up to designing virtual simulations that represent both interventions possible restoration and/or reconstruction, and the temporal evolution of the building itself, showing its construction history, the modifications, the reconstructions, the reuses that have taken place over the years (Bennardi & Furferi, 2007; Biagi Maino & Maino, 2017).

There are numerous open-source programs for drawing, designing, creating 3D animations, from CAD software to those specifically designed for creating 3D animations; of particular interest are the virtual reality tools for/on the web (*WebVR* tools) which operate simply through a browser and are therefore independent of the specific hardware or device to be used.

In conclusion, there is a wide possible choice of very valid and efficient programs, free, open source and continuously updated and above all kept in operation with all the necessary technical and documentary support, to achieve the objective, proposed here, of an integrated information system for applications to historical architecture and to be applied to the *Casa del Mutilato* in Ancona.

The 4D animation of virtual reality, in this digital documentary system project, constitutes a sort of access route - an interactive door - to all the other software modules and databases integrated into the information system itself; A kind of meta-software that allows the user to move in the urban context and inside the building and, at the same time, to activate query windows and data search on historical, material, conservation, managerial and administrative aspects, etc., relating to structures, decorative details, systems, etc.

An important aspect of virtual reality representations that deserves to be highlighted is the use, or rather representation, of light sources. Light is a substantial architectural tool. Photographic and even cinematographic reproductions of a building strongly depend on the particular lighting sources used for filming. If we then think of the nocturnal version of the historic centre of Ancona, like that of any other city, it is clear that it is no longer legible as the sum of its architectural components illuminated by the sun or by lighting systems in use in the past when the historic building we are considering was designed and built; this fact is even more true if we think of indoor lighting. The 3D simulation programs can provide visual routes, visits to the building and its urban context, not only from different perspective points but also with different lighting conditions: Arrangement and characteristics such as spectral composition and intensity of the light sources can be chosen according to personal liking and according to the needs of the research.

A working methodology was proposed by researchers of the Department of Industrial Engineering of the Federico II University of Naples (Bellia, Agresta, & Pedace, 2013), based on the study of the chromatic variations of some buildings in the Neapolitan city affected by light sources with different SPD (where SPD is the acronym for '*spectral power distribution*', i.e. distribution of spectral power that serves to define the power of a lighting source per unit of area and unit of wavelength) and on the concept of '*perceptual salience*', that is the quality that makes an object recognizable and capable of instantly capturing the attention of our eyes and mind. This methodology would allow the construction of a lighting system capable of enhancing the characteristics of a historic city centre and of a building while respecting its materials and different colour gradients.

Unlike traditional restoration which operates directly on the original asset to consolidate and improve its present status and prevent subsequent alterations, the virtual one is a non-real action conducted, as the name itself implies, only in the field of virtuality. of fiction. Therefore, it does not perform an intervention on the constitutive matter of the work of art, but with the use of dedicated software - such as GIMP- it intervenes exclusively on its digital reproduction, ensuring an exclusively visual improvement or proposing a hypothetical reconstruction. Consequently, we can say that virtual restoration fully falls within the area of safeguarding cultural heritage, meaning the latter as a "*conservation measure that does not imply any direct intervention on the work*".

3D simulations and related virtual restoration operations, like any technology, have advantages and disadvantages, namely dangers of misunderstanding and interpretation. Virtual restoration is not to be considered only as an alternative to actual restoration, but also as a functional and integrative intervention, precisely an analysis and study support for the activity of the designer, conservator, and restorer. It allows one to create restoration hypotheses and to evaluate in advance which of the many is the most suitable. Fig. 4 briefly shows the possible virtual restoration operations and the relationships existing between them (Bennardi & Furferi, 2007; Chirici, 2009; Biagi Maino & Maino, 2017).

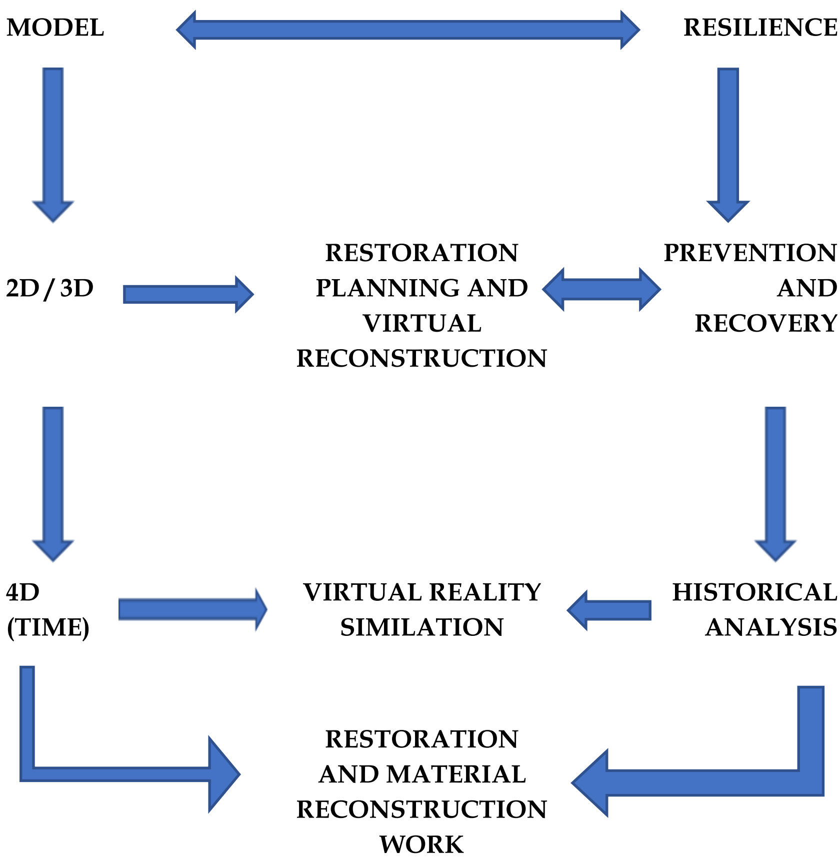

Fig. 4. Logical diagram of the possible virtual restoration operations

Furthermore, virtual restoration methodologies are very useful as an aid for the reconstruction of severely damaged or even completely destroyed historic buildings. This is the case of the *Frauenkirche* in Dresden, the eighteenth-century church burned down and collapsed entirely during the terrible Allied air raids on the German city, carried out between February13 and 14, 1945. Part of the original construction materials were recovered and filed with the typical methods of the archaeological survey and excavation, to allow - starting from the nineties of the twentieth century - to design, thanks to the techniques of computer anastylosis and virtual restoration, and consequently to proceed with the computer and therefore physical reconstruction (Friedrich, Schöner, & Nitschke, 2005). In 2005 it was possible to inaugurate the 'new' *Frauenkirche*, very similar to the original.

A similar computer work was experimented by Valeria Caggiula and myself following the repeated earthquakes that caused serious damage to the historical and artistic heritage of Emilia-Romagna in May and early June 2012. In fact, after two violent earthquakes at the end of May, a new strong earthquake of magnitude 5.1 ML which occurred at 21:20 on 3 June 2012 with its epicenter in Novi di Modena was felt throughout northern Italy and again hit the entire area of the provinces of Modena and the lower Mantuan Oltrepò. The historic *Clock Tower* in Novi di Modena - already damaged by the previous shakes - collapsed completely during this latest earthquake. Unfortunately, all the documentation relating to the *Tower* was also lost due to the damage caused by the earthquake to the Municipal Archives.

According to the documents, the *Tower* was built in the year 1712. In 1928, the tower and the bell were subject to restoration and renovation, as the former showed structural deterioration, while the latter had been cracked by lightning and rendered almost silent. Designed by the Novese architect Pietro Pivi, the tower assumed the crenelated structure, raised by three meters in the protruding form, which was possible to admire before the earthquake that caused its collapse (thus reaching almost 22 meters d height, see fig. 5) and equipped with a new four-quadrant.

Today - after the collapse of the building - the only available documentation of the tower consists of some photographs that have been possible to find from private collectors. Based on these, an attempt was made to virtual reconstruction of the tower, both in its original form (project A) and after the transformation of 1928 (project B), including metric information, etc., to provide suitable information for a future intervention of material reconstruction.

Photomodeling refers exclusively to the use of photographs to conduct the three-dimensional reconstruction of real objects (De Luca, 2011), effectively defining a work environment that allows the 3D rendering of buildings based on the global and coherent integration of the survey, modelling and representation phases. In our work (some results are shown in figs. 6 and 7), *SketchUp* software was used. After the 3D modelling phase, the photographic texture was directly projected onto the model, following the articulated trend of the surfaces in three dimensions, as shown in fig. 6.

Finally, through a geo-positioning operation, with the insertion of georeferencing data (in this case: piazza 1 Maggio, Novi di Modena), the search engine, present in the 3D model sharing bank, correctly positions the building recreated three-dimensionally. This operation also involves the generation of a Google Earth file (.kmz) which is subjected to evaluation before being inserted into the Google Earth browser and made available to any user on the network.

Fig.5. The *Clock Tower* in Novi di Modena (Italy) before the 2011 earthquake.

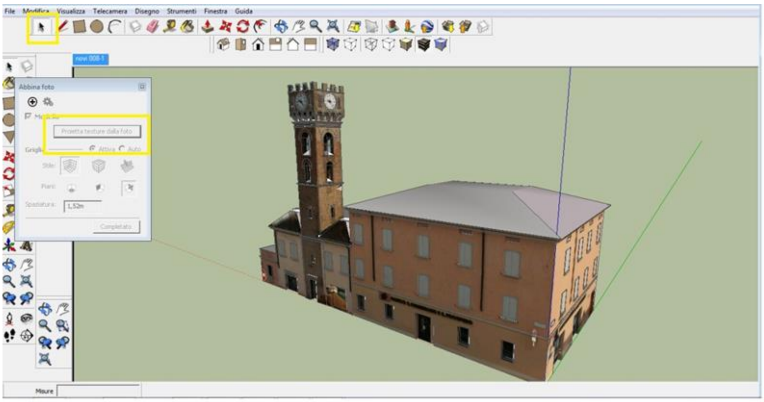

Fig.6. Texture projection from the photo in fig. 5

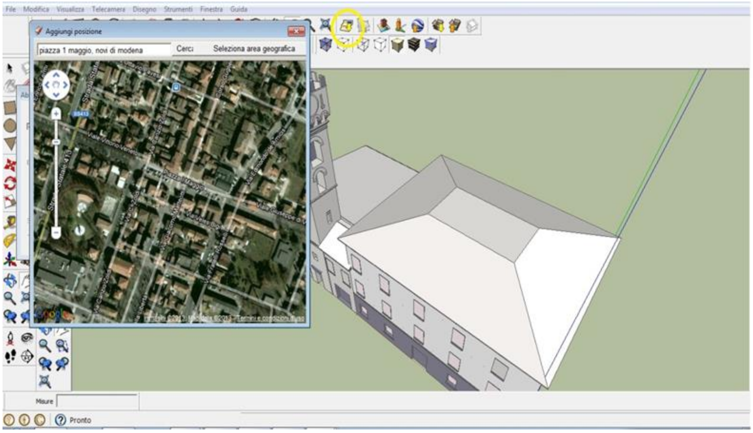

Fig.7. Entering the GPS position in the 3D reconstruction of the tower

Conclusions

In this work it was proposed a design scheme relating to the creation of a multimedia and integrated computer system that guarantees the acquisition, conservation, management, and research of all historical and archival documentation for the *Casa del Mutilato* in Ancona, and, at the next time, allows one to enter the information that will gradually be produced before and during the restoration interventions. To this platform, which partly uses GIS and HBIM methods and technologies, it will be possible to add 3D representations and the historical evolution of the building (4D simulations) using virtual reality techniques and the creation of films to create tour itineraries. and knowledge that can be defined by the user at will and according to his/her own interests. The system will be available on the internet and, of course, there will be different access and consultation methods based on the confidentiality of the data.

From the historical archive to the management data for a scheduled maintenance of the building, up to the 4D reconstruction, a general-purpose information system will be created in continuous development and becoming, divided into modules, also fundamental for the dissemination and enhancement of the asset and for the involvement of citizens in carrying out the restoration works of the building thanks to the website kept constantly updated and in the subsequent use of the architectural structure if, as hoped, it will be partly dedicated to hosting cultural institutions with their activities (historical library , newspaper library, rooms for seminars and conferences, etc.).

Concluding how it was started, with a citation from Zevi (Zevi, 1962, pp. 53-54), it is necessary to observe and reiterate that "within the limits for which it is legitimate to schematize a historical-critical process, in the face of an era or an artistic personality one should first illustrate the following data:

a) the social conditions. Each building is the result of a building program. This is based on the economic situation of the country and of the individuals who promote construction, and on the way of life, on class relations and on the custom that derives from it;
b) the intellectual presuppositions, which differ from the former to include not only what the community and the individual are, but also what they want to be, the world of their dreams, their social myths, aspirations and religious beliefs;
c) the technical conditions, that is, the progress of the sciences and their artisan and industrial applications, regarding the construction industry technique and the organization of the construction workforce;
d) the figurative and aesthetic world, the set of conceptions and interpretations of art and the

figurative vocabulary that in every age form the language from which poets draw words and phrases to express their creations in individual language".

Even the criticism of monuments can be schematically articulated in the following approximate classification:

e) urban analysis, i.e. history of the external spaces in which the monument stands and which it helps to create;
f) architectural analysis, properly called, that is history of the spatial conception, of the way of feeling and living the interior spaces;
g) volumetric analysis, i.e. the study of the wall box that encloses the space;
h) analysis of the decorative elements, that is of plastics and painting applied to architecture and in particular to its volumes;
i) analysis of the scale, i.e. the dimensional relationships of the building with respect to the human parameter.

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Book review of *Loser*

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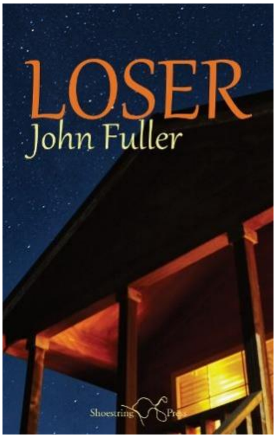

John Fuller. *Loser* (Nottingham: Shoestring Press, 2021).
ISBN 978-1-912524-74-7

Loser is the eleventh work of prose fiction by the noted author and poet John Fuller, Emeritus Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford and past winner of the Whitbread and Forward prizes. Comprising a total of 108 pages, the novella tells the story of Graham, a curmudgeonly middle-aged man who lives in a quiet cul-de-sac in north Oxford. Having recently lost Maddie, his vivacious cello-playing wife, much of the work is based around Graham's indecision on how to deal with her so-called "pod", a glorified garden shed originally built as a place for his spouse to practice her musical instrument. With no friends and a distant relationship with his two children, Graham is thus grappling with how to proceed in life. Through examining different facets of his character and personality, the work deftly portrays the turbulent waters of post-Brexit Britain through the prism of a grieving middle-aged man's worldview.

Through Graham's social interactions – be they with his motley crew of neighbours or with others who cross his path – one of the main themes that becomes apparent is his general displeasure and rage at the world. This is highlighted, too, by the frequent references to his stratospherically high blood pressure readings, with his ire seemingly provoked by a variety of unrelated things. The major source of anger, though, is the expression of Graham's apparently groundless lack of empathy for homeless people and the socially excluded. Indeed, an ill-fated run-in with a young down-and-out is one of the turning points of the work, which leads to unexpected consequences.

There are myriad other topics which are touched on in the book, including issues of race and ethnicity (for example, Graham's disastrously misguided attempt to make his son's British-born girlfriend of Korean heritage feel "at home" by cooking her an inedible Asian-style meal), politics (clearly to the right of the spectrum, Graham sneers at his liberal *Guardian*-reading neighbour, but is also not a fan of Boris Johnson), and religion (Graham is a churchgoer, and the moral compass of the story is embodied by his neighbour Father Eustace, the parish priest). However, the work's length means that these issues are merely suggested, rather than discussed in detail. Nonetheless, this does not make the book feel incomplete; rather, it adds breadth, depth, and context to the core events that take place.

The novella's stark title – *Loser* – is impacting and can clearly be interpreted in different ways. As such, it can be argued that it denotes the character of Graham himself, as a man who has lost his wife, and who is in the process of ostensibly losing his health, his relationship with his children, and potentially his whole existence. It could also be stated that the title reflects the concept of "winners and losers", with the latter being the marginalised and socially-excluded homeless people who influence the book's course of events. And finally, the notion of loss could also be applied to a portrayal of wider society – for example, as a depiction of a changing Britain where formerly established social mores are being eroded, an issue much lamented by people like Graham.

One important allusion in the book is to the paradox of Schrödinger's cat. Indeed, the notion that something can be simultaneously alive and dead seems to embody the torpor of Graham's own existence. Initially presented as a family in-joke regarding the late Maddie's music-making in the soundproof "pod", the ramifications of the paradox – and its continuing links to the "pod" – become increasingly apparent as the work progresses, thus foreshadowing the dramatic events that mark the latter third of the novella.

In terms of the quality of the writing, Fuller's style is clear and accessible, and as an acclaimed poet he has the talent for accurately describing characters in an economic but eminently insightful way, as well as for transforming mundane minutiae into full and well-defined observations. The tempo is excellent, and though an oft-levelled criticism levelled at novellas is that they can seem underdeveloped, this is certainly not the case with *Loser* – as such, it is an excellent representative of the genre. No word is extraneous, and each description, observation, and event builds neatly into a tightly-constructed whole that leads the reader seamlessly through the work's events. In short, and perhaps unsurprisingly given the author's pedigree, Fuller has created an impacting book that merits a wide readership.

Book Review on *Zhuangzi*: *The Complete Writings*

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Abstract
This brief article is a review of *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings*, which was published in March of the last year by Hackett Publishing. Subsequent to a concise explanation about the contextual circumstances in which the new and full translation of the ancient Chinese text ought to be perused, I, in order to give an instance of its possibility, pointed out that one of its famous passages could be interpreted as an allegorical vignette that symbolically but straightforwardly communicates the same truth which contemporary French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux has proved, i.e., that the primordial principle framing the whole world is contingency.

Keywords: Philosophy, Eastern Philosophy, *Zhuangzi*, Taoism, Quentin Meillassoux

Reviewed Work: Zhuangzi. (2020). *Zhuangzi: The Complete Writings* (B. Ziporyn, trans.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.

Most of those who presently study Western philosophy would agree that the discipline has been at an impasse for a long time and that they should find a way to break the stalemate. Various causes have brought about the situation; nonetheless, it is indubitable that one of the gravest problems is the implicit postulate that Quentin Meillassoux (2008) named "correlationism", i.e., "the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other" (p. 5). Even if one has not read Meillassoux's renowned analysis of the premise that has remained orthodoxy since Kant's Copernican revolution, one can facilely recognize why it is enormously problematic. It, first, makes philosophers categorically unable to accept a scientific statement concerning what is outside the correlation, and, second, peremptorily incapacitates them from rationally disproving irrational, fanatic, and impressionistic contentions (see Meillassoux, 2008, pp. 1-49).

Considering these circumstances, one would deem it as natural that those aspiring to resolve the deadlock are required to visit not only Western intellectuals before Kant but also Eastern thinkers. Therefore, we should regard this new and full translation of *Zhuangzi* as highly timely because, as many scholars have proclaimed (Ropp, 2010; Höchsmann, 2004), it is one of the most outstanding and significant texts which Asia has ever produced. Moreover, we should heartily rejoice that the work was conducted by a thoroughly qualified scholar in Brook Ziporyn, a full professor of the University of Chicago. His translation admirably conveys the spirit of the original with fidelity and clarity, and the succinct introduction and rich textual notes would strike the reader as quite informative and helpful.

Of course, a brief review cannot comprehensively critique this nearly three-hundred-page volume; yet, to evince part of the *Zhuangzi*'s trans-temporal profundity as well as the superb quality of Prof. Ziporyn's rendition, I quote its most famous passage, that often goes by the appellation of the "Butterfly Dream", inasmuch as methinks it incisively displays the deepest insight that we can glean from the classic:

> Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, fluttering about joyfully just as a butterfly would. He followed his whims exactly as he liked and knew nothing about Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he awoke, and there he was, the startled Zhuang Zhou in the flesh. He did not know if Zhou had been dreaming he was a butterfly, or if a butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhou. Surely, Zhou and a butterfly count as two distinct identities! Such is what we call the transformation of one thing into another. (Zhuangzi, 2020, p. 21)

Everyone can apprehend that *transformation* constitutes the theme in this figurative vignette. However, it is certain that, in its raw form, it would come across to most as too abstract to fathom its import. Hence, I consult an illuminating exegesis by Takahiro Nakajima, a prominent Japanese philosopher who has provided innovative but persuasive interpretations of *Zhuangzi*'s abstruse lines. Below are two sentences wherein the quintessence of his construal of the snippet manifests itself: "Transformation is not only that an entity alters into another entity but that the world the entity has thitherto constructed transmutes into a totally different world.... Through transformation, the world to which the entity has ever belonged itself metamorphoses" (Nakajima, 2012, pp. 156-157).

Now it would be obvious that the pivot of the episode is its radical and unique conception of transformation, and here I cannot help but point to a subtle but momentous resonance with Meillassoux's theory wherewith he has potently identified sheer fortuity as the absolute necessity of the world. In concluding this essay, let me elaborate on this point.

As some may know, the philosopher did not content himself with foregrounding the constitutional aporia of Western philosophy. Instead, he embarked on a quest to logically overcome it and, after a series of impeccably deductive arguments, cogently proved that the *world in itself*, which is, by definition, ontologically external to the correlation of thought and being, is ultimately framed by pure facticity, or rather unconditional contingency that is, as the first absolute, positively independent of anything and thus capable of transforming the whole world at any time and without any reason (see Meillassoux, 2008, pp. 51-81). In my estimation, the allegorical passage of *Zhuangzi* is a superlative parable which, on the one hand, indicates the same truth uncovered by Meillassoux, and, on the other, complements his stoically methodical argumentation by, as a narrative, straightforwardly communicating its very marrow to the reader.

Needless to say, the foregoing is only a small-scale and grossly insufficient foray into the gigantic text with almost inexhaustible potential. I hope that this exquisite English edition will find a wide readership and further instigate a multiplicity of intellectual intercommunications between Eastern and Western philosophies.

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Instruction for authors

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Abstract (100-150 words); Keywords: 5

Introduction

Heading...

Bibliography and sources.

Appendix

Style guidelines

The editorial board uses APA Style, 6th edition (www.apastyle.org). Please, do not use footnote, or avoid endnote as much as possible.

APA Style

In text citation/reference of a scientific source, is as follows:

Last name of the author, year of publishing and page – if needed, e.g: (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 7).

Author in a sentence

Another study for this issue (Smith, 2016) emphasizes that...

Author at the beginning of the sentence:

Smith (2016) emphasizes that...

Wolton (2009, p. 53) says that internet offers an ocean of information, but every day we choose to be on diet by choosing only the information that is beneficial to us, not time-consuming.

Wolton (2009) says that internet offers an ocean of information, but every day we ask "how to interconnect communication

ghettos who communicate only vertically and not horizontally through other communication tools" (p. 53).
In 1974 Zukowski invented the term Literacy information to describe...

Two authors in a book
Smith and Jonnes (2016) emphasize that...

Citation within a part of the sentence:
Another study for this issue (Smith, 2016) puts the main emphasis on the previous behavior in the environment where the child lives, because "the environment presents the nest where the child gathers information which later, he/she will imitate or apply in everyday behavior" (p. 6).

Different conflicts, terrorist attacks, insecurities etc., made citizens or even political actors, ask: "Why do they hate us" (Arndt, 2006, p. xviii). This is very important, because "today's hate brings tomorrow's urge of insecurity and instability not only within the country, but also for the global security" (p. 34).

Some authors for the same issue:
As the public diplomacy researchers point out (Nye, 2004; Gilboa, 2008; Anholt, 2004; Melissen, 2007)), having a positive image…

If two authors have the same last name, the first letter of the name is also written:
Authors Smith J. and Smith F. (2016) highlight some key features ...

Three to five authors in one book:

If a work has three (3), four (4) or five (5) authors, cite all authors the first time and from then on include only the last name of the first author followed by the words et al. ('et al.' is Latin for 'and others')

Eg. (Nye, Melissen, Szondi, Leonard, 2015).

Eg. (Nye et al., 2015)

Over 6 authors in one work:

If a work has six (6) or more authors, cite only the last name of the first author followed by et al. each time you refer to this work. In the bibliography all are written.

For example:

As noted in the recent study of corruption and political nepotism in Kosovo (Plepi et al., 2015), in this case neither exist…

More work by one author in a year:

As Plepi (2015a) points out, economic growth and welfare also increase family harmony, but such a phenomenon has been impossible to measure so far in Kosovo, or studies of this phenomenon are "regretful" (Plepi, 2015b).

Entities and institutions as authors

The full name of the institution should be indicated in the first citation, while the following citations may be used if the name is particularly long.

The international network of humanitarian aid associations has increased considerably in recent years in Kosovo (the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action [ALNAP], 2010).

Subsequent citations:

(ALNAP, 2010)

Bibliography

General rules

When a source has up to seven (7) authors, include all names in the reference list by dividing authors by commas.

In case of books without an author, place the title of the book in the first position instead of the author. Write the full name of institutions or associations (see example at the bottom).

Date of book publication:

The date comes after the author, separated by a full stop and is inserted between the round brackets. In case of documents without a date, use the abbreviation "n.d." in brackets (no date).

Translated books:

In case of foreign translated books, indicate the name of the translator.

Examples:

Wolton, D. (2009). *Informer n'est pas communiquer.* Paris: CNRS Editions.

Tuch, H. N. (1990). *Communicating with the world: U.S. public diplomacy overseas.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University.

Chapter or article within an edited book or summary:

Melissen, J. (2011). Concluding reflections on soft power and public diplomacy in East Asia. Në: S.J. Lee & J. Melissen (ed). *Public diplomacy and soft power in East Asia* (247–262). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Journal:

Gilboa, E. (2008). Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 616(1), 55-77.

Journal from website: Last name of author, first letter of the name. (year of publication). Article title. *Title of the online journal.* The link or doi, eg.: Gilboa, E. (2008). Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.* 616(1), 55-77.

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