

Book

of

Abstracts

2020

# Western Balkans in Comparative Perspectives

## European Social Survey



Western Balkans  
ESS Regional Network

# Table of Contents

Letter of the organizers		<b>3</b>
Agenda of the conference		<b>4</b>
<b>Panel 1: Studying identity in the comparative perspective</b>		<b>6</b>
What if the Transit Country Becomes the Final Destination		
– Attitudes of Serbian Citizens Towards Immigration in a Comparative Perspective		<b>7</b>
Sources of anti-immigration attitudes in Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia		<b>8</b>
BANAL BALKANISM? Rethinking Banal Nationalism and Regional Identity		
in Post-Yugoslav Media Space		<b>9</b>
<b>Panel 2: Studying clientelism in the comparative perspective</b>		<b>10</b>
Voting, clientelism and identity: Experimental evidence from Montenegro		<b>11</b>
Who are the clients? Predictors of citizen engagement		
in political clientelism in the Western Balkans		<b>12</b>
<b>Panel 3: Studying gender in the comparative perspective</b>		<b>13</b>
Gender-equality Paradox and Benevolence: a Multilevel Analysis		
across European Countries		<b>14</b>
Gender differences in perception of the appropriate maturity age		
for men and women		<b>15</b>
Gender differences in left-right ideology: A comparative view		
of the Balkan countries		<b>16</b>
<b>Panel 4: Studying solidarity and family life in the comparative perspective</b>		<b>17</b>
Family transitions of young adults in the South East Europe		<b>18</b>
Engagement during Everyday Life and Depression		
in Western Balkan Region: a Comparative Study between Albania and Kosovo		<b>19</b>
Loneliness, Health and Community Capacity		<b>20</b>
<b>Panel 5: Studying economic prospects in the comparative perspective</b>		<b>21</b>
Determinates of female (in) activity: a comparative perspective		
between countries from Western Balkan and South Mediterranean		<b>22</b>
Fairness of Retirement Income in Serbia: A Comparative Analysis		<b>23</b>
Minishengen as an opportunity for economic growth and raising		
the standard of living for the countries of Western Balkans		<b>24</b>

Research about Western Balkans very often misses adequate comparative and longitudinal perspective. One of the main reasons for that is the lack of data that can be used in designing such studies. This conference aims to promote the opportunity for both academic researchers and policy makers to use European Social Survey data and other longitudinal comparative data collection studies. Namely, in the recent years the researchers have put in significant efforts in including the region on the European research map by joining in prominent social data collections studies such are European Social Survey ESS, Comparative Study of Electoral Systems CSES, European Value Study and similar. This conference aims to take another step and bring together researchers and policy makers in the region to present and discuss research findings based on data of the European Social Survey and other comparative data collections. This forum will provide a framework for discussing possible collaborations and joint efforts in advancing scientific research in the region, including practical issues such as funding, collaborative research grant applications, methodological and data archiving problems, and so on. It will also put significant focus on connecting researchers and policy makers in order to promote usage of the scientific data for evidence-based policy making.

The first day of the conference will be dedicated to connecting with the policymakers in the region and discussing how the academic work can become more used in evidence-based policy making with focus on cooperation among research infrastructures in the Western Balkans and European Research Area. The second day will be focused on solely academic content, including paper presentations and discussion about data collections and prospects of joint cooperation and publications.

December 2020.

# Agenda of the conference

## Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020

09:45—10:00 ◻▶ Technical checking for speakers

### 10:00—11:00 REGIONAL COOPERATION, SCIENCE DIPLOMACY AND EBPM

Moderator: Olivera Komar, MNE

**Rory Fitzgerald**, Director ESS

**Maria Theofilatou**, Representative of European Commission (tbc)

**Goran Bašić**, Director of Institute for Social Sciences

**Alessandro Lombardo**, Coordinator of EU project unit, Central European Initiative

**Siniša Marčić**, Expert on Human Capital Development, Regional Cooperation Council (tbc)

**Blerjana Bino**, Co-founder, Center for Science and Innovation for Development (SCiDEV)

**Katarina Tadić**, Programme Manager, European Fund for the Balkans

11:00—11:30 ◻◻ Discussion, questions and answers

11:30—12:00 ▶ Break

### 12:00—13:15 RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES AND SYNERGIES

Moderator: Bojan Todosijević, Nataša Krivokapić

**Keynote: Professor Dr. Albert Simkus, Professor Emeritus, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway**

**Kseniya Kizilova**, Head of Secretariat of the World Values Survey Association

**Dave Howell**, Institute of social research, University of Michigan

**Sanja Damjanović**, Chair Person of the SEEIIST seeiist.eu

**Marija Bulat**, Regional Youth Cooperation Office

**Gjergji Murra**, Western Balkan Fund (tbc)

**Erna Kralija**, H2020 GRRIP

13:15—14:00 ◻◻ Discussion, questions and answers

## Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2020

09:45—10:00 ◻▶ Technical checking for speakers

### 10:00—11:00 PANEL 1: STUDYING IDENTITY IN THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Dragan Stanojević

**10:00 What if the Transit Country Becomes the Final Destination – Attitudes of Serbian Citizens Towards Immigration in a Comparative Perspective** – Dunja Poletić Ósosić

**10:10 Sources of anti-immigration attitudes in Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia** – Branka Matijević, Marko Jovanović, Ksenija Marković

**10:20 BANAL BALKANISM? Rethinking Banal Nationalism and Regional Identity in Post-Yugoslav Media Space** – Martina Plantak i Edina Palević

10:30 ◻◻ Discussion, questions and answers

11:00 ▶ Break

### 11:10—12:00 PANEL 2: STUDYING CLIENTELISM IN THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Olivera Komar

**11:10 Voting, clientelism and identity: Experimental evidence from Montenegro** – Nemanja Stankov

**11:20 Who are the clients? Predictors of citizen engagement in political clientelism in the Western Balkans** – Jovan Bliznakovski

11:30 ◻◻ Discussion, questions and answers

12:00 ▶ Break

### 12:20—13:20 PANEL 3: STUDYING GENDER IN THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Moderator: Olivera Komar

**12:20 Gender-equality Paradox and Benevolence: a Multilevel Analysis across European Countries** – Vladimir Mentus, Jovana Zafirović, Milan Urošević

**12:30 Gender differences in perception of the appropriate maturity age for men and women** – Bojan Todosijević i Suzana Ignjatović

**12:40 Gender differences in left-right ideology: A comparative view of the Balkan countries** – Aleksandra Trogrlić i Bojan Todosijević

12:50 ◻◻ Discussion, questions and answers

13:20 ▶ Break

**13:30—14:30 PANEL 4 (PARALLEL PANEL):  
STUDYING SOLIDARITY AND FAMILY LIFE  
IN THE COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

Moderator: Olivera Komar

**13:30 Family transitions of young adults in the South East Europe** – Aleksandar Tomašević i Dragan Stanojević

**13:40 Engagement during Everyday Life and Depression in Western Balkan Region: a Comparative Study between Albania and Kosovo** – Merita Mece

**13:50 Loneliness, Health and Community Capacity** – Dragana Vidović

**14:00** □ ○ Discussion, questions and answers

**14:30** ▶ End of the day

**13:30—14:30 PANEL 5 (PARALLEL PANEL):  
STUDYING ECONOMIC PROSPECTS IN THE  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

Moderator: Nataša Krivokapić

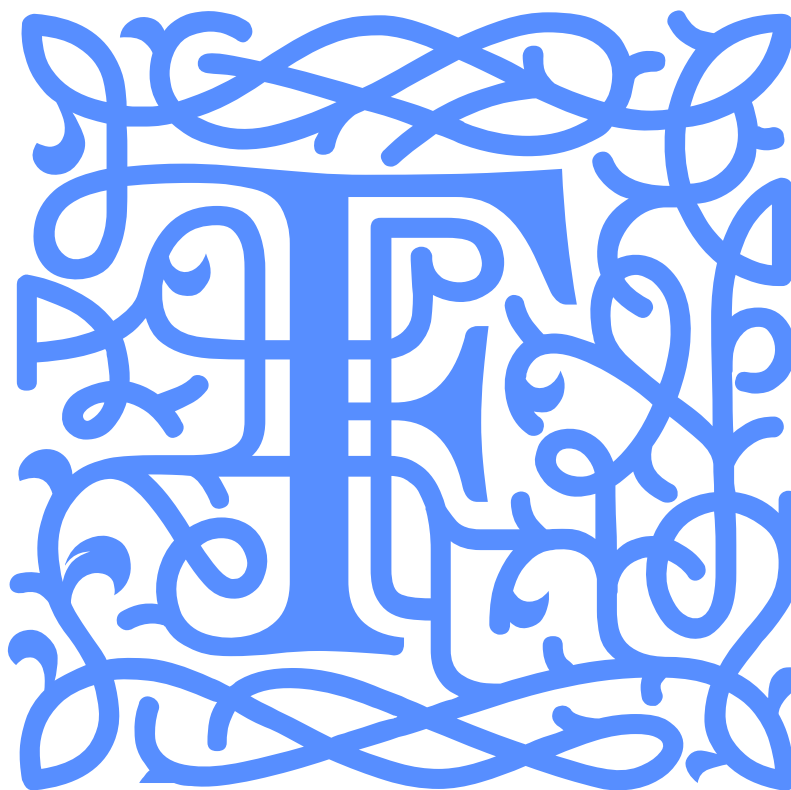
**13:30 Determinates of female (in) activity: a comparative perspective between countries from Western Balkan and South Mediterranean** – Marija Andonova

**13:40 Fairness of Retirement Income in Serbia: A Comparative Analysis** – Željka Manić i Anđelka Mirkov

**13:50 Minishengen as an opportunity for economic growth and raising the standard of living for the countries of Western Balkans** – Shkumbin Misini, Arta Hoti, Pranvera Dalloshi

**14:00** □ ○ Discussion, questions and answers

**14:30** ▶ End of the day



**Panel 1: Studying identity  
in *the* comparative perspective**

# What if *the* Transit Country Becomes *the* Final Destination — Attitudes of Serbian Citizens Towards Immigration in a Comparative Perspective

Dunja Poleti Čosić

Phd student and research  
Assistant

Institute for Sociological Research,  
University of Belgrade — Faculty of Philosophy

This paper investigates (anti)immigration attitudes of Serbian citizens with a particular focus on comparison with opinions expressed in other European countries. Although the peak of the migrant crisis happened in 2015, this issue is still high on the political agenda of the European Union. At the same time, support for immigration is an important topic not only in EU member states, but also in candidate countries that lie along the transit route, such as Serbia. As a country of emigration, Serbia has only recently encountered an increase in the number of asylum applications and immigration. Namely, the asylum system in Serbia was introduced in 2008 as part of the EU accession procedure. Over the last twelve years, based on the number of asylum applications and the institutional response time, four waves of migration can be distinguished. The first covers the period until 2013, when the number of asylum applications was relatively low. The second covers 2014 and the beginning of 2015 when the number of requests more than tripled if compared to the previous period. The third one lasted from spring 2015 until March 2016 and includes what is known as the refugee or “migration” crisis, during which a large number of people passed through the territory of Serbia, hoping to enter the European Union. Finally, the official “closing” of the Balkan route started a new chapter characterized by a reduced flow of refugees and migrants, longer retention of people on Serbian territory, and a higher percentage of migrant population entering asylum procedures. The previous body of research has detected a growing trend of negative attitudes towards refugees (collected in the pool of the previously ambivalent citizens), while the percentage of citizens with a positive opinion on asylum seekers remains almost unchanged. The reasons for negative attitudes towards this group are justified by different cultural patterns, behaviour that put threatens the domestic population, and the economic burden on the already underdeveloped economy in the country. Nevertheless, most of the quantitative studies so far, even those conducted on representative samples, could not be put into a wider European context due to a lack of comparative data. Therefore, starting from the ethnic threat theory this paper aims to examine Serbian citizens' attitudes towards immigration, their most significant predictors, and to analyse them from a comparative perspective. Our research questions are, thus, the following: whether the slow movement from a transit to a final destination country affected the spreading of anti-immigration attitudes in Serbia; to what extent are the citizens of Serbia anti-immigration oriented in comparison with the citizens of other European countries and to which attitudes, as well as socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics, are anti-immigration feelings related. These research questions will be investigated by using data from the last round of the European Social Survey, which will be analysed and compared through analysis of variance and multiple linear regressions.

Keywords ▲ MIGRATION □ REFUGEES ▲ PUBLIC OPINION  
□ COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE ▼ SERBIA



# Sources of anti-immigration attitudes in Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia

Branka Matijević

Junior Research Assistant  
Institute of Social Sciences

Marko Jovanović

Junior Research Assistant  
Institute of Social Sciences

Ksenija Marković

Junior Research Assistant  
Institute of Social Sciences

In recent years migration emerged as one of the important political questions in all of Europe. This topic gained significance especially since 2015 and so-called Refugee Crisis when a large number of migrants from the predominantly Muslim countries in the Middle East, North Africa and West Asia started heading to Europe in hope for a better future. This put to test the fundamental European values such as those established in the Treaty of Lisbon and common interest and goals of EU member and candidate states have shown its limitations as the migration debate rose. This study examines sources of opposition to immigration in Bulgaria, Croatia and Serbia. All three mentioned countries are the part of the Western Balkan Route, a route that has been one of the main migratory paths into Europe. And most importantly these countries aren't final destination for the migrants; these people are generally trying to reach more developed European countries – places with high standards of living and welcoming asylum policies. Yet in all three of our case studies, we have strong hostility towards immigrants accompanied by perceptions they threaten the native population, for example by taking jobs, challenging cultural values, or undermining the national system of welfare benefits. The main aim of this study is to investigate whether the competition and cultural theoretical models that have received solid empirical support in the context of Western-European societies can explain anti-foreigner sentiment in post-communist countries.



# BANAL BALKANISM?

## Rethinking Banal Nationalism and Regional Identity in Post-Yugoslav Media Space

Martina Plantak

PhD candidate in political Science  
Andrassy University Budapest

Edina PALEVIQ

PhD candidate in political Science  
Andrassy University Budapest

Banal nationalism as one of the newest forms of modern theories of nationalism is gaining in importance and accordingly the number of studies dealing with this topic for certain countries and regions is increasing day by day. In the post-Yugoslav region there are very few studies that deal with the exploration of banal nationalism in everyday life as well as in politics. The examination of this direction through the lens of national and regional media, however, seems to be left out.

Based on leading researchers and studies in the field of banal nationalism and regional identity, this article tries to find out whether a so-called “regional identity” currently exists among the former Yugoslav states (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Kosovo).

With the initial hypothesis that belonging to a regional, and in this case the Balkan identity, is more pronounced in the five EU candidate countries than in Slovenia and Croatia, that have become EU Member States, this article will provide some insight into “regional identity” and the banality of “Balkanism” reproduced in the state media. The article will be tasked with finding the “missing link” between Michael Billig’s (1995) banal „flaggings” of nationalism (in the media) and regional identity. Building on Slavcehva-Petkova’s (2014) research on banal Europaenism and media, this article aims to explore how regional identity is represented in the media of the Balkan countries and whether banal representation of regions can be transferred into the so-called regional identity.

For this investigation, media content analyses will be conducted. The article will be composed of two parts. The first part examines 45 most read informative online portals from all post-Yugoslav states, how the sections in these portals are divided i.e. whether there is a special section intended only for the geographical area of the countries of former Yugoslavia, the heading of which it mainly addresses and what content it contains. The portals will be divided into different political spectrums and ideologies (right/left, liberal/conservative). The second part will examine the prominence of national identity i.e. how much space each media gives to national content and national sections. By examining articles on online state portals, we will try to examine the linkage between symbols and deixes in media and their role in creating nation and regional identity.

If correct, this analysis will confirm our starting hypothesis that the term “regional identity” is much more prominent in the media of the candidate states of the EU, than in the states which are already members of the EU.

## **Panel 2: Studying clientelism in *the* comparative perspective**

# Voting, clientelism and identity: Experimental evidence from Montenegro

Nemanja Stankov

PhD candidate at Central  
European University Budapest

Teaching assistant  
at University of Montenegro

The study analyses ethnic voter-candidate linkages and the electoral consequences of such linkages in an ethnically divided Montenegrin society. I argue that vote choice in Montenegro is a function of the dominance of the identity cleavage between the two largest, dominant ethnicities: Montenegrins and Serbs. I conducted a two-stage experiment on a sample of 240 students where, in the first stage, the respondents were given cues as to a candidate's ethnicity. The results suggest both a co-identity linkage and a positive effect of ethnic information shortcuts on voters' choices among Montenegrin respondents. For Serbs, ethnic cues failed as a substantive information shortcut in producing electoral advantage. However, additional analysis of the observational data from CSES 2016 provided more evidence to support the identity linkage hypothesis. In an additional experimental stage, respondents were introduced to vote-buying information about the same candidate, under the assumption that the defection rate would be lower for the co-identity candidate. Here, the defection rates remain stable regardless of the co-identity attachment. The overall results suggest that with additional ethnic political parties present, defection as a consequence of illicit behaviour will not translate into a significant transfer of power between ethnic groups.

# Who are *the clients*?

## Predictors of citizen engagement in political clientelism in the Western Balkans

Jovan Bliznakovski

Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research,  
University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" in Skopje (ISPJR-UKIM)

The literature on political clientelism has developed several theoretical arguments as a response to the question "who are the clients?". Some researchers expect to find clientelism among the poor (Brusco et al. 2004; Stokes 2005; Nichter 2010), arguing that clientelist benefits are valued more highly by voters in the lower socio-economic groups. A second argument is connected to the party affiliation of clients: Stokes (2005) hypothesizes that political parties find it most cost-effective to target their weak supporters and swing voters, while in contrast Nichter (2010) expects that parties typically target their core supporters with an intention to induce turnout. Gans-Morse et al. (2014), on the other hand, claim that political parties rely on a portfolio of strategies, some directed at opposers (vote-buying) and others at core supporters (turnout-buying). Finally, Auyero (2000) and Stokes et al. (2013) claim that political parties target those voters where clientelist monitoring comes cheapest and easiest to implement: voters residing in smaller and/or rural areas are expected to be the prime targets because clientelist brokers (i.e. the middle-level between patrons and clients) utilize their insertion in social networks to practice effective monitoring. All of the mentioned arguments have found some empirical backing.

This presentation tests the presented arguments on the Western Balkans, while including data and evidence from all six countries in the region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia). The research relies on the author's original work and uses quantitative data from the survey conducted in the framework of the project "INFORM: Closing the gap between formal and informal institutions in the Balkans" (2017, N=6040); qualitative data extracted from semi-structured interviews with citizens, also gathered by INFORM (2018, N=120); as well data from the fieldwork conducted by the author in the period June 2019– February 2020 which includes semi-structured interviews with experts and clientelist insiders (N=72). All sources of data include all Western Balkan countries.

The findings from the study demonstrate the importance of considering the clients as an important factor in the establishment, maintenance and breakdown of clientelist exchanges. First, it is found that it is difficult to associate clientelism only with the poor citizens in the Western Balkans, but rather that different socio-economic profiles are engaged (aligning with the idea of widespread presence of political clientelism in the region). Second, it is found that different clients (by their socio-economic, political and networking resources) participate in different types of clientelist linkages (i.e. clients with higher volume of resources engage in exchanges that produce higher returns). Finally, it is also found that political parties across the region utilize clientelism not only for electoral purposes but also for the purposes of building and maintaining party organizations, and that this opens space for engagement of both poor and better-off clients; as well as clients with divergent affiliation towards political parties.

Keywords ▲ CLIENTELISM □ PATRONAGE ▲ WESTERN BALKANS  
□ POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ▼ POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

**Panel 3: Studying gender  
in *the* comparative perspective**

# Gender–equality Paradox and Benevolence: a Multilevel Analysis across European Countries

Vladimir Mentus

Institute of Social Sciences,  
Belgrade

Jovana Zafirović

Institute of Social Sciences,  
Belgrade

Milan Urošević

Institute for Philosophy  
and Social Theory, Belgrade

In this paper, we test the gender–equality–values paradox, in the case of benevolence as a value orientation. Gender–equality paradox, which states that more gender–equal societies are also more gender differentiated in terms of values, traits, interests, and preferences, is a growing research field. In terms of values, for example, some studies indicate that, first, men consistently attribute more importance to power, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and self–direction values than women do, while the reverse is true for benevolence and universalism, and also that these differences are largest in gender–egalitarian societies (Schwartz and Rubel, 2005; Schwartz and Rubel–Lifschitz, 2009). It is argued that these societies should display the largest psychological gender differences because such conditions allow men and women to more freely express their intrinsic dispositions (Connolly et al., 2019).

However, prior studies mainly used inappropriate measures of gender equality (which were not time–matching other data). Also, these studies have not controlled for variables such as income, which was found to be relevant in this sense (Meer and Priday, 2020; Smeets et al., 2015). Finally, previous research didn't differentiate between various country types.

We use the data from the ninth round of the European Social Survey, from 2018, including 27 countries and comprising 47,086 individuals (45,3% of women,  $M_{age} = 47.92$ ,  $SD_{age} = 18.86$ ). The importance of benevolence is measured using the question: "How much each person is or is not like you?" and items: "It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being", and "It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him". The answers are given on a six–point scale ranging from 1 ("very much like me") to 6 ("not like me at all"), and the value score is the mean response to the two items. Internal consistency of the scale in our sample is  $\alpha = .645$ . On the other side, we used the UNDP Gender Inequality Index from 2018 as a measure of aggregate gender equality. We run several linear multilevel models ( $ICC = .12$ ) to assess country differences in regard to gender–benevolence association. We also looked at the differences between mean benevolence levels in three country groups: the Western Balkans, other postsocialist countries, and traditionally capitalist countries.

Controlling for age and education, our results confirm the gender–equality–values paradox, but adding income into the model gives contradicting results: interaction effect of gender and Gender Inequality Index on benevolence loses its significance. Consequently, our results show that gender differences in regard to benevolence do not depend on aggregate gender equality. Second, our data indicate a clear grouping of countries in terms of benevolence mean levels: the Western Balkan and the traditionally capitalist countries have distinctly higher levels compared to other transition countries.

Keywords  $\Delta$  CGENDER–EQUALITY PARADOX  $\square$  BENEVOLENCE  
 $\Delta$  GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX  $\square$  EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY

# Gender differences in perception of the appropriate maturity age for men and women

Bojan Todosijević

Ph.D., Senior research fellow,  
Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade

Suzana Ignjatović

Ph.D., Senior research fellow,  
Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade

Perceptions of appropriate age for personal events such as getting married, starting living with an unmarried partner, or when one becomes 'adult', are often seen as culturally determined. Indeed, such cross-cultural variations have been observed. However, evolutionary theory suggests that gender should matter for the perception of appropriate age for certain personal 'events' in two ways. First, it should matter whether the appropriate age is suggested for men or women. Second, it should matter if the assessments are made by men or women.

Concerning issues presumably related to reproduction (get married, become adult, start to live with a partner), the appropriate age, on average, for women should be younger compared to what is seen as appropriate for men. Both men and women should demonstrate this asymmetric perception. However, the effect should be stronger for women. In particular, when women estimate appropriate age for men in such issues, they should show a greater tendency to suggest older appropriate age for men.

These hypotheses are examined using the 9th wave of the ESS data, totaling around 47 thousand respondents. General findings are examined in more detail by focusing on data from the Balkan countries. The overall results support the outlined expectations. For instance, it was found that both women and men think that the appropriate age "for a girl or woman to start living with a partner she is not married to" is lower compared to that for men. However, women think that the appropriate age for men (in this regard) is somewhat higher than what men think is ideal for men. Correspondingly, men think that the ideal age for women is lower than what women themselves think. These asymmetries are explained from the perspective of the evolutionary theory.



# Gender differences in left–right ideology: A comparative view of the Balkan countries

Aleksandra Trogrlić

Ph.D., Department of psychology,  
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

Bojan Todosijević

Ph.D., Senior research fellow,  
Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade

Recent literature reports that gender differences in left–right ideology have shifted since the early 1990s (Dassonneville, 2020). Surveys from the 1970s and 1980s depict women as being on average somewhat more on the conservative, or right-wing side. Since the 1990s, women became more left-wing, or liberal oriented compared to men. The change actually affected mostly women’s position, while men on average did not much change their own ideological position.

These findings are mostly based on West European and North American data. Additionally, significant cross-country variations have been observed. There is little evidence about the situation in the former communist countries, and in particular about the countries of the Western Balkans.

In this paper, we examine to what extent there are gender differences in left–right ideology in the Western Balkan countries. Our hypothesis is that there should be little difference for two reasons: 1. left–right terminology in most countries plays a relatively minor role in the regional political vocabulary, 2. Experiences with the socialist regime are likely to have reduced earlier gender differences characteristic for more traditional societies.

In addition to this descriptive analysis, we will address two related problems. First, we ask what are the most influential individual-level predictors of left–right ideology in the region? We mostly focus on the basic socio-demographic variables. Next, we will explore what factors may be responsible for cross-country differences.

The analyses will use various sources of survey data, such as the European Social Survey (ESS), the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems, and other relevant sources.

Keywords ▲ LEFT–RIGHT IDEOLOGY □ GENDER DIFFERENCES

▲ BALKANS □ PUBLIC OPINION

**Panel 4: Studying solidarity and family life  
in *the comparative perspective***

# Family transitions of young adults in the South East Europe

Aleksandar Tomašević

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad

Dragan Stanojević

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

The aim of the presentation is to analyze housing and family transitions among the young and young adults in five countries: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Albania representing different cases of the Post-socialist models of welfare regime. Different research (Kuhar, 2009; Aisenbrey, Fasang, 2020) have already noticed different family transitions between different welfare regime, (Gornick, Meyers, 2004; Walther, et al, 2002), although the above-mentioned region is still being underexplored. Relying on the latest available cross-sectional data we will tackle two research topics: 1. types of trajectories among young adults across different SEE countries, 2. differences in housing and family trajectories between young males and females.

In order to answer the research questions, we will use the sequence analysis (Abbott 1995), as a useful means for understanding the structure and regularities of life events. Our analysis will follow two major steps: 1. we will use the sequence analysis and the cluster analysis in order to find and compare different groups of housing-family trajectories across five countries, and 2. we will examine the effects of the various characteristics (age, gender, education, parents education, religion affiliation, etc.) on these trajectories. The analysis is based on the 9th round of European Social Survey's module Timing of life. The module includes all relevant indicators related to housing and family transitions: the age when respondents started to live independently, got married / started to live with a partner and got a child.

# Engagement during Everyday Life and Depression in Western Balkan Region: a Comparative Study between Albania and Kosovo

Merita H. Meçe

PhD Candidate,  
Clemson University

Depression is a serious mental health disorder and a significant public health challenge for the governments in the Western Balkan region. Fragile socio-economic situation, democracy deficit, poor health conditions and weak social cohesion are some of the risk factors of depression. While most of the studies conducted in the Western Balkan countries have been mainly focused on the impact of macro-level and structural drivers, limited research has been done to examine the role of micro-level factors including engagement during everyday life in depression. Scant to no studies have been found in Albania and Kosovo as well. The main purpose of this comparative study is: a) to examine whether citizens in Albania and Kosovo differ in respect of engagement during everyday life and depression (controlling for gender and place of residence); b) to assess the relationship between engagement during everyday life and depression among citizens in Albania and Kosovo. It is based on the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions to explore how positive emotions of feeling interested, engaged and absorbed contribute to human flourishing and mental health. Three main research questions of this study are: a) Do citizens in Albania and Kosovo differ in respect of engagement during everyday life (controlling for gender and place of residence)? b) Do citizens in Albania and Kosovo differ in respect of depression (controlling for gender and place of residence)? and c) Does engagement during everyday life predict depression of citizens in Albania and Kosovo?

This study uses data from round 6 (2012–2013) of the European Social Survey for Albania and Kosovo. Depression is the sole dependent variable measured with a seven-items scale with four response categories. Engagement during everyday life is the independent variable measured with a three-items scale with 11 response categories while gender and place of residence are controlling variables. Data are analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Services (SPSS), version 2.2. Results reveal that citizens in Kosovo self-reported higher engagement during everyday life than citizens in Albania after controlling for gender and place of residence. The citizens of Albania self-reported higher depression than the citizens of Kosovo after controlling for gender and place of residence. Engagement during everyday life predicted depression of citizens in Albania and Kosovo. Findings of this study have important implications for individuals, practitioners and policy-makers because healthy individuals are potential contributors and devoted citizens of a flourishing society. Efforts made to improve their engagement produce sustainable and long-term results that multiply gains.

Keywords ▲ DEPRESSION ■ ENGAGEMENT DURING EVERYDAY LIFE  
▲ THE BROADEN-AND-BUILD THEORY

# Loneliness, Health and Community Capacity

Dr Dragana Vidović

Senior Research  
Officer

Connected Communities  
University of Essex

Loneliness has been considered a threat to physical and mental health even before the COVID-19 onset. The United Kingdom (UK) Government saw it as a significant societal issue that needed urgent attention. The UK Government developed a strategy to address loneliness in 2018, funded numerous loneliness related initiatives (ranging from £2-11 million) and engaged with numerous organisations to raise awareness on the impact of loneliness on health.

The UK Government and other institutions have based their actions on numerous reports that non-medical issues such as loneliness account for a large number of appointments with doctors (General Practitioners). Some of the reports have found that loneliness also impacts economic productivity, with up to £2.5 billion in costs to the UK economy per year.

Given these reports, there is a great interest in initiatives that can help address loneliness. One such model is social prescribing. Social prescribing is a way of referring individuals to non-medical services to help improve their physical and mental health, and positively impact their usage of health and social care services. Professionals trained to deliver social prescribing are knowledgeable about local services and health issues, and use their expertise to put people in contact with services that can provide help and support. The aim is to help reduce pressure on health and social care services by finding a more appropriate ways to address people's needs.

I am currently working at the University of Essex on evaluating the impact of a social prescribing programme [Connected Communities](#) initiative that includes 4 local authorities in England (Medway, Kent, Suffolk, East Suffolk) and 2 in France (L'Eure, Oise). The programme lead and the Director of Evaluation of the project is [Dr Gina Yannitell Reinhardt](#) from the [Department of Government](#).

While social prescribing is becoming very popular in the UK and other countries such as Canada, Australia and some of the Scandinavian countries, the evidence to support the impact of social prescribing is somewhat weak. This is something that those working on producing impact evaluation for policy makers are currently working on – improving evidence to better determine the impact of social prescribing. This is the aspect that I find the most interesting about being part of the Connected Communities initiative.

## **Panel 5: Studying economic prospects in *the comparative perspective***

# Determinates of female (in) activity: a comparative perspective between countries from Western Balkan and South Mediterranean

Marija Andonova

University American  
College Skopje

The last two decades have seen major changes in the female participation in the labor market which resulted in many studies on gender aspects of employment. Researchers on this topic have found large differences in female activity and employment patterns across the world, across developed countries and across time. Researchers have tried to provide possible explanations for such differences in female participation rates across the world. The focus of the studies is on different sets of factors that may affect a woman's decision to participate in the labor force. Beside the standard socio-economic approach there are other factors which may as well affect female labor force participation. In the recent years, culture has emerged on the agenda of researchers as one of the potential explanations of why females decide to be active on the labor market or stay at home. However most of the studies explore the gender employment and wage gap by focusing on the data of single country only and fail to capture different cultural attitudes toward participation of women in the labor market

The aims of this thesis are: (i) to empirically investigate factors which have influence on female labor force in Macedonia with a focus on cultural context in which women shape their decisions to supply labor and (ii) to provide a comparative analysis of the female labor force supply in a set of selected countries from Western Balkan as one group and South-Mediterranean as second group.

Assessment of the overall cultural context on women's decision whether to supply their labor on the labor market represents a major contribution of this thesis to the current knowledge. In addition, the thesis provides an in depth analysis and comparisons of the factors affecting female participation (including culture) on the activity of females across several countries, and between two groups of countries, the Western Balkan countries and South Mediterranean ones, which in our knowledge is done for a first time. Moreover, we apply a methodology for assessment of the effect of the culture which is rather novel and rarely exploited. In particular, the methodology is based on previous research in which cultural context is examined through building two cultural variables: (i) Female Perception of Machista Cultural Context (FPMCC) Index which measures whether women have internalized machista cultural values or not and (ii) female Conservative Index measures whether women possess conservative culture values towards family, marriage and children.

Binary logistic regression is utilized to determine the differences in factors influencing FLFP between the two groups of countries. Analysis is conducted through the use of data from World Value Survey (WVS).

Comparative analysis of the factors that influence FLFP indicate that lower living standard of the women from selected countries from Western Balkan is one of the main reason for differences in factors of LFP. The most significant differences between the factors that affect FLFP between both groups of countries are observed in educational attainment of the women, being married, income of the family, employment status of the husband and educational attainment of the spouse especially for husbands with completed tertiary education or above.



We found that the cultural context is an important determinant of the females' labor market activity, which is important in designing government support and policies for promoting females' activity. Conservative women from Western Balkan countries tend to participate less in the labor market than women from South-Mediterranean who share same conservative values and norms toward family, marriage and children.

Keywords **△ FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION □ SOCIAL NORMS △ CULTURE**

## Fairness of Retirement Income in Serbia: A Comparative Analysis

Željka Manić

University of Belgrade – Faculty  
of Philosophy

Anđelka Mirkov

University of Belgrade – Faculty of Philosophy

Over the past few decades the demographic structure of Europe has changed significantly due to longer life expectancy and lower fertility rates, thus increasing the participation of the elderly in the population of many countries. Almost one fifth of Serbia's population is over 65 years of age, with projections of a continuous and significant increase in their share in the coming decades. According to the data from the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of the Republic of Serbia, there were 1,715,152 pension beneficiaries in December 2018. The sustainability of the state pension fund in Serbia is becoming increasingly questionable due to the high unemployment rate and significant participation of the working contingent in the informal economy. The ratio of the number of employees who pay contributions to the pension fund and the number of pension beneficiaries in 2018 stood at 1.3:1, as opposed to the ideal ratio of 3:1 required for the normal functioning of the pension system. The average pension in 2018 was 51% of the average net salary. Numerous objective data indicate the endangered living standards of pensioners, who often belong to the lowest strata of Serbian society. The subject of this paper is the pensioners' subjective assessment of the fairness of retirement income distribution. The analysis was performed on data collected in 2018 within the European Social Survey, on a representative sample of 2,043 Serbian inhabitants. The assumption is that most pensioners in Serbia perceive their retirement income as unfairly low. In order to gain a broader picture of the fairness of retirement benefits in Serbia, the data were compared with the findings from the post-Yugoslav countries participating in the European Social Survey in 2018 – Montenegro, Croatia and Slovenia. From the comparative perspective, the assumption is that the perception of fairness of retirement income in other countries is similar to Serbia, although the situation is expected to be slightly more favourable in Slovenia, where the economy is more developed. According to the survey, a quarter of households in Serbia (25.5%) depend on pensions as their main source of income. The total monthly income of households relying primarily on retirement benefits is generally lower than the income of other households. If pensions are the main source, every second household (52%) cope on the present income, while every third (35%) find it difficult or very difficult to cope. The vast majority of pensioners in Serbia consider their retirement income to be unfairly low (79.5%), less than a fifth to be fair (16.5%), and only 4% to be unfairly high. In Montenegro, only 12.6% of pensioners feel that their retirement income is fair, in Croatia this share is 16%, and in Slovenia it is as high as 25.6%. The findings confirmed the initial hypotheses of perceived unfair retirement income distribution in Serbia as well as in other countries, which to some degree differs depending on the overall economic development.

Keywords **△ FAIRNESS OF INCOME □ PENSIONS △ SERBIA △ COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

# Minishengen as an opportunity for economic growth and raising *the standard of living for the countries of Western Balkans*

Shkumbin Misini

College University "AAB",  
Faculty of Economics

Arta Hoti

College University "AAB",  
Faculty of Economics

Pranvera Dalloshi

College University "AAB",  
Faculty of Economics

The paper will include an analysis of the macroeconomic policies of the Western Balkan countries (Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia and Montenegro). The paper will analyze and measure the impact of economic growth with some important macroeconomic indicators within these countries. This paper will focus on the economic growth of these countries in the period of 15 years, and the focus of the study will be the analysis of the study of the most important macroeconomic indicators focusing on absolute advantages for exports and foreign investment that will affect the quality of living for Balkan citizens. The focus of the indicators that will be analyzed in this paper are, such as: economic growth, social welfare, emigration, standard of living and income per capita, etc. The purpose of this paper is to measure empirically the impact of economic growth on socio-economic indicators in these countries. The paper will include comparability of economic and emigration growth of these Western Balkan countries. The analysis of this paper will analyze and study the standard of living among these countries of the Western Balkans. The methodology of this paper will focus on secondary data obtained from international institutions (World Bank, MFI) and state institutions of these Western Balkan countries (Statistical Agencies). The paper will have statistical analysis including punctuation graph analysis, descriptive statistics, correlations, and linear regression. In this paper we will reach conclusions based on professional empirical results to provide a genuine scientific contribution and analysis for the overview of socio-economic performance within the Balkan countries. In the framework of empirical findings and empirical study, we will give some recommendations to these countries, and more specifically to policy makers to change the situation in which these countries are. Also, the paper will present a real overview of these countries regarding the socio-economic situation based on results, facts, and empirical analysis of the situation that prevails in these countries. The overview of the paper will present some suggestions to change state policies and to change the situation of these countries, so that the focus is on reducing emigration and raising the standard of living for all Balkan citizens.

Keywords ▲ ECONOMIC GROWTH □ SOCIAL WELFARE ▲ EMIGRATION  
□ FOREIGN INVESTMENT ▼ FREE TRADE

□ **Western Balkans in Comparative Perspectives**  
**European Social Survey**

△ **Book of Abstracts**

◀ **December 2020**