

KONFERENCA

**SKRBBSTVO, SOLIDARNOST IN
POLITIČNA PARTICIPACIJA
MLADIH**

*CARE, SOLIDARITY, AND YOUTH POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION*

**ZBORNİK
POVZETKOV**

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SKRBBSTVO, SOLIDARNOST IN POLITIČNA PARTICIPACIJA
MLADIH ; CARE, SOLIDARITY, AND YOUTH POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION

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OZADJE KONFERENCE

SODOBNE POLITIČNE DINAMIKE:
MED STRUKTURAMI IN IZKUŠNJAMI

MARINKO BANJAC,
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE
VEDE

Konferenca Skrbstvo, solidarnost in politična participacija mladih odpira prostor za premislek o mnogoterih izjemno relevantnih procesih in fenomenih sodobnih družb, v katerih lahko prepoznavamo številne napetosti in krize, ki pomembno prispevajo k vse bolj perečim vprašanjem demokratične legitimnosti oblasti na različnih nivojih, naraščajoče neenakosti in transformacije načinov družbenega delovanja. Prispevki, zbrani v tem zborniku, izhajajo iz raznolikih teoretskih in empiričnih pristopov in naslavljajo različne vsebine, vendar lahko že uvodoma ugotovimo, da jih povezuje skupna usmeritev, in sicer kritično raziskovanje pogojev, v katerih družbenopolitični procesi in fenomeni nastajajo, se transformirajo in pomembno vplivajo na delovanje posameznikov in skupnosti. V ospredju zbornika je razumevanje političnega delovanja (nasploh in specifično mladih) kot pojava, ki ga je mogoče misliti le v širšem kontekstu sodobnih družbenih, ekonomskih in političnih transformacij. Prispevki pokažejo, da oblikovanje političnih stališč in delovanja različnih subjektivitet ne moremo in ne smemo misliti kot rezultat enoznačnih procesov, temveč ti procesi potekajo venomer znotraj hierarhizacij, oblastnih razmerij; potekajo na presečišču institucionalnih ureditev, ideoloških okvirjev in konkretnih družbenih izkušenj. Posebno mesto zavzema analiza vloge digitalnih medijev, ki opozarja, da sodobno politično mišljenje mladih nastaja v pogojih intenzivne medijske posredovanosti, kjer so informacije, interpretacije in politični pomeni vselej že umeščeni v specifične komunikacijske in družbene kontekste. Poseben poudarek je namenjen tudi vprašanju skrbstva in solidarnosti kot temeljnih, a pogosto spregledanih dimenzij političnega. Prispevki, ki so jih



pripravili udeleženci konference, odpirajo med drugim vprašanje pokojninskih sistemov, neenakosti spolov, procese medicinizacije in prakse medsebojne pomoči, torej, vsaj v nekaterih oblikah, skrbstva. Izpeljemo lahko, z veliko mero posploševanja, da je skrbstvo ključno politično vprašanje, povezano z organizacijo družbe, porazdelitvijo virov in prepoznavanjem ranljivosti kot osnovnega elemente človekovega življenja in s tem pogoja možnosti medsebojnega delovanja v vsakokratnih človeških odnosih in onkraj njih. V tem kontekstu se solidarnost kaže kot praksa, ki lahko presega institucionalne omejitve in odpira možnosti za alternativne oblike skupnostnega delovanja.

Nenazadnje zbornik vključuje tudi refleksije o epistemoloških in teoretskih predpostavkah sodobne politologije. Kritike racionalističnega modela subjekta, razprave o ideoloških omejitvah okoljskih politik ter analize vpliva kulturnih in diskurzivnih tradicij na politično mišljenje opozarjajo na potrebo po premisleku temeljnih kategorij, s katerimi in prek katerih razumemo politično.

Ob koncu naj zapišemo, da je ravno zaradi heterogenosti prispevkov že to dejstvo svojevrsten pokazatelj, kako študentje in študentke odpirajo kompleksno sliko sodobnega političnega prostora, v katerem ne moremo biti le nemi opazovalci. Obratno, nujno je odpirati premisleke in kritično osmišljanje sodobnega sveta na način, ki bo ponujal tudi most do različnih transformativnih praks soustvarjanja novih oblik političnega življenja. Ta zbornik zato ne predstavlja le pregleda raziskovalnega dela, temveč tudi povabilo k nadaljnjemu kritičnemu premisleku o možnostih bolj vključujočih, solidarnih in demokratičnih družb.

PROGRAM

PANEL 1
11:00-12:30

REFLEKSIJE POLITOLOŠKIH PRISPEVKOV 1. DEL

-
PRISPEVKI:

Frauke Jill Zöllner: *Transformations of European Migration Policy*

Lia Vaupotič: *The Influence of Social Media on Young People's Political Opinions*

Tijana Rašović: *Gender, Pensions, and Care: Inequality in Ageing Societies (Italy and Croatia)*

Maria Arghirescu: *Symbiotic Antagonism and the Genealogy of Anti-Communism in Post-2024 Romania: A Digital Ethnography of Technocratic Neoliberalism and Sovereignist Populism*

Tatiana Bebikova: *Beyond the Rational Subject: Cognitive Anthropology and the Limits of the Liberal Model of the Human in Political Theory*

Angela Petkova: *The Necropolitics of Abandonment: State Sovereignty and the Extraction of Affective Labor in North Macedonia*

ODMOR
12:30-13:00

PANEL 2
13:00-14:30

REFLEKSIJE POLITOLOŠKIH PRISPEVKOV 2. DEL

-
PRISPEVKI

Miha Gorše: *Mysticist Dimension of Aleksandr Dugin's Understanding of Geopolitics*

Jan Zupan: *One-Dimensional Climate Solutions: Herbert Marcuse and the Ideological Blockade of Transformative Action*

Urban Beg: *Solidarity and Care in Times of Crisis*

Niko Čajić: *The Political Philosophy of Jiang Shigong*

Karolína Sikorová: *The Medicalisation of Language Difficulties in Preschool Children: The Role of Speech-Language Therapists and Gender Norms*

Vid Bizjak: *Politični sistem Republike Armenije: zgodovinski temelji in moderni izzivi*

Nina Jović: *Institutional Drivers of Affective Polarisation and Their Implications for International Conflicts*

ZAKLJUČEK
14:30-15:00

POVZETKI

TRANSFORMATIONS OF
EUROPEAN MIGRATION POLICY

FRAUKE JILL ZÖLLNER,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

In this thesis I will examine the current transformation of European migration policy through the lens of the reconfiguration of borders both within and outside the Schengen Area. While Schengen was originally intended to ensure freedom of movement and the dismantling of internal European border controls, this principle is increasingly being called into question by current political developments. In the wake of rising migration flows and shifting political dynamics, several EU member states have reintroduced temporary border controls within the Schengen Area. At the same time, migration control is increasingly being shifted beyond the EU's external borders, particularly within the framework of new policy instruments such as the EU Migration and Asylum Pact. This paper argues that European border policy is currently undergoing a process of spatial reorganization in which control is both intensified internally and externalized externally. This dual development cannot be explained solely by security policy considerations but also reflects domestic political interests as well as an attempt to address societal expectations regarding the handling of migration. Borders thus no longer appear as static territorial lines, but as flexible instruments of political governance that are increasingly decoupled from their geographical location. The central research question is: To what extent does the combination of the protection of the EU's external borders, the new regulations of the EU's migration and asylum package, and the

reintroduction of temporary internal border controls reflect a shift in borders both inward and outward? Additionally, the study examines to what extent these developments are driven by security logic, political dynamics, or structural changes in European migration policy. Methodologically, the study is based on a qualitative policy analysis combined with comparative case studies. It examines the reintroduction of border controls in selected Schengen states, particularly Germany, as well as political developments at the EU level in connection with the Migration and Asylum Pact. The analysis draws on policy documents, official statements, and institutional reports. The study thus contributes to an understanding of current changes in European migration policy and highlights the growing tension between freedom of movement and control policies.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S POLITICAL OPINIONS

LIA VAUPOTIČ,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

This paper explores how social media shapes political attitudes and opinions among young people. In today's political climate, the proliferation of fake news and increased political polarization worldwide raise the question of how youth develop into political thinkers and actors in times of political discord (Wray-Lake, 2019). Platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram and X (ex Twitter) are an important source of information. Young people on those platforms encounter political topics and form their opinion.

With this paper, I aim to understand how everyday exposure to different content on social media influences the way young people think about politics and how it shapes their opinions. Social media, unlike traditional media, present more information in fast moving and more personalized environment. Users, especially young people are exposed to different opinions and emotionally charged messages. This doesn't only affect what young people know about politics, but also how they evaluate and interpret political topics.

In this paper, I will focus on several key mechanisms, such as peer interactions, algorithms and influencers. Algorithms are very important, because they shape what content users see. Media audiences often self-selects into so-called 'echo chambers', where they only encounter views with which they agree (Hoewe in Peacock, 2020). Influencers also play important role, because they often present political ideas in simplified or persuasive ways, which leads people to identify or relate with them. And lastly, peer interactions can normalize certain opinions while discouraging others.

The analysis will be based on a review of existing literature and examples of political content on social media in Slovenia. Mainly I will focus on Tiktok,

that has become main social media platform among young people. The paper will argue that social media does not only inform young people, but it also actively shapes their political views. With this paper, I raise important question about how political opinions among youth are formed in the digital age.

Wray-Lake, L. ((2019). How do young people become politically engaged? Child Development Perspectives. Dostopno na: <https://academic.oup.com/cdpers/article/13/2/127/8232894?guestAccessKey=>

Hoewe, J. And Peacock, C. (2020). The power od media in shaping political attitudes. Current opinion in Behavioral Sciences. Dostopno na: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352154619301159>



GENDER, PENSIONS, AND CARE: INEQUALITY IN AGEING SOCIETIES (ITALY AND CROATIA)

TIJANA RAŠOVIĆ,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

well-designed policies to combat the issue. As demographic trends shift toward an increasingly older population, pension systems have become central to debates on sustainability, social protection and the overall future of welfare states. However, an additional challenge is gender inequality, which is shaped by institutional arrangements and shows later in life during retirement.


Drawing on a comparative analysis of Croatia and Italy, the study explores how these two member states with different pension systems respond to an ageing population. Both countries face rising old-age dependency ratios and increasing pressure on public budgets. While Italy depends on a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) system linked with economic growth, Croatia operates a multi-pillar system combining both public and private elements. The arrangement of these pension systems reproduces and amplifies gender inequalities rooted in labour market disparities and unequal distribution of unpaid care work. During their career, women are interrupted by part-time employment and caregiving responsibilities, which leads to a pension gap and a higher risk of economic insecurity and poverty. Around 36% of older women in Croatia are at risk of poverty, compared to about 26% of men. Additionally, pension systems that rely heavily on earnings-related benefits tend to exacerbate these inequalities. These dynamics are evident in both case studies. Furthermore, neoliberalism has found its way to transform social policy and pensions specifically, which creates a shift of responsibility from the state to individuals. Active ageing and extended working lives aim to ensure financial stability, but still fail to address structural inequalities and the unequal burden of care, which is why I call it a neoliberal trap. Pensions should not be understood as merely an economic instrument, but as a fundamental mechanism of care that reflects political choices about solidarity, responsibility, and social justice in ageing societies.

SYMBIOTIC ANTAGONISM AND THE
GENEALOGY OF ANTI-COMMUNISM
IN POST-2024
ROMANIA: A DIGITAL
ETHNOGRAPHY OF TECHNOCRATIC
NEOLIBERALISM AND
SOVEREIGNIST POPULISM

MARIA ARGHIRESCU,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

Following the 2024 presidential elections, Romania's political field has undergone a significant reconfiguration, consolidated by a sharp division between two ideologically opposed camps: a neoliberal, pro-European bloc and a sovereignist, nationalist and populist one. The former, represented by the current administration led by President Nicușor Dan and Prime-Minister Ilie Bolojan, places great emphasis on anti-corruption discourse and appeals to a large share of the urban middle class population, often employed in the private sector. By contrast, the latter is represented by far-right party AUR led by George Simion and other political figures such as Călin Georgescu or Diana Șoșoacă, a movement characterized by anti-globalisation, ultranationalist, Christian-sovereignist and neofascist narratives, appealing to a disillusioned, more rural, economically marginalized electorate. Post-2024, this division has been widely interpreted as evidence of deep ideological polarization. Drawing on a genealogical approach, this thesis challenges that interpretation, arguing that it obscures the shared substrate of anti-communism as a historically sedimented political rationality, which functions as a legitimizing, common grammar between the two blocs. Empirically, it focuses on the anti-communist armed resistance in the Făgăraș Mountains as a case study, tracing how the figure of the mountain partisan, a symbol of ethno-nationalist folk culture with underlying themes related to resistance, authenticity, and the legionary movement, was gradually articulated, aestheticized, and woven into a shared cultural reservoir. This foundation has persisted since 1989, structuring Romanian political imagination, legitimacy, and memory, thereby making possible the coexistence of seemingly incompatible political projects within a common discursive field. In parallel, the thesis uses digital ethnography to examine how the aestheticization of anticommunist narratives is recirculated within

contemporary online environments. Particular emphasis is placed on the ways in which both neoliberal and reactionary content is embedded and normalized within a culture of resistance that renders it affectively resonant for broader audiences. With an understanding of online platforms as sites of political production where meaning is continuously reshaped, this methodological orientation is especially pertinent in the Romanian context, as the 'sovereignist movement' has emerged and expanded primarily through TikTok, drawing significant support from diaspora communities. These approaches enable a reconceptualization of the post-2024 Romanian political landscape, revealing how contemporary political antagonism is sustained through historically grounded and digitally mediated structures. By shifting the analytical focus, this thesis underscores the foreclosure of the conditions of possibility for political alternatives to emerge and the critical need for a renewed repoliticization.



BEYOND THE RATIONAL SUBJECT:
COGNITIVE ANTHROPOLOGY
AND THE LIMITS OF THE LIBERAL
MODEL OF THE HUMAN IN
POLITICAL THEORY

TATIANA BEBIKOVA,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

Contemporary Western societies are often described through a growing list of crises: rising populism, political polarization, declining trust in institutions, as well as increasing levels of depression, burnout, and social isolation. These are usually treated as separate problems. This paper starts from a different intuition: that they may be connected, and that what we see are not isolated failures, but symptoms of a deeper tension built into the way modern institutions are structured.


At the center of this tension is a particular image of the human being. Liberal political theory, and many of the institutions shaped by it, tend to assume a subject who is rational, autonomous, and capable of making informed and consistent choices. But if we look at findings from cognitive science and anthropology (Simon, Kahneman, Haidt, Henrich, Tomasello), this image becomes difficult to sustain. Human behavior is not only limited in its rationality; it is also context-dependent, emotionally driven, and fundamentally shaped by social relations.

What is striking is that this is not new knowledge. Yet it has not been fully absorbed into political theory. At the same time, other domains—markets, media, and more recently digital platforms—have, in practice, long operated with a different understanding of the human subject, one that takes seriously its affective and non-rational dimensions (Bernays is an early example here). This creates an unusual situation: different parts of the same social system are, in effect, addressing different versions of the human being.

To make sense of this, the paper introduces the concept of subject-model conflict. The idea is simple: institutional expectations—self-regulation, continuous productivity, informed decision-making—do not fully match what people are actually able to sustain. This mismatch is not abstract. It is experienced as pressure, overload, and often as a sense of personal failure.

People respond in predictable ways: simplifying decisions, relying more on emotion or group alignment, or stepping back from participation altogether. When these responses accumulate, they can begin to show up at the political level, for example in declining trust, polarization, or support for populist actors.

The paper brings together two strands of work that are usually kept apart: philosophical critiques of the subject (Foucault, Butler, Honneth, Braidotti) and empirical research on human behavior. The aim is not to propose a new model of the human, but to take seriously the limits of the existing one and to ask what follows from that for how we understand contemporary political life.



THE NECROPOLITICS OF ABANDONMENT: STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE EXTRACTION OF AFFECTIVE LABOR IN NORTH MACEDONIA

ANGELA PETKOVA,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

This research investigates the structural gap between formal animal welfare legislation and the material reality of institutional neglect in North Macedonia. Despite the adoption of the Law on Animal Protection and Welfare in 2007, the country's public spaces are characterized by the systematic presence of abandoned and traumatized sentient beings. This study addresses the political mechanisms that allow for the normalization of violence and the systematic withdrawal of state protection from the public sphere. Drawing on Giorgio Agamben's theoretical framework, the research analyzes how the state operates the "Anthropological Machine" to manufacture a divide between human and animal life. This process reduces stray animals to "Bare Life"—subjects existing in a "Zone of Exception" where legal protections are sovereignly suspended. In this zone, the animal is stripped of legal status and becomes a subject that can be annihilated without consequence. This illustrates a conception of sovereignty that maintains a privileged place for the human through the systematic exclusion of the non-human "Other." Furthermore, the study connects this exclusion to Achille Mbembe's concept of "Necropolitics." The Macedonian state exercises its sovereignty by creating "death-worlds"—streets and landfills where animals are "left to die." This form of governance through abandonment reveals the "nocturnal body" of the state: a dark side driven by violence and exclusion that hollows out the liberal values celebrated in formal legislation. In this context, sovereignty operates by annihilating or neglecting those considered politically irrelevant to the state. The research also employs a feminist political economy lens, specifically Silvia Federici's work on "affective labor." I argue that the state consciously exploits the uncompensated labor of activists who perform an unpaid state service. By parasitizing the economic, physical, and psychological resources of these citizens, the state prevents a

total societal and epidemiological collapse while avoiding the administrative and financial burden of building functional institutions. Through process tracing of institutional decision-making and critical discourse analysis of state responses—such as the dismissal of reports of violence—this research aims to uncover the political economy of abandonment. It concludes that the construction of stray animals as “Homo Sacer” serves as a precursor to the broader erosion of the social contract in post-socialist transition realities.




MYSTICIST DIMENSION OF ALEKSANDR DUGIN'S UNDERSTANDING OF GEOPOLITICS

MIHA GORŠE,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

Recent events in Eastern Europe, particularly in Ukraine, have once again highlighted the influence mysticism has in contemporary Russian politics. Mysticism has played an important role in Russian society at least since the Middle Ages. Be it as an epistemology, ideology, political discourse or as a value system, it has been shaping policy of the Russian Federation – both internal and foreign. No single individual better personifies Russian mysticism better than Aleksandr Dugin. Dugin is sometimes referred to as “Putin’s Rasputin”, “Putin’s brain” or “the most dangerous philosopher in the world” in the West. The aim of my Master thesis is to establish, to what extent does mysticist thinking influence decision makers in the Russian Federation, with Aleksandr Dugin’s philosophy, specifically *Foundations of Geopolitics* (1997) and *The Theory of a Multipolar World* (2021) as a case study. *Foundations of Geopolitics* is an almost one thousand pages comprehensive geopolitical manifesto on how to achieve Pax Russica or Russkiy mir, while *The Theory of a Multipolar World* is a critique of the neoliberal world order, offering a world order organized around distinct civilizations, each with its own view of the world, political system and values, as an alternative. I argue, mysticism still plays a significant role in Russian politics, with its role even gaining momentum in significance in recent years. Additionally, I argue, Dugin’s influence as an individual on Vladimir Putin is overestimated in the West, while his ideas, with those of his contemporaries play a pivotal role in shaping Russian policy. The paper is based on discourse analysis of Dugin’s work, political documents and historical literature on Russian foreign policy, combined with interpretative analysis of mysticism and constructivist theoretical framework. Even though, Dugin is not referred to as a mainstream political philosopher in the West or even a credible political scientist, his ideas carry enormous weight. His contribution to geopolitics and (neo)realist

understanding of international relations has been studied extensively. This is exactly why I think, my paper can contribute significantly to the academic community, because the mysticist dimension of Dugin's work remains a relative unknown, especially in the West.



ONE-DIMENSIONAL CLIMATE
SOLUTIONS: HERBERT MARCUSE
AND THE IDEOLOGICAL BLOCKADE
OF TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

JAN ZUPAN, UNIVERZA V
LJUBLJANI

Despite decades of scientific warnings and growing public concern about climate change, meaningful structural transformation remains elusive. This paper proposes that Herbert Marcuse's concept of 'one-dimensional thought' developed in his 1964 work *One-Dimensional Man*, offers a robust diagnostic framework for understanding why radical climate opposition has been systematically neutralized by the very logic of advanced industrial society. Marcuse's conceptualization of "one-dimensional" mode of thought through understanding dynamics of modern capitalism and the technological rationality provides a frame for understanding how critique is absorbed, false needs are manufactured, and any alternative that challenges the system's core imperatives appears unrealistic or even unthinkable. If we apply this lens to the climate crisis, it can be argued that ostensibly bold climate policies like carbon offsets, net-zero pledges, and green growth strategies often function as what Marcuse would call "affirmative" changes. These changes strengthen the existing order rather than question its foundations. Meanwhile, ideas that hold potential for a radical systemic change, such as degrowth, decommodification of energy, or planned phase-out fossil fuel extraction, are systematically marginalized as utopian, economically irrational, or politically impossible. In Marcusean terms, the very imagination of a qualitatively different socio-ecological relation has been foreclosed. The proposed thesis would pursue two lines of inquiry. First, a conceptual reconstruction of Marcuse's key ideas, such as technological rationality, the great refusal, and one-dimensional thought, in relation to ecological thought, drawing also from his later essay *Ecology and Revolution* (1972). Second, a critical discourse analysis of mainstream climate policy documents such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), Conference of the Parties (COP) outcome documents, or IPCC documents with the intention of demonstrating how they

reproduce capitalist logic and technological rationality. The goal of the paper is not to claim that “nothing” is being done, but to show why the most radical responses have been rendered invisible or illegitimate by the very structure of modern industrial society’s thought.

SOLIDARITY AND CARE IN TIMES OF CRISIS

URBAN BEG, UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

This abstract approaches the act of care and solidarity not as an abstract set of moral values but as materially based collective practices that emerge in response to systemic failure. Drawing inspiration from Spade's *Mutual aid: Building solidarity during this crisis (and the next)* (2020), the abstract argues that mutual aid initiatives arise where state and market mechanisms, especially in moments of crisis. Rather than positioning young people as passive subjects of systemic processes, Spade's perspective highlights the young people's role in constructing alternative infrastructures of support, mainly networks that redistribute resources, knowledge and care outside dominant institutional frameworks.

In contemporary societies marked by increasing economic inequality, ecological crisis and democratic erosion, youth-led practices of mutual aid represent a form of political participation that challenges conventional definitions of politics. While they appear peripheral to institutional politics, they are deeply political in their capacity to contest existing power relations, build collective agency and refigure social arrangements. Spade emphasizes that mutual aid is a radical form of solidarity grounded in shared struggle and a feeling of commitment to dismantling oppressive systems as opposed to just alleviating their ramifications. By centering care as a base for political action, mutual aid acts as a blur of the boundaries between the social, the political, and the private and the public. They also expose the limitations of neoliberal frameworks that individualize responsibility and erode collective forms of support. In contrast, mutual aid fosters interdependence and collective responsibilities, offering a vision of »caring democracies« rooted in everyday practices, rather than institutional design alone.


The abstract ultimately suggests that youth participation in mutual aid networks should be understood not as supplementary to formal politics but as a critical arena of political life in its own right. One that both responds to and reimagines the conditions of contemporary crises.

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF JIANG SHIGONG

NIKO ČAJIĆ, UNIVERZA V
LJUBLJANI

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall and capitalism's apparent global triumph in the late 80s, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama (in) famously declared: "We may be witnessing not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such". He conceived Western liberal democracy as the "the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution" and in 1989, Fukuyama seems almost to have been under the impression that China was already there. During the Deng Xiaoping's opening-up era, many believed economic liberalization would foster a consumer society. They expected China's rapidly expanding and now the largest middle class in the world would eventually challenge the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) political monopoly and this in turn would culminate in Western-style democratization. This did not happen, instead non-Western societies can appropriate modern technologies and implement economic reforms that in return produce capitalist technologies of affluence while simultaneously rejecting the Western model of political organization. Alternative conceptions of authority, sovereignty, constitutionalism, and social organization may coexist with, rather than converge toward, liberal democracy. This is not a failure to achieve Western modernity or a complete alternative to it, but the end of modernity's presumed singularity and a deepening crisis in the liberal international order, which many now consider to be terminal. Yet many Western observers have yet to reconcile with this fact, as they project their own aspirations onto China and giving disproportionate attention to thinkers they classify as liberals, rather than engaging with what Chinese intellectuals actually think. And what Chinese intellectuals actually think is increasingly not liberal. To provide a corrective to this injustice, I will analyse the political philosophy of Jiang Shigong, a

leading constitutional law professor at Peking University and a key voice in China's New Left. Once critics of 1990s American imperialism and neoliberalism, the New Left has evolved into a very peculiar intellectual movement that blends Marxism and Maoism with Confucianism and the right-wing statism of Carl Schmitt and Leo Strauss — ostensibly conflicting traditions united by a shared rejection of liberal universalism. Jiang merits attention not only for elucidating Chinese policy and his vision of a post-liberal international order freed of Western hegemony, but for confronting questions that Western political thought has systematically neglected.



THE MEDICALISATION OF LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN: THE ROLE OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE THERAPISTS AND GENDER NORMS

KAROLÍNA SIKOROVÁ,
UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI

The process of medicalisation is understood as reshaping the social phenomena into medical issues and has a crucial influence on how society defines the norm and abnormality. However, in the field of language and speech difficulties among preschool children, medicalisation has received only limited academic attention, even though it has direct influences on the educational trajectories of children. Speech and language therapy, as a clinical praxis, is a significant site where the medical, pedagogical, and social frameworks intertwine, and experts gain the power to define which communication and speech are considered normal and which require intervention.

In my master's thesis, I plan to focus on how speech and language therapists construct the language and speech difficulties among preschool children as a medical issue and the role of gender norms in this process. I'm building on the concept of stratified medicalisation, which shows that diagnostic processes are not neutral, but they can vary depending on gender, social status, or expectations associated with the child's role. At the same time, I'm trying to show that the medicalisation of language difficulties is closely linked with neoliberal ideas about individual responsibility and performance, which shape the expectations required from children as they enter the school system. Following this logic, care is often reduced to expert intervention focused on correcting the deficiency, while the broader dimensions of solidarity, diversity, and collective understanding of linguistic variations take a secondary role.

The aim of my thesis is to critically analyse how speech and language therapy praxis can contribute to a narrow interpretation of normality and how children are assigned identities and perceived deficits that influence

their self-esteem and academic performance. I pay particular attention to different approaches to symptoms in girls and boys, which research describes as crucial in the reproduction of gender inequalities (for example, the tendency to pathologize problems in boys more often, or, conversely, to downplay difficulties in girls). The topic shows how expert approaches form children's life opportunities and how the process of medicalisation can either support or undermine early childhood care.

POLITIČNI SISTEM REPUBLIKE ARMENIJE: ZGODOVINSKI TEMELJI IN MODERNI IZZIVI

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Čeprav si celotne strukture, poteka in specifičnih detajlov svoje prihodnje Magistrske Naloge še nisem popolnoma zamislil, sem si za splošno temo le te izbral Politični sistem Republike Armenije in njegove zgodovinske temelje ter moderne izzive. Menim, da bi bila to primerna tema za mojo Magistrsko Nalogo, saj imam o tej temi že veliko lastnega temeljnega znanja (z Armenijo in temami povezanih z to državo se ukvarjam že praktično od 12-ega leta naprej), tema sama pa je zelo obsežna, unikatna v Slovenskem akademskem prostoru in primerna moji študijski smeri (Politologija – Politična teorija, globalizacijske in strateške študije). Tema sicer še ni čisto dodelana v njenih detajlih, vendar pa je očitno, da bo v glavnem sestavljena iz treh delov – zgodovine Armenskega političnega sistema, modernega sistema samega in z njim povezanimi institucijami ter raznolikimi izzivi in problemi, s katerimi se ta politični sistem sooča. Zgodovinski del magistrske naloge se bo, kakor že po imenu razvidno, ukvarjal z zgodovino političnega sistema Armenije. Na hitro se bo preletelo čez starejše politične sisteme, kateri so obstajali v antični in srednjeveški zgodovini Armenije, z manjšim poudarkom na slednjega. Nato pa se bo naloga v tem delu osredotočila na delovanje republikanskih sistemov v času Prve Armenske Republike ter Armenske SSR – in kako sta ti dve politični tvorbi dali osnove za nastanek moderne Armenije in njenega sistema; prav tako pa se bo dotaknil razvoja od neodvisnosti leta 1991 do danes, z posebnim poudarkom na tako imenovani “Žametni Revoluciji” leta 2018. Naslednji del naloge se bo ukvarjal z modernim političnim sistemom Republike Armenije – njegovo strukturo, institucijami, tremi vejami oblasti in delovanjem. Podrobno bo pregledano delovanje parlamenta, zgodovinska in moderna pozicija Predsednika Države in sodna veja oblasti; predstavljene bodo tudi pomembnejše politične stranke (vključno z nekaj bolj

“zgodovinskimi”) ter tudi vpliv “zunanjih” organizacij, kakor so to na primer nevladne organizacije in protestna gibanja. Pod zadnji del naloge pa bo spadal pregled pomembnejših problemov in izzivov, s katerimi se sooča moderni Armenski politični sistem – od korupcije, institucionalne nepopularnosti, zgodovinskih konfliktov in zunanjih pritiskov. V tem delu pa bom prav tako iskal cilj te naloge – potencialne rešitve, katere bi lahko Republika Armenija uporabila pri spopadanju s temi problemi v svojem političnem sistemu.



INSTITUTIONAL DRIVERS OF AFFECTIVE POLARISATION AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

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This Master's thesis analyses the role of institutional legitimacy in shaping affective polarisation and its implications for international conflict dynamics. In times of rising polarisation worldwide, this research explores how institutions themselves, as well as their perceived fairness, affect the conditions under which conflicts emerge. Furthermore, it examines the extent to which implications for international conflicts vary depending on differences in the scale of polarisation, and compares patterns in highly divided societies to those in less divided ones.

The research investigates how institutional factors and their legitimacy shape affective polarisation, and how political narratives reinforce the relationship between polarisation and conflict dynamics.

This thesis argues that weakened institutional legitimacy fosters affective polarisation, which shapes international conflict dynamics, and that higher polarisation contributes to more conflict-oriented political dynamics by reducing support for diplomatic compromise and increasing support for confrontational policies. Rather than treating polarisation as purely an attitudinal outcome, it is conceptualised as a socially embedded process shaped by institutional environments and political discourse.

Methodologically, the thesis combines theoretical analysis with an illustrative comparative perspective, focusing on differences in institutional trust and affective polarisation across European contexts. In this paper, Eastern and Western Europe are analysed separately to illustrate broader variation in institutional legitimacy. Previous studies suggest that weaker perceptions of institutional fairness and trust are associated with higher levels of affective polarisation, which could reduce the potential for compromise and increase support for confrontational political stances. In

contrast, more consolidated institutional environments tend to be associated with higher levels of political trust and lower levels of affective polarisation. This comparison enables a broader understanding of how structural and discursive factors interact in shaping conflict-related outcomes.

By bridging theories of institutional legitimacy and affective polarisation, this study contributes to a more integrated understanding of how domestic political structures shape the conditions under which conflict becomes more socially and politically acceptable. All the factors mentioned above highlight the importance of institutional legitimacy and political trust in shaping political stability.

