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ABSTRACT

This article explores the ramifications of the war in Ukraine on Serbian politics. Attention is paid to the governing Serbian Progressive Party/SNS and the “broader right” (*national conservative, radical, and extreme right*) between 2022 and 2025. This study demonstrates that the war granted Serbia’s “broader right” a temporary “common ground” but not a long-term opportunity structure against SNS. The nexus of Russophilia in Serbia is not “fixed” but situationally adaptive. It is conditional upon ideology, the patterns of political engagement among heterogeneous actors, and the unpredictable impact of watersheds in domestic politics.

Introduction

This article explores the ramifications of the war in Ukraine on Serbian politics, focusing on the governing Serbian Progressive Party/SNS and the “broader right.” The questions are: How *idiosyncratic* or *unique* are the political reactions to this war in Serbia and why? Has the war in Ukraine granted Serbia’s “broader right” an opportunity structure vis-à-vis SNS?

Recent treatises have demonstrated how this war impacts Serbian foreign policy in its neighborhood (Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina) and beyond.¹ However, not many treatises dealt with its repercussions on Serbia’s right-wing politics.² It is timely to study how and why civilizationism and ethno-nationalism can interweave with illiberalism in Southeastern Europe.

This enquiry relies on a critical discourse analysis³ of programmes and declarations issued by selected political actors in Serbia. Expert reports, public surveys, and articles from the Serbian and international press are of a secondary importance. First, the critical discourse analysis concentrates on: (a) Russia’s imageries among Serbian right-wing actors; (b) their responses to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine (24 February 2022).

Then, it proceeds to clarify *whether, why, and how* this war provided Serbia’s “broader right” with an opportunity structure or not. Attention is paid to the rhetoric utilized by selected political actors to: (a) legitimize their support to Russia along political, socio-cultural, and socio-psychological premises; (b) de-legitimize SNS as an actor with an ambivalent and unreliable stance vis-à-vis Serbia’s “historical ally” (Russia).

The “broader right” is treated as an “umbrella-concept” that hosts the sub-categories of the *national conservative, radical, and extreme right*. A discussion of civilizationism

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and its intersections with ethno-nationalism (e.g., on Kosovo) is of essential importance because these two notions interweave in the platforms of Serbia's "broader right." Then, the empirical discussion: (a) introduces *stabilitocracy* as a pattern of illiberal governance, SNS as the preponderant force in domestic politics, and Serbia's "broader right"; (b) summarizes Russia's imageries in Serbia since the 1990s. The *core* component deals with the "broader right" and its pro-Russian engagement since 24 February 2022.

The war in Ukraine granted Serbia's "broader right" a temporary "common ground" but not a long-term opportunity structure against SNS. The nexus of, political and socio-cultural/socio-psychological, Russophilia in contemporary Serbia is not "fixed," but fluctuating and situationally adaptive. It can become subject to ideology, the patterns of political engagement among heterogeneous actors, and the unpredictable impact of watersheds in domestic politics.

Conceptual frames

Mapping the "broader right"

Instead of clustering all actors beyond the mainstream center-right under the umbrella of the "radical right" this piece counter-proposes an alternative scheme. This scheme introduces the *broader right* as a multifaceted notion, paying attention to political origins, evolutionary trajectories, and patterns of active engagement alongside ideology. The boundaries inside this scheme are not fixed, but "porous" and malleable. "Broader right" comprises the *national conservative*, *radical*, and *extreme* right.

Resulting from the impact of domestic and international politics, it is possible for political actors to reform and either "de-radicalize" or "radicalize" - transitioning from one of these categories to another. The last decade has witnessed the transformation of political actors, previously oscillating between the radical and the extreme right, into "moderate" parties of the conservative right (e.g., Hungary's Jobbik). Meanwhile, radical right-wing parties may also host more militant wings (e.g., AfD's *Flügel*/"Wing" and EKRE's *Sinine Áratús*/"Blue Awakening" youth-organization in Estonia).⁴

Radical right-wing parties encompass: (a) varying shades of ethno-nationalism and nativism⁵; (b) anti-establishment rhetoric and a distinction between the people and the elites;⁶ (c) insistence on "hard borders" and law and order.

The European radical right comprises actors such as Austria's Freedom Party/FPÖ and Czechia's Freedom and Direct Democracy/SPD. These parties scrutinize constitutional order but promote their cause(s) via the parliamentary institutions. Radical right-wing parties may be by-products of top-level formation processes that came into being after the: (a) reformation or merger of already existing parties (e.g., the Finns Party in Finland and Estonia's EKRE); (b) secession of "splinter groups" from larger parties (e.g., the erstwhile Independent Greeks/ANEL and the Hellenic Solution/EL in Greece). On some occasions, radical right-wing parties joined governing coalitions (e.g., the Finns Party in Finland, EKRE in Estonia, and ANEL in Greece).

Another category of right-wing parties beyond the mainstream center-right are the *national conservatives*. Sekerák⁷ argues that national conservative parties prioritize "... national sovereignty, the institution of family, established authorities, vaguely defined people and even more loosely defined traditions' while "opposing immigration, multiculturalism, progressivism, "woke ideology," political correctness, and liberalism."

According to the author, “in the case of conservatism, nationalism provides a valuable toolkit of emotional appeals strong enough to reinforce its core ideas...national conservatives emphasize the preservation of the nation-state and uphold peculiar national and cultural identity.”⁸

All sub-categories of the “broader right” differentiate, to varying degrees, between a virtuous native ingroup (“us”) and an, frequently unreliable, alien outgroup (“them”).⁹ This designation of exclusion and inclusion along sociocultural criteria renders belonging to the titular nation a “pre-politically settled” fact that is not negotiable.¹⁰ To propagate and maintain cohesion and solidarity within the native ingroup, national conservatives tend to downplay those aspects that might fragment the main body of “native” society (e.g., anti-elitism).¹¹

This cautious stance vis-à-vis anti-elitist rhetoric and their varying endeavors to claim the mainstream space¹² differentiate national conservatives from the more vocal anti-systemic/anti-establishment disposition within the radical right.¹³ Prominent national conservative parties include Hungary’s FIDESZ, Poland’s PiS, and Croatia’s Homeland Movement/DP.

Meanwhile, extreme right-wing parties may subvert state institutions (e.g., through “patrolling operations”). Such parties come into being via processes spearheaded by a grass-roots nucleus, often aided by semi-paramilitary groupings, opting for a militant engagement (against political rivals and/or immigrants). Parties of this sub-category with a non-negligible public appeal became active across Central and Southeastern Europe and include “Our Slovakia” (*Ludová Strana Naše Slovensko*), Bulgaria’s “Ataka,” and Greece’s Golden Dawn.¹⁴ Their anti-democratic inclinations often resulted in clashes between the extreme right and the state (e.g., the conviction of Golden Dawn and “Our Slovakia” by the Greek and Slovak courts of justice based on criminal charges in October 2020).

This overview is necessary to categorize the factions of Serbia’s “broader right” and identify their modes of interaction and engagement into politics. It also facilitates placing into context SNS as a party that originates from the “old” (radical/extreme right-wing) Serbian Radical Party/SRS but gradually evolved into an established, *cartel* party.

Global “broader right”: Civilizationism and ethno-nationalism

The conceptual framework of this study rests on the premises of *civilizationism* and embeds the Serbian case into the background of global right-wing politics. Recent treatises detect common denominators within the global “broader right” in international politics: (a) opposition to universalism and a fragmentation of mankind along essentialist lines with an emphasis on “a birth-determined immutable origin articulated as culture” (*birth-culture* as the subject and object of national sovereignty – inside and outside the territory of a given state¹⁵) ();¹⁶ (b) substitution of international law with a *transactionalism* shaped by an “unconstrained opportunistic dealmaking with other birth-cultures”¹⁷; (c) rejection of “globalism” in both the political and socio-cultural sense (e.g., condemnation of both left-wing and neoliberal/capitalist “wokism”).¹⁸

However, the platforms of the global “broader right” can become subject to *civilizational* catalysts. Brubaker¹⁹ has delineated: (a) religion and nationalism as analogous

phenomena; (b) religion as a cause or explanation of nationalism; (c) religion as imbricated or intertwined with nationalism; (d) religious nationalism as a distinctive brand of nationalism. Therefore, political actors within the “broader right” may, depending on their socio-cultural contexts, resort to “(Judeo)Christian,” “Orthodox,” or “Western/Christian/European” civilizational references to legitimize their ideological principles and demarcate “inimical contenders.”²⁰

This function enables these actors to transcend the parochial boundaries of their nationalisms and embed their prerogatives into “quasi-religious” cosmologies.²¹ According to Tepsić, civilizational ideas serve three interconnected functions: (a) cultural (linking historical meanings to everyday narratives); (b) explanatory (offering a perspective on the international system); (c) normative (providing recommendations for a desired future).²²

Nevertheless, contrasting civilizational references can generate divergent reactions to groundbreaking developments in international politics among the global right-wing spectrum. For instance, the war in Ukraine has witnessed a fragmentation between right-wing actors with a “Western/Atlanticist” understanding of European civilization and those harboring “pro-Eurasian” leanings.²³ On some occasions, such orientations are conditional upon security-related concerns (e.g., the Atlantic-based understandings of regional security among the “broader right” in Poland and the Baltic States²⁴).

On other occasions, though, it is through a value-based opposition to “Western and American multiculturalism” that a certain appeal of, say, Aleksandr Dugin’s Neo-Eurasianism is observed within the European “broader right” (e.g., in France and Germany – Guerra²⁵). This conceptual overview of civilizationism is particularly relevant to the Serbian “broader right” where Russophilia is often embedded into clerical understandings of ethno-nationalism linked to the theological concept of *Svetosavlje* (“Faith of Saint Sava”).

Moreover, the pledge to “defend Kosovo,” as a master-symbol and a “sacred/ancestral territory” in Serbian ethno-nationalism, features as a crucial component in these civilizational narratives. “Ancestral (or sacred) territories” are central in ethno-nationalist imagery. Such spaces are endowed with a poetic and mystical dimension: these are the territories where an ethno-cultural community flourished during its “golden age,” and which have to be defended by all means and at any cost.²⁶ One example of a “golden age” is Periclean Athens (5th century BC) in Modern Greek nationalism.

Kosovo (*Kosovo i Metohija* “Kosovo and Metohija” as designated in Serbian) was the cultural heartland of the medieval Serbian empire and home to religious monuments of primary significance to the Serbs (the Patriarchate of Peć, the monasteries of Dečani and Gračanica). The political utilization of the symbolism built around Kosovo as a “sacred/ancestral territory”: (a) constructs a discursive bridge between civilizationism and ethno-nationalism among Serbia’s “broader right”; (b) augments pro-Russian sentiment in the political, socio-cultural, and socio-psychological sense.

“Stabilitocracy,” the “broader right,” and Russophilia in Serbia

SNS and “stabilitocracy”

Bustikova²⁷ addresses cases such as Hungary’s FIDESZ and Poland’s PiS as “radicalized” parties of the (formerly mainstream) center-right. When FIDESZ and PiS consolidated in the halls of power, they refashioned their patterns of policymaking from

anti-establishment rhetoric and mass mobilization toward anti-immigrant speech and quasi-authoritarian governance. Here, such political actors are treated as parties of the (established) national conservative right rather than radical right-wing parties with an articulate pattern of a, “bottom-up,” anti-systemic engagement.

SNS displays some commonalities with the aforementioned actors. Since the mid-2010s, SNS has relied on political *clientelism*. This strategy ranges from the mobilization of employees at the public sector and the formation of a patronage nexus with private entrepreneurs²⁸ to systematic cooperation with ethnic minority parties (e.g., the Alliance of Hungarians in Vojvodina/VMSZ).²⁹

Although occasionally employing an “anti-establishment” rhetoric, targeted at the “mistreatment” of Serbia by powerful states, international organizations (UN, EU), and their “domestic enablers,”³⁰ SNS has cemented its status in the government and encompasses the top-down management practices characteristic of a leader-centred, around Aleksandar Vučić, *cartel* party. Nevertheless, there also exist qualitative differences that set SNS apart from the precedents of FIDESZ and/or PiS.

SNS has been categorized as a *stabilitocratic* party.³¹ According to Bieber,³² “a stabilitocracy is a regime that includes considerable shortcomings in terms of democratic governance yet enjoys external legitimacy by offering some supposed stability.” It is this legitimacy that they enjoy by external actors (usually EU) that renders stabilitocracies idiosyncratic.³³

SNS employs stabilitocracy to legitimize themselves as the absolute guarantor for stability, domestically and internationally. Balkan stabilitocracies (Albania, Montenegro, Serbia) are flexible and, unlike, say, Hungary’s governance under FIDESZ, do not undertake such extensive constitutional/legislative reforms.³⁴ Serbian stabilitocracy embeds weaker ideological underpinnings than FIDESZ or PiS and a more tactical engagement into politics. For instance, neither a clear demarcation of “external adversaries” nor a commitment to overarching socio-cultural principles (e.g., the pledge to combat the “spread of gender ideology” and the nexus between nativism and the safeguarding of Christian values during the migrant crisis of 2015/2016 in Hungary and Poland) is present here.³⁵

On global politics, SNS opts for Serbia’s multi-vector engagement as a sovereign actor. This consists of a “balancing act” between Western (EU, NATO, US) and “alternative” (Russia, China) partners, extracting as many gains as possible (trade, energy), and a preference for a “global multipolarity” where actors such as Russia and China enjoy an invigorated status vis-à-vis the US and the EU.³⁶ From a pragmatic perspective, “this position has allowed Serbia to increase its leverage on foreign policy issues, including with regard to security, energy and trade Serbia is the only state in the world enjoying the benefits of having signed a free trade agreement with both the EU and Russia.”³⁷

Serbia’s “broader right”

This sub-section addresses political actors from the national conservative, radical, and extreme right. Due to word-length considerations, these parties have been nominated based on their, current or erstwhile, representation in parliament (e.g., SRS, *Dveri*, NADA), the intensity of their grassroots activism (e.g., *Dveri*, *Srpska Akcija*, *Srpska Desnica*, *Naši*, and, to a secondary extent, *Obraz*), and other policymaking patterns.

Correspondingly, this study prioritizes, for instance, the radical right-wing party of *Dveri* (“Gates”) over *Zavetnici* (“Oath-Keepers”). Although neither party currently holds seats at the parliament (*Skupština*), *Dveri* have both a longer trajectory of parliamentary representation and a record of cooperation with other right-wing, but not exclusively, actors.³⁸ This sub-section addresses the origins, ideological principles, and standpoints of the selected parties in international politics.

NADA (“Hope”) is a coalition established on 26 January 2021 by the reformed Democratic Party of Serbia/DSS and the Movement for the Restoration of the Kingdom of Serbia/POKS. DSS is a formerly center-right party that, under the leadership of former Yugoslav President Vojislav Koštunica, participated in coalition governments during the 2000s. NADA is represented by 13 deputies at the *Skupština*.

On foreign policy, the chairman of DSS and NADA, Miloš Jovanović, has called for: (a) blocking Serbia’s accession to the EU because this entails the recognition of Kosovo³⁹; (b) neutrality and no cooperation with NATO⁴⁰; (c) a policy of “hard borders.”⁴¹ NADA prioritizes ethno-nationalism, nativism, and social conservatism with a mild anti-establishment rhetoric and low propensity to grassroots activism. Hence, NADA’s categorization as a *national conservative* party.

Dveri fits more accurately the typology of a *radical* right-wing party. Launched in 2015, it incorporated a party-organization and a “bottom-up” component. *Dveri* have utilized their activism in protests: (a) against the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina⁴²; (b) in support of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro over its property rights (*Svetinje*)⁴³; (c) against LGBTQI rights.⁴⁴

Their programme (2023)⁴⁵ rejects EU-membership because Serbia’s accession process brought about: (a) “state-shrinkage,” following the termination of the state union between Serbia and Montenegro (Section I, Point 1); (b) the “*de facto*” recognition of Kosovo’s independence by Serbia (Section I, Point 2); (c) demographic stagnation, impoverishment, and the transformation of Serbia into an “economic colony” (Section I, Points 7 and 9); (d) the import of trends “alien” to Serbian values (Section I, Point 10). *Dveri* subscribes to an extensive cooperation with Russia based on its “unique” significance as an economic/energy partner and an ally against the international recognition of Kosovo (Section IV, “*Ruska Federacija*,” Points 2, 4, and 6).

Dveri’s Russophilia rests on Manichean premises. Former party-leader, Boško Obradović, has criticized the EU as a supranational institution dominated by an ideology of “liberal dogmatism,” dissociated from Christian values, and accused Brussels of promoting a “new set of values: LGBTQI rights and the right to abortion.”⁴⁶ Other prominent party-members such as Vladimir Dimitrijević, comprehend the competition between Russia and the “collective West” along the premises that “if the West should win, small nations will not be able to avoid death; should Russia win, the world will start rebuilding itself.”⁴⁷

Further along the radical right, SRS, formed on 23 February 1991, is one of the oldest organizations in post-Communist Serbia. Throughout the 2000s, SRS bounded together a nexus of anti-Western nationalists, former voters of Milošević’s Socialist Party of Serbia/SPS, and “losers” of the transition – making it the largest opposition party in its own right. However, after a splinter group departed and evolved into SNS (2007–2008), the party’s popularity declined and SRS has no representatives at the *Skupština*.

Regarding foreign policy, as early as 2009, SRS underlined that “Serbia has no reason to become a member of alliances that favor the interests of certain states at the expense of others (e.g., the EU).”⁴⁸ Instead, SRS advocated for the cultivation of relations with “those nations and states that, during our hardest moments in history, demonstrated solidarity with Serbia [especially Russia].”⁴⁹ In 2019, SRS expanded on these standpoints by dubbing EU-accession “a counterproductive move...the EU does not recognize Serbia’s territorial integrity,”⁵⁰ proposing the imposition of tariffs to products imported from the EU,⁵¹ and advocating for a systematic cooperation between Serbia, the BRICS, and the Eurasian Economic Union.⁵²

Alongside sovereignty, SRS has been charged with harassing ethnic minorities (e.g., acts of violence against the ethnic Croats of Hrtkovci in Srem, May 1992),⁵³ and hate speech against Serbia’s neighbors⁵⁴ and migrants.⁵⁵ These aspects, in combination with the dispatch of an SRS-led paramilitary faction to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (1990s), hint at an actor that oscillates between the *radical* and the *extreme right*.

Meanwhile, the extreme fringe of the “broader right” comprises extra-parliamentary actors such as *Srpska Desnica* (“Serbian Right”), *Srbska Akcija* (“Serbian Action”), *Obraz* (“Honor”), and *Naši* (“Ours”). These forces converge along their: (a) varying adherence to *Svetosavlje*⁵⁶; (b) rejection of collective rights for ethnic and sexual minorities and a revisionist speech vis-à-vis neighboring nations (e.g., Albanians and Croats)⁵⁷; (c) Russophilia in both a political and sociocultural sense.⁵⁸

Regarding the latter aspect, *Naši* envisage Belgrade as the “fourth capital” of an extended Eurasian Union⁵⁹ alongside Moscow, Kyiv, and Alma Aty.⁶⁰ The party-leadership portrays Russia as a “protective force” for Serbia and a binary to the “negative Western values” (LGBTQI rights, degeneracy, and the dismantlement of traditional family; “the EU’s anti-human politics [against Serbia] which are subject to the whims of savage narcotics administrators of a pro-Albanian and pro-American orientation”; etc.).⁶¹

Srpska Desnica converges with NADA and *Dveri* along the premises of: (a) endorsement of traditionalism, social conservatism, and the establishment of a social order that operates according to “the concepts of togetherness and solidarity (*sabornost*)” stemming from Eastern Orthodoxy⁶²; (b) rejection of EU-accession as a process that will lead to the *de jure* separation of Kosovo from Serbia.⁶³ In a similar vein as *Naši*, *Srpska Desnica* do not perceive the Eurasian Economic Union merely as a forum of political and economic cooperation. They also counter-propose Eurasian integration, under the umbrella of Russia, as a civilizational (spiritual, cultural, and historical) sphere where Serbia has always belonged – by contrast to the “Euro-Atlantic corpus of states.”⁶⁴

Nevertheless, it is their political activism that demarcates Serbia’s extreme right from the radical and national conservative right. Starting with *Obraz*, in 2012, it dubbed Serbia’s LGBTQI community as “perverts ... who will be punished most severely and eradicated.”⁶⁵ Conversely, its campaign of verbal and physical intimidation against sexual minorities, resulted in a ban of *Obraz* by the authorities (12 June 2012)⁶⁶ and its re-registration as an organization, following several appeals throughout 2016, under the leadership of Mladen Obradović.⁶⁷

Moving to *Srpska Desnica*, throughout 2019, its leader, Miša Vacić, threatened to “drown in the Serbian river Drina” and “send under the sword” political rivals (e.g., the political scientist Vuk Velebit)⁶⁸. More importantly, the party’s verbal attacks on

representatives of the anti-SNS opposition led commentators to draw parallels between Vacić's links to the SNS-led apparatus and the partnership between Milošević and Šešelj in the 1990s.⁶⁹

As for *Srbska Akcija*, this party professes a lineage from, interwar Fascist ideologist, Dimitrije Ljotić, and organizes commemoration events in his honor.⁷⁰ In its programme (2010, "Strukovni Sabor"), *Srbska Akcija* rejects parliamentary democracy because of "the manipulation and deception that exists in parliamentary democracy ... where the voter decides over questions that they have no competence about and elects representatives about whom they possess little knowledge."⁷¹

Lastly, *Naši* have set as paramount objective the "unification of all Serbian lands into a common state" (consisting of Serbia proper, Kosovo and Metohija, Montenegro, *Republika Srpska*, Northern Macedonia, the erstwhile "Serbian Republic of Krajina" in Croatia, and parts of modern-day northern Albania).⁷²

The current programme (2025) employs a milder jargon but still envisages Serbia as "a sovereign and territorially resurrected state that comprises under its auspices *all* the Serbian lands under [*foreign*] *occupation* after the wars of the 1990s" ("Politička Državotvorna Politika KPN")⁷³. The party prescribes "resetting the struggle for the return of Kosovo and Metohija to a right track and exiting the illusion that the puppet-regimes in Belgrade have been implementing since 2000 under the guidelines of the EU and US."⁷⁴

Overall, Serbia's "broader right" is highly fragmented. On the one hand, the ideological prerogatives of its components range from national conservatism (NADA) to clerical ethno-nationalism (*Dveri*), Neo-Eurasianism (*Naši*), and/or even Neo-Fascism (*Srbska Akcija*). On the other hand, their patterns of political engagement are equally diverse and stretch from parliamentary action (NADA) to intense activism on the grassroots level (*Dveri* and *Naši*) and hostile speech against political rivals, ethnic minorities, the LGBTQI community, and neighboring nations (SRS, *Obraz*, *Srpska Desnica*, and *Srbska Akcija*). This heterogeneity is to account for the distinct trajectories via which these actors: (a) responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine; (b) united in support of Kremlin and against SNS.

Foundations of Russophilia in Serbia

The origins of Serbian Russophilia stretch back to the 19th century and beyond.⁷⁵ This overview concentrates on the 1990s onwards. During the Cold War, Yugoslav-Soviet relations underwent stages of tension and rapprochement. The wars across the former Yugoslavia (1990s) redefined Serbian perceptions of "the West" and Russia.⁷⁶ Several policies pursued by the West (UK, US, Germany, France) during the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia were interpreted, by political and extra-political actors in Serbia, as detrimental to the national interest. These grievances reached a zenith with NATO's air-campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (March-June 1999) and the recognition of Kosovo's independence by powerful Western governments (US on 18 February 2008).

The assumption of the Russian Presidency by Vladimir Putin (2000) and Russia's emergence as a potent actor was viewed by several circles in Serbia as a development that could upgrade Serbia's global status.⁷⁷ SNS pledged to promote the Orthodox and

Slavic, cultural and religious, bonds between Serbia and Russia.⁷⁸ As the former SNS-chairman and Serbian President, Tomislav Nikolić, stated: “Serbia wants to join the EU because it is an organized family of nations...but, at the same time, we have a close historical and religious connection to the Russian Federation.”⁷⁹ Before the consolidation of SNS in Serbian politics, political actors with a pro-Western orientation (the centrist/liberal Democratic Party/DS) did not refrain from maintaining links to the Kremlin, either.

This is because, since the 2000s, the communication between Serbia and Russia comprises vital (geo-)political and economic dimensions. On the one hand, Russia is a staunch ally of Serbia on Kosovo.⁸⁰ The Russian deputies at the UN Security Council block its international recognition as an independent state. Considering the dynamics of Kosovo as a master-symbol in Serbian nationalism, this stance has been of decisive significance for the persistence of pro-Russian trends.⁸¹

Throughout the mid-2010s, President Vučić stated to Russian-based news portals that: “I feel very comfortable about Vladimir Putin’s words of further support for Serbia’s territorial integrity, which is not only an issue of Serbia...it has become an issue for many sovereign states.”⁸² The Serbian President issued charges of “double standards” and/or “hypocrisy” against powerful EU member-states: “How can Serbia open a Pandora’s Box? Who opened this Pandora’s Box in 2008 having accepted, acknowledged, and recognized the unilaterally proclaimed independence of Kosovo? They were doing so, not us!”⁸³ In response, amid tensions between the government in Pristina, the Serbs of northern Kosovo, and Serbia (28 December 2022), Kremlin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, although denying Russian interference, reiterated: “Having very close allied relations, historical and spiritual relations with Serbia, Russia is very closely monitoring what is happening...of course, we support Belgrade in the actions that are being taken.”⁸⁴

On the other hand, since 2008, the Serbian government established a steady cooperation with Gazprom⁸⁵ and Russia secured its status as a key-partner of Serbia in energy cooperation.⁸⁶ On the sociocultural/socio-psychological dimension of Russophilia, one also needs to consider the role of extra-political actors (the clergy) and idiosyncratically Serbian interpretations of Eastern Orthodoxy (*Svetosavlje*). This concept was standardized by Justin Popović (1894–1979) and Nikolaj Velimirović (1881–1956).

According to Velimirović, “the (proto-)nationalism of Saint Sava encompasses the national church, the national dynasty, the national state, the national education, the national culture, and the national assertion the national church forms the basis and the center of the (proto-)nationalism of Saint Sava.”⁸⁷ Jovanov and Lazar (2017)⁸⁸ conceptualize *Svetosavlje* as “a variant of a civic religion – a *religious nationalism* – where the Serbian nation itself takes a sacred and self-transcendent character, becoming the object of reverence.” The early proponents of *Svetosavlje* constructed a binary between a “cold, over-secularized, and mechanical West” and “a spiritual East” that found its embodiment in the Eastern Orthodox practices across the Serbian countryside.⁸⁹

On Russia, in Velimirović’s words, “if the West were to go to war with Russia tomorrow, the West would lead a war in the name of Nietzsche...in the name of its egoism, while Russia would fight the war in the name of Dostoevsky...in the name of Christ, in the name of all-human union and brotherhood.”⁹⁰ Hence the, almost

integral, Russophile sentiment among both theological and political affiliates of *Svetosavlje* from its beginnings until nowadays.

Correspondingly, high-rank clerics within the Serbian Orthodox Church may embed their criticism of Western policies in Central and Southeastern Europe not solely in geopolitics but also in a distinction between a “greedy West” and a “spiritual (Orthodox) East.” For instance, during the mid-2010s, the late Amfilohije Radović (1938–2020), former Bishop of Montenegro and the Littoral, not solely attributed the unrest in northern Kosovo and southeast Ukraine to a “Nazi-like expansionism” by NATO and the EU.⁹¹ Radović dubbed both developments “a joint, EU-NATO, project” that would culminate with the enrichment of the few and the impoverishment of the many.⁹² Value-based distinctions of this kind augmented Manichean cleavages between a “corrupt West” and a “benevolent Russia” among Serbia’s “broader right,” especially actors with an emphatically clerical-nationalist orientation.

The ramifications of the war in Ukraine on Serbian politics (2022–2024)

The Serbian government reacts to the invasion

The Serbian government maintained a “balancing act” amid the escalation of tensions between Russia and Ukraine. Shortly before the invasion, on 22 February 2022, Serbia joined the EU in its declaration against the recognition of the self-declared “People’s Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk by Kremlin.⁹³ Some months later, on 13 October 2022, Serbia joined 143 UN member states in their condemnation of Russia’s annexation of these two territories, Kherson, and Zaporizhia. Since 24 February 2022, Serbia voted in favor of all UN resolutions in support of Ukraine’s sovereignty and the withdrawal of the Russian military from the internationally recognized Ukrainian territory.⁹⁴

However, Vučić reiterated the question of Kosovo and accused the West of applying “double standards” at the UN General Assembly: “What is the difference between the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and that of Serbia?”⁹⁵ Furthermore, Serbia did not support the UN resolution for war reparations to Ukraine in November 2022 and abstained from the vote on Russia’s expulsion from the Council of Europe.⁹⁶

Most importantly, Serbia refrained from imposing economic sanctions on Russia. On the contrary, the Serbian government signed a three-year gas agreement and extended energy-cooperation with Russia.⁹⁷ Meanwhile (2022–2024), Serbia accepted Ukrainian refugees and channeled aid for internally displaced persons and other humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.⁹⁸

In terms of rhetoric and practice, the war in Ukraine not only revealed a continuity in Serbia’s oscillation between East and West. One might argue that the war granted the SNS-led government another opportunity to legitimize its *stabilitocracy*. Of exceptional significance are: (a) the precedent of Kosovo in international relations; (b) the conviction that Serbia must enjoy freedom in maintaining links with Western and “other” partners inside a *multipolar* world order.

Vučić reaffirmed his endorsement of Ukraine’s territorial integrity (also considering Kosovo’s non-recognition by Ukraine) while accusing the West of disregarding Serbia’s territorial integrity. Meanwhile, underlining the necessity for Serbia’s national survival

inside a shifting global environment, the government declined to sanction its transactions with Russia. This policymaking pattern has aimed at augmenting the status of SNS and President Vučić as the stepping stones of stability, domestically and internationally. The Serbian government keeps portraying its oscillation between the EU and Russia as “a wise foreign policy, a kind of Balkan link between the West and the East.”⁹⁹

Serbia’s “broader right” unites in support of Russia (2022–2023)

The Serbian government refrained from severing the political and other ties to Kremlin through its decision not to impose economic sanctions on Russia. Although appearing sympathetic, SNS’ decision not to fully align with Kremlin’s objectives in Ukraine triggered competition between the governing party and Serbia’s “broader right.” From different angles and to varying degrees, the latter interpreted this development as an opportunity structure to: (a) compete with SNS for Russian attention and endorsement; (b) dub SNS an “ambivalent and unreliable” actor for Russian interests; (c) mobilize their bases of support in support of Russia’s “special military operation” and against the government.

Starting with NADA, the party was granted an opportunity to reiterate its preference for Russia as a major partner. On 24/25 February 2022, Jovanović urged the government not only to remain “neutral” in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, but also: (a) not to impose sanctions on Russia or condemn the annexation of the “People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk”¹⁰⁰; (b) to resist any external pressures, adhere to the principle of neutrality, and underline that Serbia will never join NATO.¹⁰¹

Between March and December 2022, NADA denounced: (a) the governmental decision to vote in favor of condemning the Russian invasion at the UN General Assembly (2 March 2022)¹⁰²; (b) the proposal by the then President of the Committee for Foreign Policy at the *Skupština*, Borko Stefanović, for Serbia to align with the EU and impose sanctions on Russia.¹⁰³ NADA dubbed the conflict “not a war between Russia and Ukraine but a war between Russia and the West...the imposition of sanctions on Russia will directly imperil Serbia’s interests in Kosovo and the situation of Serbs in Montenegro and *Republika Srpska*”¹⁰⁴. Of greater importance for this study are radical and extreme right-wing actors with a higher mobilization potential than NADA.

Moving to the radical right and *Dveri*, one can discern a continuity with their outlooks on Serbian-Russian relations. At an early instance, Boško Obradović, held “Kyiv’s puppet-regime, that the West installed after engineering a ‘colour revolution’”¹⁰⁵ responsible for the war. In a similar vein as NADA¹⁰⁶, Obradović contended that Russia has the right to recognize the “People’s Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk” as several Western states recognized Kosovo¹⁰⁷. Of particular interest is the reiteration of the terms “colonial status” and “colonialism” by Obradović and *Dveri*’s Vice-President, Milovan Jakovljević.

Between 2022 and 2023, *Dveri* contended that the EU’s response to the war in Ukraine represents one more manifestation of “Europe’s colonial status vis-à-vis the US, NATO, and the UK”¹⁰⁸ adding that “the war can stop only if free-minded Europeans awaken and express their discontent through massive protests across Europe”¹⁰⁹. Moreover, Obradović voiced his dissatisfaction over the meetings between

representatives of the Serbian government (e.g., the President of the *Skupština* in 2023, Vladimir Orlić) with President Zelenskyy and other high-rank Ukrainian officials – adding that the Serbian government did not demonstrate a comparable enthusiasm over the protection of ethnic Serbs in Kosovo through the UN General Assembly and other forums.¹¹⁰

On 25 February 2025, Ivan Kostić, who replaced Obradović in the leadership on 29 September 2024, accused President Vučić and his government of “being incompetent to pursue a foreign policy that correlates to the new geopolitical circumstances”¹¹¹ and “adhering to a pro-Kyiv stance” at the UN General Assembly, especially at a time when “even the US and Israel agree that Ukraine can no longer continue to exist in its current form.”¹¹² Most emphatically, on 12 June 2025, Kostić accused Vučić of “dispatching weapons to Ukraine, thus violating Serbia’s officially neutral stance”¹¹³ and dubbed the Serbian President “no longer a factor of peace and stability in the Balkans.”¹¹⁴

Meanwhile, the party’s activism consisted in: (a) public marches “in gratitude to Russia for saving Serbia and Europe from Fascism in the Second World War” (Niš¹¹⁵ and Novi Sad¹¹⁶); (b) calls for a referendum over whether Serbia should impose sanctions on Russia or not¹¹⁷; (c) meetings with Russian state-representatives¹¹⁸; (d) organization of conferences where *Dveri* promoted “a new Serbian-Russian alliance” and embedded it into “an emerging conservative world order”¹¹⁹; (e) petitions for opening an office for *Russia Today* in Belgrade.¹²⁰

Regarding SRS, on February and March 2022, Vojislav Šešelj and other high-rank cadres (Vice-President, Aleksandar Šešelj) issued calls for: (a) Serbia not to turn against Russia¹²¹; (b) the moral obligation of Serbia to support Russia¹²²; (c) Serbia to distance from the EU¹²³; (d) reaffirming the alliance between Serbia and Russia¹²⁴, emphasizing that “Russia is Serbia’s biggest ally” and that “we must not betray our brotherly nation.”¹²⁵

On 6 November 2024, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov decorated Aleksandar Šešelj with a medal for his “Contribution to Strengthening World Peace”¹²⁶. Between 2022 and 2023, SRS-affiliates participated in conferences organized by the Russian government¹²⁷ and met with Russian state representatives¹²⁸; SRS attempted to boycott cultural events organized by “Ukro-Nazis”¹²⁹ and/or circles of the Russian opposition in Serbia¹³⁰; the party coordinated events on a local basis against the EU¹³¹ and in support of Russia¹³² and joining the BRICS.¹³³

A major common denominator between *Dveri* and SRS is the combination of programmatic declarations/rhetorical utterances and grassroots activism. Another one is a rhetoric that encapsulates political/geopolitical and socio-psychological/moralistic components. Consequently, both parties depict the war in Ukraine as a crucial “test” whereby any act of Russia’s “betrayal” by the Serbian government is bound to instill a sentiment of guilt on the Serbian “collective subconscious.” Simultaneously, this moralistic discourse comprises a “rational” argumentation. An alliance with Russia is portrayed as a pragmatic choice for Serbia inside a multipolar world order where: (a) new blocks of cooperation (BRICS¹³⁴) challenge the global hegemony of the Euro-Atlantic core; (b) the US, following the assumption of the Presidency by Donald J. Trump (2024), heads toward isolationism.

Moving to the extreme right, between 2022 and 2023, *Srbska Akcija* were quick on their feet to: (a) “unconditionally endorse the elimination [by Russia] of the separatist

Bolshevik entity called “Ukraine”¹³⁵; (b) condemn “Vučić’s anti-Serbian government” for voting against Russia’s “special military operation” at the UN General Assembly¹³⁶; (c) castigate the “biased and Russophobic coverage of the war in Ukraine” by media-outlets in Serbia (e.g., *Blic*)¹³⁷; (d) accuse the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church of engineering a schism and “disseminating “Ukro-separatism” and the anti-Orthodox doctrine of Banderism”¹³⁸. On 24 February 2024, *Srbska Akcija* warned that the war in Ukraine is a trajectory via which “the Zionist-driven NATO and the EU endeavor to spread globalism, Euro-Bolshevism, and cultural Marxism.”¹³⁹

Between 2022 and 2024, the party intensified its protests and countrywide activism: (a) against the EU¹⁴⁰ and NATO¹⁴¹; (b) promoting organizations of the Russian extreme right (“Imperial Legion”)¹⁴² and the activities of their paramilitary units in Ukraine, including relevant publications¹⁴³. Nevertheless, one should not overlook a crucial difference between the engagement of *Srbska Akcija* and that of other radical (*Dveri* and SRS) and/or extreme right-wing actors (*Naši*). On the one hand, although a staunch supporter of Russia, *Srbska Akcija* does not endorse the BRICS and “Maoist China”¹⁴⁴. On the other hand, by contrast to *Dveri* and/or *Naši*¹⁴⁵, *Srbska Akcija* rejects commemorative marches for the Soviet victory in the Second World War, dubbing them “remnants of the Communist past that have no place in Serbia and/or *Republika Srpska*”¹⁴⁶. On both occasions, the party remained consistent with its Neo-Fascist lineage.

In a comparable fashion to *Srbska Akcija*, *Naši*: (a) urged the government to recognize the Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk as parts of the Russian Federation¹⁴⁷; (b) charged media-outlets in Serbia (*Danas*¹⁴⁸ and the TV-station *NI*¹⁴⁹) with the “dissemination of hate and disinformation against Russia”; (c) called for the boycott of “pro-Ukraine and anti-Russian” happenings organized by Serbian NGOs and the Russian opposition¹⁵⁰; (d) initiated a campaign for the erection of a monument in honor of Vladimir Putin in Belgrade.¹⁵¹ Moreover, as an organization that has been influenced by Neo-Eurasianism and its calls for a multipolar world order, between 2022 and 2025, *Naši* have been advocating for Serbia to join the Eurasian Economic Union¹⁵² and BRICS¹⁵³.

A particularity that sets *Naši* apart from the rest of Serbia’s “broader right” is their more systematic activism on themes that pertain specifically to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and in support of the Kremlin. Apart from the official visit that the party-leader, Ivan Ivanović, paid to the “People’s Republic of Donetsk” (3 October 2022),¹⁵⁴ *Naši* has: (a) regularly installed billboards praising Vladimir Putin as a global leader,¹⁵⁵ denouncing Zelenskyy as a “NATO-terrorist,”¹⁵⁶ and promoting the “Z” symbol of the Russian armed forces¹⁵⁷; (b) organized commemorative events to mark Russia’s “special military operation” (24 February 2025).¹⁵⁸

Mass mobilization loses its momentum (2023–2024)

Serbia’s “broader right” aligned in their support for Russia along political/geopolitical, moralistic, and socio-cultural/socio-psychological premises. This “common ground” culminated into demonstrations in support of the “special military operation.” Especially during early March 2022 these events, across Serbia and *Republika Srpska*, amassed crowds of up to 4,000 protesters (Belgrade).¹⁵⁹ These demonstrations also brought together other extreme right-wing groupings (*Obraz* and *Narodne Patrole* / “People’s

Patrols”¹⁶⁰), clerical associations (*Sveti Georgije Lončari* / “Saint George of Lončari”), and Kremlin-sponsored biker clubs (“Night Wolves”).¹⁶¹

This was not the first instance that these actors found a “common ground.” Throughout the last decade, the same forces jointly participated on public occasions such as the expression of grievances to the Hague Tribunal, the international status of Kosovo and the situation of its ethnic Serb minority, support for *Republika Srpska*, and the dispute of the Serbian Orthodox Church with the Montenegrin government over its property rights. Nevertheless, by contrast to the “Balkan-centred” character of these events, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine provided a common umbrella over a groundbreaking development with global ramifications.

Throughout 2022, a small growth in the popularity of the “broader right” was monitored – presumably among former SNS-voters.¹⁶² More importantly, this mobilization granted Aleksandar Vučić and SNS another occasion to portray themselves as a voice of stability in Serbian politics in contrast to the “irrationality, opportunism, and irresponsibility” of the “broader right.”¹⁶³ Vučić contended that the government prioritized the national interest without capitalizing on pro-Russian sentiment within the electorate to win more votes (Ibid). Regarding the international/European audience (European Commission), the Serbian President underlined that the jeopardization of SNS’ status by more nationalistic, forces would imperil relations between Serbia and the EU¹⁶⁴.

Although occurring regularly between 2022 and early 2023, the demonstrations in support of Russia lost their momentum by the second half of 2023. Moreover, there are no indications that the radical and extreme right augmented their popularity vis-à-vis SNS. One can comprehend these developments along the lines of a combination between macropolitical (ideological cleavages) and micropolitical (rivalries between party-leaderships) catalysts and the decisive impact of new, unpredicted, hot-button issues in domestic politics (the fatal canopy collapse at the railway station in Novi Sad on 1 November 2024).

Some representatives of Serbia’s “broader right” proved keener on downplaying differences in their engagement and reach a consensus on areas of mutual concern. For instance, although initially reserved,¹⁶⁵ throughout early 2024, *Dveri* invited NADA, as the largest force to the right of SNS, to ally with the party and other “like-minded patriotic organizations” for the municipal elections in Belgrade (2 June 2024).¹⁶⁶

Nevertheless, not all segments within the “broader right” exhibited consensual dispositions. *Naši*, for instance, regard DSS as a “fake patriotic organization,” due to its “subservient capitulation to Western demands” during Koštunica’s term in the Presidency of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (2000–2003).¹⁶⁷ Between 2022 and 2023, *Naši* equally dubbed: (a) Obradović (*Dveri*) a politician who “spends more time giving interviews to pro-Western media-outlets than with the Serbian people”¹⁶⁸; (b) Miloš Parandilović, POKS-leader, a “fake monarchist with suspicious links to [liberal, pro-Western, politician] Dragan Đilas.”¹⁶⁹ Correspondingly, the objective of *Naši* to antagonize NADA and *Dveri* took a toll on any attempts at a rapprochement and seek a “common ground” with these two actors.

Further along the extreme right, *Srbska Akcija* co-existed with *Dveri* and other radical right-wing actors in public manifestations (e.g., protests in support of convicted General Ratko Mladić in 2017).¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, this party’s Neo-Fascist lineage and militant engagement cannot guarantee a steadier cooperation with the rest of the

“broader right.” Along comparable lines, Vacić’s, leader of *Srpska Desnica*, labeling as “a man in the service of SNS (‘Vučić’s Šešelji’)” across the political spectrum,¹⁷¹ took a toll on this party’s credibility. Lastly, although a preponderant force in the 1990s and 2000s, SRS became a marginal actor since 2020.¹⁷²

Nevertheless, a major watershed in Serbian politics was the collapse of a canopy at the railway station of Novi Sad that claimed the lives of 16 people (1 November 2024).¹⁷³ The anti-SNS opposition condemned this incident as an indication of infra-structural deficiencies, ill planning, and corruption at the higher and lower levels of governance. Most importantly, throughout 2025, this incident spurred countrywide protests. Largely coordinated by extra-political actors (university students), by mid-March 2025, these happenings culminated into Serbia’s largest rally that amassed 325,000 demonstrators in Belgrade.¹⁷⁴

The intersection between global politics (e.g., the war in Ukraine) and concerns in regional politics (relations between Serbia and its neighbors) can generate powerful repercussions in the interior. However, one should not underestimate the mobilizing potential of anxieties revolving around issues of a more “direct” significance (non-transparent administration, corruption, and a perceived drive toward authoritarianism). Here, one should recall the demonstrations organized in Belgrade (1996–1997) against the electoral fraud committed by Slobodan Milošević’s apparatus¹⁷⁵ amid a deteriorating situation in Kosovo with international ramifications. Under such circumstances, the ethno-nationalist component, which is of essential significance for the political and socio-psychological, engagement of the “broader right,” can lose much of its mobilizing weight.

At this point, one should also summarize the stances among the Serbian opposition on the war in Ukraine. On 12 May 2022, DS urged Serbia to align with EU’s decision to impose sanctions on Russia.¹⁷⁶ According to Spasojević,¹⁷⁷ between 2022 and 2023, a wide range of political actors (DS, the Movement of Free Citizens/PSG, and the leftist *Moramo*/“We Must!”) “spoke out strongly in favor of Ukraine and called for sanctions on Russia.”

Most recently, on 24 February 2026, the green/leftist *Želeno-Levi Front* (“Green-Left Front”) deplored that “official Serbia does not clearly condemn Russian aggression and refuses to introduce sanctions on Russia,” adding that “an important task of the new democratic government after SNS will be to correct this situation.”¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the heterogeneous anti-SNS opposition adopted a straightforward condemnation of the Russian invasion, by contrast to SNS’ “balancing act” and the unconditional Russophilia of the “broader right.”

Conclusions

Regarding the first question, it was not exclusively in Serbia where the ramifications of the war in Ukraine reactivated particularistic identity politics. Empirical research demonstrates that the war brought back to the fore the salience and mobilizing potential of identity-and-memory politics inside other national contexts. Two appropriate examples are the reactivation of: (a) the identity-and-memory politics of the *Domovinski Rat*/“Homeland War” in the 1990s (Croatia); (b) post-Soviet *restoration and decolonization* nationalisms in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia).¹⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the idiosyncrasy of the Serbian case rests on that Serbian Russophilia is multifaceted and comprises both political/geopolitical and socio-cultural/socio-psychological layers. Pro-Russian trends can manifest through both a clerical/religious and a secular/political façade. They can be simultaneously “rational,” incorporating a political/geopolitical and economic argumentation, and “emotionally driven,” alluding to a “moral commitment” that Serbia has vis-à-vis Russia as its “historical ally.” Conversely, the nexus of Russophilia in Serbia is not concrete and uniform but fluctuating and situationally adaptive. It can become subject to ideology, the patterns of engagement among diverse actors, and the impact of watersheds in domestic politics.

Regarding the second question, the war in Ukraine granted Serbia’s “broader right” a temporary “common ground” but not a long-term opportunity structure vis-à-vis SNS. The internal cohesion and dynamic of the “broader right-wing block” in support of Russia and against SNS became entangled with and complicated by: (a) SNS’ capacity in maintaining its global “balancing act” and defending the *stabilitocratic* doctrine (2022–2023); (b) diverse, frequently incompatible, ideological trajectories and patterns of engagement into politics among *radical*, *national conservative*, and *extreme* right-wing actors; (c) the unpredictable repercussions of the canopy collapse at the railway station in Novi Sad that reorientated public opinion from identity politics (revolving around the war in Ukraine) to questions of a more “direct” significance (governmental transparency and increasing authoritarianism), (2024–2025).

From a theoretical angle, the findings of this study underline the necessity to formulate interpretative models for right-wing politics that pay a greater attention to origins, evolutionary trajectories, and patterns of active engagement alongside ideology. Correspondingly, there is a need for a more systematic cooperation between academic experts in the “broader right” and specialists in ethno-nationalism and other identity politics (civilizationism, Orientalism/Occidentalism, etc.). Amid the heterogeneity within the global “broader right” regarding their civilizational leanings,¹⁸⁰ there is also a necessity to examine the idiosyncratic trajectories for the *localization* of key-concepts in contemporary right-wing jargon (e.g., “culture wars”) inside different socio-cultural settings, from a cross-regional/cross-cultural perspective.

As a closing remark, the findings of this enquiry aim at encouraging a more systematic, comparative, study of the external impact that groundbreaking developments in global politics can exert, along the right-center-left axis, within other societies both at the political and at the grassroots levels (e.g., global reactions to the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza, 2023–2025).¹⁸¹

Notes

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 11. Takis Pappas, “How to Tell Nativists from Populists,” *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 1 (2018): 148–152.
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30. Dušan Spasojević, "Riding the Wave of Distrust and Alienation: New Parties in Serbia after 2008," *Politics in Central Europe* 15, no. 1 (2019): 139–162.
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32. Bieber, "The Rise and Fall of Balkan Stabilitocracies," 179.
33. *Ibid.*, 178–179.
34. *Ibid.*, 182.
35. Petsinis, *Echoes of the War in Ukraine*, 123.
36. V. Petsinis, *Cross-Regional Ethnopolitics in Central and Eastern Europe: Lessons from the Western Balkans and the Baltic States*, 290.
37. Belloni, "Serbia between East and West," 290.
38. *Dveri* were represented by 7 and 6 deputies (out of 250) at the *Skupština* in 2016 and 2022, respectively, whereas *Zavetnici* elected 10 MPs in 2022. Moreover, *Dveri* formed alliances with DSS (2016), the (multiparty/not right-wing) *Savez Za Srbiju*/Alliance for Serbia (2020), and POKS (2022).
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