

STRATEGIC CULTURE IN THE GEOPOLITICAL INTERPRETATION OF TRANSIT AND TRANSITION

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The paper explains and proves that in epochal changes at the turn of centuries and millennia, two similar, but also in many ways different processes are noticed: transit and transition. Transit is the passage of parts of a state through a complex and unified state in the direction of international independence. Empirically, transit takes place in two ways – peacefully or in a conflict. Transit is, in fact, another name for separation or secession. Transit secession in a state forms several independent states. In that sense, transit is the extra-territorialisation of internal politics, its internationalisation and geopoliticisation. Although it manifests dramatically, tragically and catastrophically in a secession conflict, in the theoretical discourse of social, national and state changes, transit is covered by the process of transition. The paper identifies three approaches to the relationship between transit and transition: transit partially differentiated from transition, transit completely differentiated from transition and transit equated with transition. At the same time, the phenomenon of transit is clearly and fundamentally different from the phenomenon of transition. Finally, the paper emphasizes the chronopolitical moment of geopolitical metamorphoses in which transit precedes and in many ways determines later transition. Transition as a socio-economic process, i.e. political and economic structural transformation of a socialist into a capitalist society, cannot be understood without understanding the previous event of transit. It is precisely the Yugoslav case of the dissolution of a complex state that could be instructive for current European integration, and also for some multinational and mononational states that are facing the danger of extreme regionalism, autonomy and separatism.

Key words: complex state, transit, transition, integralism, secessionism, democracy, geopolitics, geoeconomics, strategy

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Introduction: the phenomenon and concept of transit

In general sense and meaning, the word *transit* refers to movement, i.e. transiting, that is, completed or unfinished traffic along some route to a certain destination, and literally means: *crossing, to cross, passage, passing, to pass, road, access*. Retaining the main kinetically oriented and teleological meaning, in specific political, geopolitical and strategic use, the term *transit* contains, however, more complex and sometimes richer associative and metaphorical meanings.¹ In colloquial speech, media narratives and journalism, as well as theoretical discourse, the concept of *transit* is often covered by the concept of *transition*, which causes many oversights, identifications and confusions.

In the theoretical considerations, there are also points of view that indicate transition on a geopolitical basis, moreover, transition as geopolitics. In such interpretations, transition is viewed as a dynamic move from one geopolitical situation to another and is marked as a major change in epochal situation.² However, the term expressed by the word *transit* has not been implemented and established in only one field of social sciences. It is, in fact, expressed in several fields, mainly in political science, law, economics, sociology, demography, cultural studies, psychology, anthropology... In each of these fields, the term *transit* has different and special meanings, and is most often used to express the phenomenon of transforming historical movements in socio-economic, socio-cultural, political and geopolitical sphere.

Transit, as an equation (synonym) at the root of the concept of *transition*, indicates the dynamics of change of the previous social, economic and political structure in the direction of (ir)reversible renewal of capitalism in leaving the previous state of socialism or communism. Besides the potential and political energy of the renewal of the pre-communist order of capitalism, the transition thus understood also manifests itself as an all-pervading process of deep and extensive restructuring in the consequent historical period. Transition is most often referred to as a state that arose during and after something that has historically been defined as: *post-communism, post-socialism, post self-government, post-monism, post-authoritarianism, post-Titoism*, etc.

¹ About it: Knežević Miloš, *Paradigma raspada. Razlaganje države u ogledalu uzročnosti*, poglavlje "Tranzit kao pojam i pojava", pp. 220-221, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2009.

² Geopoliticologist Milomir Stepić uses the category of "geopolitical transition", which he describes in the following way: "There has been a period of planetary insecurity, unprincipledness, illegality, instability and unrest, but with recognizable properties of 'controlled chaos'. In fact, it has been a staged process of geopolitical transition from the previous to the upcoming world order ... The new phase of global geopolitical transition has been marked by the recovery of the former Cold War rival and the accelerated strengthening of new Eurasian forces and their disagreement with the subordinate position in the unipolar order." Stepić Milomir, *Geopolitika. Ideje, teorije, koncepcije*, poglavlje "Geopolitička tranzicija i američki prioriteti", p. 611, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2016.

The non-analytical identification of the concepts of *transition* and *transit*, as a supposedly unique and identical change, hinders, however, the observation and interpretation of different transitional/transitory manifestations and their historical and human meaning. Broadly viewing, transit is, in terms of sonority and meaning, seemingly only a semantic variation of a broader phenomenon and the concept of transition, devoid of considering mutual general and specific differences. The synonymy of the phenomena and concepts of *transition* and *transit* is common both in political science and law, as well as in sociological and economic discourse. This synonymy, however, slows down and suppresses heuristic ascents in the knowledge of the content and form of epochal dynamics.

Namely, transition is a sensitive process of complex change that contains many flows, environmental meanders and backwater, and inclusive and exclusive forms and types. It is the polymorphism of the phenomenon of transition that suggests the understanding of special phenomenological differences. On the basis of the criteria of the relationship between general, special and individual, the relationship between transit and transition can be interpreted and understood in several ways. It is, in fact, the need for interpretative distinction of two admittedly similar, but still different currents of epochal changes that have taken over global societies at the turn of centuries and millennia. Three main interpretations of the relationship between transit and transition can be considered possible.

Transit partially differentiated from transition

According to the first point of view, transition as a summary process of historical dynamics, collects, multiplies and transforms other, viewed as a whole, dependent determinants marked by different words, names, terms, concepts, definitions, categories... In the first interpretation, transit, as one of real or potential processes, is subliminally integrated into general/historical course of transition, it is insufficiently differentiated, it belongs to it, and it is often blurred by it beyond recognition.

Although, as mentioned, transition is indicated as a process that also contains some geopolitical features, in most interpretations of this type it is not considered as predominantly geo/political, but a mixed socio-economic and cultural phenomenon. In such an understanding of historical mixture, transition is understood as backward movement forward (?) to the previous state, at a higher level of development. A fundamental transitional reversal occurred as a result of the traumatic collapse of the communist order. The goal of such a transitional turn and unbalanced inclination is reflected in the idea of the restoration of the old as a new order in the altered reality of the post-communist peripheral capitalism.

General ideational and polytocratic platform of transition, as an epochal event, implies the establishment of a post-authoritarian society and democratic political institutions. Hence, transitional strategic culture is not the same as transit strategic and cultural forms. Transit is interpreted on the horizon of transition and is justified by the accomplishment of transition values and goals. In political life, the extensive and far-

reaching strategic goals of transition, according to this interpretation, absorb all other goals including transit ones. In fact, transit is considered as a conditional prelude to transition or as a necessary part of transition, and not as an end in itself of national and state independence. In any case, transit is partially recognized and included in transition as its previous stage. The political and socio-economic transition gathers momentum only after the end of transit in the sign of successful secession.

The countries of successful transit through a complex state consider transit irreversible and complete, while those independent parts of the former state that are damaged in the national and state sense, i.e. by territory and resources, do not consider transit definitive and resist aspirations to declare "passage" final. Hence, among integralists, opponents of transit through a complex state, ideas and aspirations to restore the previous state form of territorial integrity often arise, as well as retaliation for suffered defeats.

According to this view, far-reaching goals mask deeply conflicting transit practice that is represented at a seemingly lower operational and tactical level in relation to the higher strategic importance of transition. It can be said that strategic premises of transit, which drastically reshape and change the state political and legal structure are camouflaged by a transition strategy that strives for a complete change of political, economic and ideological formation.

Transit differentiated in transition

Transit can also be understood as a differentiated process of the historical dynamics of the social metamorphosis. It takes place, primarily, in the sphere of social, economic, political, geopolitical and military relations, which do not include or fully encompass all aspects and dimensions of transitional epochal changes. According to this interpretation, transit is, however, differentiated and only partially determined by the general and summary course of transition because the transit process is manifested and shaped both before and after, i.e. out of crucial transition flows.

Simply put, although it belongs to transition in the broadest epochal sense, transit does not coincide, and particularly is not completely identical to transition. It could, in fact, be said the other way round, that transformation in transition has in some historical cases been fully determined by transit as a process of disintegration of a state.³ Some states have been completely transformed, while others have been destroyed in order to transform their separate and independent parts.

In some socialist and communist countries of the Eastern Europe, transit has not even happened, while transition has. These are non-transit, and at the same time transitional states and nations. Even under strong internal and external pressures, they

³ More about that in: Knežević Miloš, *Paradigma raspada. Razlaganje države u ogledalu uzročnosti*, glava "Tranzitni okvir i uslovi tranzicije", pp. 93-119, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2009.

have shown greater resilience and permanence of political existence in critical times. In their historical case, transit through the state form has not occurred, but only a socio-economic, political and economic change in the unchanged borders of the state territory and, at least only temporarily, in the preserved demographic composition. What has caused the need to preserve or destroy the state form? Is it, above all, its complex communist interethnic federal form? Probably that is what it is all about!

The three communist federations were divided into various national constituent parts, which indicated the impossibility of any association of nations, states and semi-states on a socialist and communist basis. However, not only the communist federations in Eurasia, Central Europe and the Balkans have been dismantled, but also their economic and military alliances. This, in fact, shows that the socio-economic transition from communism to capitalism is based on the previous transit geopolitical disintegration of different types of socialist state communities in federal and interethnic form, but also military and economic unity of the Soviet and self-governing type.

In the presented sense, the undertaken transition has been a differentiated and particularly articulated continuation of transit in a particular place and in a different historical form. The question can be asked whether the successful transit on the destructive route of the secession disintegration of the socialist states was a necessary precondition for the execution of the socio-economic, political and economic transition? Perhaps it is because only separated and divided, reduced and weakened socialist states could be subject to the triumphant will of a bipolar rival.

The paradigm of the behaviour and actions of the Euro-Atlantic West towards the Euro-Eastern countries was simple and practical, and also ancient. The territorially large one was supposed to be dismembered, reduced and to become small; the militarily strong one was supposed to be weakened and made powerless; united and constituent one to be separated; allied, cooperative and friendly to quarrel and be hostile; independent one to be put in a hopelessly dependent position... The pattern of imperial fragmentation and crushing of a hated opponent has been tried out and tested many times, all the way to the necessary level of disorganization and incapacity for any recovery and return to the "old glory" of military and geopolitical power. Many Western politicians, soldiers and scientists, with short-sighted enthusiasm, have pointed out an ideal opportunity for the other pole of power to finally and once for all be defeated.

At the turning point, the superior West has caused a fundamental earthquake by its external and internal actions, and then, as a managed seismic consequence, a series of metamorphic "landslides" of the Eastern European societies and states. In such an atmosphere, these societies did not offer great structural and frontal resistance. Greater resistance to destructive influences could not be offered by using the old communist nomenclature and devalued Cold War matrices, and a new matrix at the time of the transit/ transitional demolition of the "old world" had not yet been found. The intuition of the leaders of changes indicated the necessity of abandoning the previously prevailing lifestyle without clear and detailed ideas of how life would

be in the future. The immediate improvement in the overall living conditions in freedom and democracy was euphorically expected, which, of course, did not happen in the expected time and in imagined forms.

In political and crypto-political circles, there was a belief that transition is, in fact, a high leap to a new state that is possible by quick and pragmatic adoption of ready-made formulas and literal copying and imitating neoliberal principles and models. Such ideas were opposed by a rare, but reasonable criticism of neoliberalism.⁴

The former competitive goals of quantitative achievement and prestige of the West in the ex-East have been replaced by the qualitative goals of adopting the Western values and complete Westernization, i.e. becoming a part of the Western world. From the peripheral non-Western "rest", the political elites of the transition countries longed to enter the centre of the free world and finally become the West. One could embark on a transitional path of economic and political globalization.⁵

In the dissident circles of the countries that were the Soviet satellites, political changes took on the significance of liberation transformation from the political, military, economic and ideological constraints of the "fraternal community". Hence, most Eastern European actors of the epochal transformation considers the destructive tectonics of changes as liberation (r)evolution. The voluntary fall into the embrace of the West was conditioned by the withdrawal from the strong Soviet, that is, Russian hug. At the same time, as it is well known, the entire communist world was identified in a russophobic manner with the "malignant" USSR and Russia. The triumphant Manichean logic of the refraction of light and darkness pointed to two antithetical real and symbolic meanings. Eurasian communist Moscow represented frustrating slavery, and transatlantic liberal Washington represented unlimited freedom for the tortured and afflicted Eastern European nations and countries.

Antiauthoritarian ideas and ideals are most strongly expressed in the mass desire to restore neglected democracy. At the same time, transition was understood as a transfer from authoritarianism to post-authoritarianism in a pro-democratic spirit. The political rule of the people - democracy was emphasized as an important motivational and driving value of the started transition. In the time of upheaval, democracy was ritually, without measure and unquestionably glorified as an all-solving instrument of linear progress. The critical capability to notice disharmonious and contradictory effects of the "export of democratic revolutions", the authoritarian imposition of democracy, democracy for the privileged, the so-called democraship, etc. was not enough noticed. In the political sense, transition has, in fact, been identified with democratization, as its development-oriented process and final, i.e. resulting structure.

⁴ See: Dušanić Jovan, *Neoliberalizam*, glava "Neoliberalni koreni krize", pp. 139-142, Catena mundi, Beograd, 2015. More in: Katić Nebojša, *Iz drugog ugla*, glava "Neoliberalni duh vremena", pp. 13-16 i "Ideologija monetarne politike", pp. 52-55, Catena mundi, Beograd, 2015.

⁵ About it: Mitrović Ljubiša, *U rajama tranzicije. Između sunovrata i alternative*, glava "Neoliberalna globalizacija i ekspanzija prekarizata i eksploatacije", pp. 85-93, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu, Prometej, Niš - Novi Sad, 2017.

Transit-transition processes have changed not only the spatial and resource size of the disintegrated Eastern European and Balkan societies, nations and states, but also their position on the political and geographical map, a different historical role, new relations and cooperation, new membership and geopolitical solidarity, "brotherhood" and "unity". Transit and transition changed the Versailles/Yalta silhouette of the Balkan macroregion of the old Europe, which was outlined in 1918 and lasted until 1991/9, which means almost the entire Serbian and Yugoslav 20th century.

It should also be noted that a kind of linguistic transition has affected the Balkan geography, which has been established for centuries and millennia, especially the definition of the place and position of the Serbian nation in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula. The transit in which nations and states were re-formed and the transition by which a new socio-economic structure of society was established, have influenced language, the modification of concepts, words and names by which politically problematic phenomena were interpreted and understood. One of the imposed notions of the Balkan transitional character is related to deeply politicized linguistics and semantics. Not only there is the separation of the original unique Serbian language into local dialects and local lexical varieties, with the ambition of cloning special languages (Montenegrin, Bosniak, Croatian, Vojvodina, etc.), but the administrative renaming of places and phenomena in places is also carried out by destroying the Serbian language or giving new arbitrary names. One of such cases, which was generated in international diplomatic communication, is the increasingly used name "Western Balkans".

For the Balkan Peninsula, or the well-known Balkans, general and summarizing names such as the European Southeast, Middle East, a part of the Eastern Mediterranean, Intermarium (the land area between the Pannonian Basin of the Adriatic, the Aegean and Black Sea) are still in sporadic circulation. In recent years, however, out and against every cultural, civilizational, historical, ethno-national and geographical logic, the countries and nations that are not members of the European Union and partly NATO - including the Serbian people in Serbia with Kosovo and Metohija, Montenegro, the Republic of Srpska and Macedonia – have been defined as the "Western Balkans" by position and orientation. Thus, Serbs, along with other non-members, and in this way depersonalized and denationalized, have become regional "Western Balkans people" in diplomatic jargon.

Such a topical and topological redefinition of national and state reality bypasses the notorious geographical fact that the Serbian ethno-national, cultural and religious space is mostly spread in the central Balkans, not the so-called Western Balkans. Namely, it is enough to look more precisely at the political and ethnic maps of the Balkans and be convinced of this fact. However, transit and transitional realpolitik manipulations are inevitably followed by the nominal exhibitions of manipulative semantics. The renaming changes the historically acquired names and addresses without the question of tolerable objects, in order to confirm the decisive geopolitical influence in the Balkan macroregion in an outworn expansive manner with new names and addresses.

In the end, it is both necessary and useful to question the geopolitical issues and the dilemma of the value and historical meaning of transit, transition and transformation in all identity segments. Rather different answers and excuses of various degrees of cognitive persuasiveness are still given to old and new doubts. If carefully studied, the certainty of the difference between the historical processes of transit and transition becomes obvious. In some aspects, especially in terms of conflict destruction of political, i.e. state structures, transit does not resemble transition at all. In transit, as a rather internal geopolitical process, secessionist ideology and politics come to full expression. Hence, the strategic culture of transit is very different from the strategic choices and achievements in the later course of transition. The main and obsessive goal of transit is separation, and therefore culture in newly nationalized and neo-national subjects is understood primarily in a separating and opposing interpretative key.

Transit equated with transition

In this mode of interpretation and understanding, which is common and major, transit does not differ from transition and is not named as a special combatively destructive process. When one considers disintegration or dissolution of a complex state, one also thinks of transition. Transit is, in fact, not understood as a special political and geopolitical current, but only as a somewhat specific prelude to targeted transitional socio-economic changes on the path of neoliberal political and economic reforms.

Appearing and conceptually included in transition and with unnoticed special properties of manifestation, transit is not understood as a decisive course of events for other areas of social metamorphosis. By being understood as a preconditional economic factor, transit under the name of transition is, in fact, perceived as a socio-economic and geo-economic, and not a geopolitical phenomenon. If it is taken seriously into consideration as a differentiated process at all, in this interpretation of the essence of the epochal transition, transit is essentially marginalized, being left in a darkened zone of unmarkedness and misinterpretation.

In the foreground of interpretation is the socio-economic transition from one social and economic order to another. The transition understood in this way has not got so similarities with typical geopolitics as with geoeconomics or, as it is pointed out in rather frequent interpretations, with the economy that is exempt from direct political influence and control. The accelerated reforms of the economic structure of the previous order on the neoliberal platform liberate market relations, change the ownership structure, enable free market competition and establish different financial and banking mechanisms. The initial momentum of transition takes place in the spirit of general deregulation of the previous directed or command economy. Although the starting point of transition is the divided, diminished and weakened political and economic space of the previously dissolved complex state, interpretations are mostly exhausted by the analysis of the relationship between economic losses and gains, i.e. the cost of new state independence.

One of the paradoxes of transition, however, is contained in the contradiction between the ideal of economized politics and the reality of politicized economy. One declares, for example, the renunciation of the state influence on vital economic flows, although in the deficient reality of a weak state this is hardly possible to accomplish. Although transition includes a change of political structure, institutions, procedures and personnel, there is a strong need at declarative level to renounce the political voluntarism that characterized the previous planning period. In the conditions of the renewal of political pluralism, the ruling communist will is dismantled by the new will of the reformist and modernizing elites. Transitional actors in decommunized countries believed in the omnipotent possibility of economic development.

Instead of a strong state structure, the goal of the transition thus understood is the maximal economy in the so-called minimal state. There is the belief that market economy can overcome old and new political problems. Apart from the fact that the minimalism of the confused and disabled post-secessionist state does not provide economic growth and development, but only clientelistic relation to the centres of capital and loyalist reliance on the unchanged centres of military power.

The structural political and economic dependence is a state in which, by the arbitrary will of political elites, according to the inevitable rule of domination of financial capital centres and predatory banks, agencies and multinational corporations, nations in the transition countries of peripheral capitalism have fallen one after another. As a high price of ideological and political decommunization and restoration of capitalism in the countries of the former socialist bloc, there was deindustrialization, the collapse of the so-called great systems and many sectors of real production, with the disintegration of the financial and banking system. All of this has resulted in a state of hard-to-compensate economic inferiority and deepened social stratification. In addition to the outflow of capital abroad, the internal distribution of social wealth has indicated the phenomenon of a small number of transitional winners and a much greater number of transitional losers, in fact poor groups of citizens.

In the conditions of the crisis cycles of capitalism, countries with slow and unfinished transition are more exposed to all kinds of external and internal dangers.⁶

In those countries that have experienced the transit disintegration of a complex state, whether they recognize the determining importance of transit for transition or not, the risks of economic collapse are even greater. Among such countries, the negative consequences of transit for transition are indirectly recognized by highlighting the damages to their interests caused by secession. There is a paradox in that place because secession is understood as a condition and fulfillment of state-constitution liberation, and also a process that by the destructive effects of the integralists at that time has caused harm to such a national being as appropriated and understood by separatists.

However, even this type of argumentation is not devoid of the all-causal blame of the previous complex state for the evils that have been transferred to the new state

⁶ More about that in: Knežević Miloš, *Neizvesni prelazak. Demokratija tranzicija*, glava "Protivrečnosti zakasnele i ubrzane tranzicije: relativnost tranzicionog apsolutizma", pp. 29-63, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2012.

formations. Thus, for example, in the case of the ex-Yugoslav space, the newly established states still blame Yugoslavia for all economic and political evils, then the intra-Yugoslav Serbia during the rule of Slobodan Milošević and, finally, modern Serbia after the second and third Yugoslavia.

Transition in this way of interpretation is a general phenomenon of lifestyle change. Transitional strategic culture assumes a complete and unchanging territorial silhouette and the boundary of the political space in which economic reforms take place. This space in the form of state territory is postulated by superior factors as a finished form, "a finished thing" and "a solved problem", which means that in international relations it is treated as unquestionable and indisputable. At the same time, transit, that is, the historical *understanding of the disintegration of a complex state* into unequal parts and fragments places the other plan of the slow "expert" interpretation by the historiographer in the political brackets of daily obsolescence.

Although transit in the secessionist historical reality is not identical to transition, in the imprecise political discourse of the presented type, it is conceptually included and boils down to it. The reason for that is certainly not only in the semantic ignorance of the definition and use of the terms "transit" and "transition", but also in the ideological and doctrinal interpretations of the dissolution and disintegration of complex multinational socialist states. The strategic culture of transition, which subsummarizes transit as its barely noticeable and nonindependent premise, is oriented towards social and economic relations. Such a strategic culture is based on the economic needs of growth and development and manifests itself, above all, as the culture of economic reforms, and therefore in discursive practice it seeks to depoliticize economy and degeopoliticize foreign policy.

Finally, we should remind of three indicated possibilities of interpreting and understanding the relationship between transition and transit. In the first possible interpretation, transit is encompassed by transition, in the second it is relationally and relatively differentiated, and, finally, in the third, transit is in a transitional manner reduced to economics, i.e. geoeconomics. The presented interpretative possibilities point, however, to the need for a more accurate understanding and use of the word, term and concept of *transit* in political science and geopolitical discourse.

Democracy and secession

One of the reasons for ambiguity in the interpretation of the state disintegration is contained in a mixture of value and ideal plans of the best possible policy and the least bad political reality. What logical and meaningful relations can democracy and secession have? The pro-democratic position presupposes the political will of the democratic type of government in a single state, while from the secessionist point of view it would like to establish a state of political separation and state specifics. In the momentum of separation, the primary goal is not democracy, but ethno-national, religious-ecclesiastical, territorial and resource separation from the existing state. The national and state separation is a deeply ingrained obsession and an essential political feature of separatists.

The proclaimed secondary political goal in a far-reaching form may, however, be the development of a democratic type of government in the future realistically and functionally demarcated territory. Such desirability can indeed be conducted, but not in every case and not necessarily. Post-secession democracy is not guaranteed in advance and forever, neither among unsuccessful integralist actors, nor among separated political nations and national groups in the newly established states and state-like formations because secession and early post-secession periods are not the most suitable time for fast and calm democratization.

In general, the transit dissolution of a complex state represents a deep cut in developmental historical course. Hence, the social, national and state discontinuity caused by secession harms a declared goal of democratic evolution. The individual and mutual post-secession consolidation of separated and independent parts of a complex state is not inevitably and only democratic consolidation. The post-secession consolidation can be carried out in a pro-democratic and authoritarian direction and take on the forms of mass and plebiscitary democracy, and also authoritarianism and autocracy. This is indicated by the presidentialist systems of strong presidents established in the post-communist transition countries of the Eastern Europe.⁷

Although from the point of view of political values, it is desirable for the social and economic, as well as the national and state consolidation to be accomplished in a pro-democratic form, the convulsive political life in transition shows that this is not always the case. It happens, namely, that the accomplished consensus platform on the need and directions of pro-democratic changes is deformed by external conditions, pressures and dictates of foreign factor. From within, the authoritarian inclinations of some movements, parties and interest groups can come to the fore, as well as the ambition and power-hunger of political leadership and leaders. Whether authoritarianism in a protoplural and pro-democratic atmosphere will be functionally time-limited or will last and stabilize in a longer-term form of a specific political system, depends on specific circumstances in certain transition countries.

Despite the initial secessionist enthusiasm, secession actually delays the establishment of democratic institutions and mechanisms for the time after the consolidation of structural separation that can be, and mostly is, uncompromising and militant, repressive and authoritarian. In chronopolitical terms, possible democratic consolidation takes place in the post-secession period. This also means that democratic consolidation is not carried out at the point of termination with the previous state because the democratic results of such a state are rejected as an useless template. Therefore, separatists are completely turning to their political tradition in parts of their democratic heritage, of course, if they have it at all. If they do not have it, by "creative interpretation" of the past, separatists imagine and simulate their democratic roots in the periods when they were not noticeable.

⁷ About that in: Knežević Miloš, "Prezidencijalizam na horizontu istorije", glava "Slabi i jaki predsednici", pp. 48-67, u *Savremeni predsednički sistemi*, zbornik, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2005.

The content and forms of the post-secession relations do not meet, however, needs of all participants in secession. When it comes to an integralist party, there is a feeling of deprivation and damage due to the loss of a part of nation, territory, resources, communication facilities, artificial borders, a different land position. The collective feeling of geopolitical, geoeconomic, demopolitical and geocultural resentment is easily transformed into a sense of the suffered injustice, which is considered to have to be removed at some point. It is exactly from the ground of negative feelings, due to the suffered secession traumas, that the ideas and ideologies of the revision of defined borders and historical revenge for the suffered evil grow. The demands for the reconfiguration of the political map and a different geopolitical design of macroregion are an expression of that.

Is it even necessary to remind that after the dissolution of the second Yugoslavia in the post-secession period, the Serbian nation and, as it is pointed out, Serbia, which is always anti-democratic and authoritarian, are to blame for all the committed evils. A special form of such beliefs is self-underestimation and self-blame, which is perverted into self-hatred or autochauvinism.⁸

The secession problem is in the civilizational, historical and geopolitical aspect and, of course, it is much more complex and by no means unilaterally and unambiguously based. The pro-democratic defence of the integrity of the entire complex state from the integral point of view has emphasized the anti-state as a conspicuously undemocratic effort of secessionists. At the same time, but quite the opposite, secessionists have most often only/declared themselves the "fighters for democracy", which have been allegedly thwarted and deprived by authoritarian integralists. "Conquering democracy" is for secessionists the often proclaimed ultimate goal of the struggle against the whole state. Whose side was the "democratic deficit" on then? Did the very emergence of secessionism in a society and state like Yugoslavia indicate major shortcomings of partocratic democracy in the conditions of multiethnic political monism? Or has secessionism disrupted the democratic achievements of a multi-member state, whose composition has been threatened by potential, and then real, separation?

According to many historical testimonies, secessionism in the reality of secession is mainly politically persistent and reckless, and similarly insensitive to sophisticated theoretical understanding of dangerous ways of state disintegration. The practical political energy and cryptopolitical ingenuity of secessionists are derived mainly from a strong source of separating emotions that rarely succeed in gaining mental persuasiveness.⁹ Based on the desire for separation, secessionist emotions do not

⁸ See: Simeunović Dragan, "Srbi i tradicija kolektivne krivice", *Srpska politička misao*, 1-2, 1999, pp. 121-134. Also: Lompar Milo, *Duh samoporicanja*, glava "Kompleks predodređene krivice i strah", pp. 76-90, Orfeus, Novi Sad, 2011.

⁹ What do secessionists complain about and what do they see as an interest in secession? These are, according to Pavković and Radan: 1) the unequal distribution of power and resources within the home country to the detriment of a secession group; 2) the damage deliberately caused by the authorities of the home country to a secession group; 3) the perception of the central government of the home country as foreign power in relation to a secession group. Pavković Aleksandar, Radan Petar, *Stvaranje novih država. Teorija i praksa*, glava „Mobilizacija stanovništva: žalbe secesionista“, p. 77, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2008.

care for prudent excuses, and are often directly opposed to cautious and reasonable warnings of the possibility of catastrophe. One rushes into secession, and when the course of separation eventually slows down and subsides, it deliberately accelerates and intensifies. This is done by planned incidents and fake events that are made by the media as sufficient reasons for intensifying conflict or external intervention.

A pro-democratic action is, of course, a desirable political process, just as democracy is a desirable political state that is sensitively and willingly supported by the majority of citizens in modern societies and developed political communities. The almost complete agreement on the ideals and values of democracy for the human community in the modern age is not accompanied, however, by similar enthusiasm for the phenomenon of secession. Most citizens are wary of secession because they suspect and know that it brings trouble, from social and political conflicts with potentially tragic consequences. Emotional political views about secession, in difference to views about democracy, are sharply polarized. The opinion that secessionism manifests itself as a departure from democracy in the direction of a special authoritarian state is opposed to the contrary opinion that secession is a departure from a common authoritarian state in the direction of a specially organized (national) democracy. In short, while separatists in secession consider the path leading to democracy, integralists in the secession path consider new forms of authoritarian hopelessness.

Therefore, the problem is exacerbated when two extremely opposite needs and desires, two mismatched interests and motives: the democratic maintenance of an integrated state and the belief, also declared as democratic one, that secession is existentially valuable, politically necessary and practically possible, are confronted. According to the measure of the survival of a political whole in the form of a state, it is a collision of two opposing world views, two political worlds in an uncompromising or/or relationship. Hence, in the cases of conflicting desires in a state - to stay in it or to leave it - the question of the authenticity and justification of the first or second pro-democratic belief arises: the practice of maintaining a state or the separating practice of disintegrating a state? Which belief at the level of idea, ideation, ideology and doctrine is authentic and justified is defined in the internal balance of power and attitudes and actions by external factors of power.

The peaceful and conflicting properties of transit

Just as the passage of passengers through an area can be unhindered and comfortable, so transit can be reasonable and peaceful through the form of a complex and connected state. Although the disintegration of a complex state can be done reasonably and without hatred, history testifies that transit mostly happens in an upset and turbulent manner. The abandonment of the old and creation of the new political subjectivity in historical events happens mostly gradually, sometimes very slowly and painfully.

However, the embodiment of political identity can happen by leaps and bounds. What previously seemed only as a postponed possibility of independence is made

serious in a militant way within particular circumstances. Passage or transit then means the separation of parts of the political community, in other words, its separation and disintegration.

A partial change in the territorial size, shape and content of a complex state can be agreed on and conducted amicably and unanimously, without armed conflict. James Nickel, who, for example, has considered the main types of secessionist and integralist policies, including genocide, ethnic cleansing, forced assimilation and expulsive secession, found that strategic approaches in the listed policies differ. According to his view, in the first three cases, geo-demo-political actions are carried out in order to preserve the entire ethno-national territory, as understood by integralists or separatists. In the fourth case a religious, ethnic or national group, whose suppression and rejection is wanted, is separated together with territory. In such a case, state consciously and willingly deprives itself of a part of the state territory because it does not want to have an incompatible and disloyal demographic factor in its territory.¹⁰

Voluntary renunciation of a part of the state territory, natural resources and population is quite rare in international practice. The self-amputation of the territory inhabited by incompatible, disloyal and rebellious population is the ultimate measure by which a sovereign state recognizes its inability to effectively control a part of the state territory. The logic of self-amputation is contained in the view that it is better for a state to deprive itself of a part of the territory and population that fails to be submitted to effective sovereign power than to threaten a state as a whole by spreading the destructive process. Sacrificing a part for the sake of the entire state territory can happen by meeting separatist appetites in such a territory, but other situations can arise in which separatists demand much greater territories than those a state is ready to give up. However, the reverse case can also be imagined, in which a state consciously and decisively rejects a part of its territory without citizens of such a state wanting to be separated and independent. From the point of view of the will to separate, in this rare and bizarre case the roles of integralists and separatists have been replaced.

As it has been said, transit is the passage of internally organized political entities in a complex state, which is directed to independence from a state as a whole. According to historical facts and experiences, it takes place in the peaceful stages of the state life and culminates in a non/peaceful, in fact, war secession. In the pre-secession stages, transit ideology and practice threaten the order of a complex state in various ways. The idea of transit develops in the range from managing and administrative specificity, functional territorial autonomy and constitutional legal semi-state capacity of republics in the federation, to the idea of dissolving a common federal state into a loose community of states, a loose confederation and a semi-obligatory consociation.

¹⁰ About that: Nikl V. Džejms, „Četiri načina kako se rešiti drugih grupa”, u *Secesija, tranziciona pravda i pomirenje, zbornik*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2009, pp. 123-134.

In the certainly complicated and multiple Yugoslav transit case, there were circumstances that pointed to the intricate historical character of the Yugoslav conflict as an interrepublican, interethnic, interreligious and civil war. However, as it has been said, war separation did not happen in every case. The idea and aspiration for the peaceful separation of the republics and leaving the federation required, however, certain preconditions. The author tandem Pavković – Radan has listed five main causes and reasons which, in their opinion, have led to peaceful secession in recent historical experience. These include: 1) the democratic, pluralistic and parliamentary character of the home countries; 2) the constitutional, federal or administrative specificity, with legitimate bodies of seceded parts; 3) the failure to plan the actions and engagement of forces of the home countries against possible secessionists, which means that territorial integrity, as a political value and goal, was not in the foreground of state policy; 4) feelings and knowledge that within internal and external circumstances no force will be used during secession, and in that sense force is unnecessary; 5) non-existence of motives and interests of external interference in secession on anyone's side.¹¹

It is interesting that Pavković and Radan do not notice one of very important and, in a deeper sense, perhaps crucial factors concerning the cultural and civilizational reasons for dissolution. Namely, the war secession did not occur between the republics and nations of the same faith and ecclesiology, similar culture and mentality. Thus, the Orthodox Republics of Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro separated without war conflict, while the multi-stage war for the delimitation of territories was waged in mixed Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim areas in two Republics - Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while in Slovenia it was aimed at separation from the federal state.¹²

However, the typical and dramatic forms of transit did not develop peacefully and harmoniously, but in the war whirlwind, in the bloody secession of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result of the mentioned secession conflicts, the Republic of Serbian Krajina and the Republic of Srpska emerged on the changed political map.¹³ It is obvious that the character of transit separatism in the form of the four-year secession Yugoslav war was not simple or unambiguous, and therefore not easy to interpret. Therefore, in order to avoid reductive interpretations, it should be repeated that in the internal secession dynamics, the Yugoslav conflict manifested many features: interethnic, interrepublican, interparty, interleading, religious-ecclesiastical, resource and territorial war.

¹¹ About it: Pavković Aleksandar, Radan Petar, *Stvaranje novih država. Teorija i praksa*, glava „Mirna otepljenja: neka zajednička obeležja”, pp. 136-137, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2008.

¹² See: Radinović Radovan, *Karakter ratova za razbijanje Jugoslavije*, glava “O karakteru rata u Sloveniji”, pp. 45-61, “Zaključno o karakteru ratova vođenih na tlu Hrvatske”, pp. 156-173, “Zaključno o karakteru rata u BiH”, pp. 380-391, Beogradski forum za svet ravnopravnih, Beograd, 2015.

¹³ About that: Antić Čedomir, Kecmanović Nenad, *Istorija Republike Srpske*, glava “Stvaranje države”, pp. 283-297, Nedeljnik, Beograd, 2016. Also: Novaković Kosta, “Oružano organizovanje Srba Krajišnika (1990-1995. godina)”, pp. 343-378, glava “Uzroci oružanog organizovanja Srba Krajišnika”, pp. 344-351, zbornik *Istina o Republici Srpskoj Krajini*, referati i saopštenja I, priredili Momčilo Subotić i Branko Nadoveza, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2008.

From the point of view of the institutions and apparatus of the federal state and integralist actors, secession was viewed as an interdependent and prolonged destructive process. On the other hand, individual actors of separation perceived their separation separately, as the completion of a long historical process of ethno-national and state establishment. Nations were in the foreground, and the goal - the establishment of nation states, was accomplished at any cost, even the highest one. Hence, *casus belli* were sought and constructed in Borovo Selo in Slavonia, in Sarajevo in Markale, in Račak in Kosovo and Metohija. The media staging and simulation of the reason resulted from the destructive motives and interests that tended to disintegrate the federal state.

If we take into account that the series of secession conflicts took place in a mixture of spontaneity and plan, i.e. developed tactics and strategies, it is easy to see that in relation to each individual property of the secession conflict there was some goal focus, planning and logistical preparation. The secession strategies contained multiple ethno-national, republican, party, leadership, religious-ecclesiastical, territorial-resource, civil, ideological, diplomatic, informative, media and cultural premises. No matter which particularly articulated separation strategy was discussed, in the territorial part of the federal state in the phase of the republican separation, such a strategy merged into the general political and military course of secession. The greatest temptations were faced by the Yugoslav Army, which integrated the idea of a common state in the secessionist chaos.¹⁴

Strategic views differentiated in various fields have relied on unique secession teleologies and separate geopolitical goals that have certainly been opposite to the common state. Although it had a prelude of the federal dissolution, the secession took place in the sign of the state organization of the new state republics. Although it lasted for a relatively short time, the process of the separation and political and national identity settlement of the South Slavs continued in the so-called post-secession time, during two decades, and continues to this day. In that sense, the modern South Slavic political distance and the policy of anti-Serbian coalitions in the "environment" is based on the motives of the previous establishment of segmented space, people and states. Hence, such a policy of modern South Slavic neighbours is often manifested in the dimensions of the policy of thwarting and suppressing the strengthening and the stability of the state of Serbia and increasing the influence of the Serbian factor in the post-Yugoslav macroregion.¹⁵

In the end, it can be said that the specific difference of transit in relation to transition is that in transit state is geopolitically reshaped and territorially reduced by its decomposition into parts, while transition is a geoeconomic process that takes place in a retained or newly acquired state form without questioning its

¹⁴ See: Knežević Miloš, *Balkanska pometnja*, glava "Integralistički izazov Vojske Jugoslavije", pp. 77-85, DP "Đuro Salaj", Beograd, 1996.

¹⁵ About that, in detail: Knežević Miloš, "Strahovi i mržnje u politici. Istorijske dimenzije srbo mržnje i srbofobije", glava "Međunacionalne antipatije i omraze", pp. 80-81, u: *Govor mržnje i kultura pamćenja*, zbornik, priredili Zoran Milošević i Miloš Knežević, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2020.

geopolitical form, size, position and very existence. In that sense, transit is rather destructive in the form of conflict, and partially reconstructive in the form of peace, since it changes both the geopolitical form and the legal and political content of state.

Transit destruction

Transit is not a state reconstruction, but its destruction. It is, in fact, a process of the state peaceful or conflictual destruction. In empirical and logical basis, it mainly means the transient decomposition and separation from a complex state. Transit is the passage of some constitutionally and administratively organized part of a state through its complex federal form - defederalization. The historical essence of transit is the fragmentation of a complex whole of the common state by the actions of internal and external disintegrative forces, which results in a single or multiple separation of its individual parts. The parts of the disintegrated state are then made politically and territorially independent in a peaceful or conflictual manner, i.e. they are integrated in their territories as new states.

Transit mainly takes place in complex states, although it can also occur in countries whose organization is unitary and centralized. The single administratively organized states, without a more pronounced constitutional form of decentralization, regionalism or autonomy, can also be affected by transit. This happens to unitary states in which one or more parts are directed towards separation from state. Although there are no formal legal preconditions for secession, there is strengthening of particularist and secession political practices that base their ideas on a radical change in the internal political and, potentially, external geopolitical position. Views are also expressed that regionalism and globalism complement each other, that they go hand in hand.¹⁶

The demands are usually made in the direction of demetropolisation, decentralization, deconcentration, the higher degree of autonomy, confederalization, special and parallel status, entity definitions, etc. The common denominator of such localist, particularist and separatist aspirations is the dissatisfaction with the place, role and development opportunities in the existing political community, state. The social, economic, religious-ecclesiastical and cultural dissatisfaction regularly takes on regional political forms. Regionalism can be integrative, and also disintegrative.¹⁷

¹⁶ Such an opinion is expressed by sociologist Zoran Avramović, who believes that regionalism and globalism relativize and attack the values of the sovereignty of nation state. See: Avramović Zoran, "Regionalizam i demokratija. Regionalizam kao ideološko sredstvo desuverenizacije", *Sociološki pregled*, Beograd, januar-jun, 2001, p. 194.

¹⁷ See: Knežević Miloš, *Prizma geopolitike*, glava "Integrativna i dezintegrativna regionalizacija", pp. 191-195, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2013.

A part or parts of a single state emphasize the political pretensions of incorporation and separation. Thus, state reaches a severe structural, in fact, existential crisis.

The political meaning of separatist goals and demands can most often be recognized in ethno-national motivation and interests. A part of nation (residents and citizens) emphasizes the intention to separate from the majority of compatriots in the social and political community. As a religious, ethnic or national minority in a particular state territory, separatist actors seek to be represented as the majority in the still stateless territory in which they reside. Separation is accelerated by the transformation of the obvious minority that does not recognize the majority state will, but only its minority as the majority will in a part of state. Thus, in the numerical replacement of the will for state as a whole with the will for the independence of a part of state, the dominant will of the minority is established as the will of the majority and thus, subsequently, formal and legal coverage of secession is provided.

The drafted process of the transformation of the minority will into the majority will marks the modern period of erodive disruption of complex socialist states in front of the torrents of separatism. The political destruction of states on a transit basis has not occurred only under external pressures, intervention and aggression, but also due to internal self-destructive causes. Not only there have been the mentioned principles of "self-determination to secession" at dusk and dawn of communism,¹⁸ but similar processes of state disintegration on the ethno-national matrix can be seen in the liberal capitalist world. The crude dynamics of the ethno-national separatisms disrupts the harmonious ambitions of the great rearrangements of the world. The seemingly pacifist and, in fact, war rhetoric for the protection of individual and collective human rights is no longer helpful. The great powers are splitting and crushing middle and small states, at the same time not allowing the thought of the possibility of their decomposition. That is why the transit practice and theory that justifies it, or criticizes it with reason, is of great importance for understanding the contemporary historical situation.

Equated with the concept of *passing*, the concept of *passage* or *transit* can, if one would like so, be theoretically understood in a mitigated, euphemistic manner. Nevertheless, the concepts of passing and passage only in a more careful and polite way express the drama and brutality of the conflict degradation of the whole that leads to the disappearance of the political community in the form of a federal state. In the geopolitical game, there is state as a whole and the parts belonging to it, which, through separation, leave it and cease to be its parts by attribution, and with the statehood that follows, they become their own, new state.

¹⁸ See: Subotić Momčilo *Pravo na samoopredeljenje i "jugoslovenski eksperiment"*. Prva, druga, treća Jugoslavija, glava "Elementi konfederalizma u jugoslovenskom federalnom sistemu i kraj 'države ravnoteže'", pp. 97-107, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2004. Also: Terzić Slavenko, "Pravo na samoopredeljenje i srpsko pitanje", 517-525, zbornik *Istorija jedne utopije. 100 godina od stvaranja Jugoslavije*, knjiga druga, Catena mundi, Beograd, 2018.

The statement separating “a part of state” can be understood in three ways:

1) as the separation of the demarcated part of the state territory on land, sea and in the airspace;

2) as the separation of a part of citizens, i.e. citizens of some ethnonationality, religion, or cultural and linguistic affiliation and

3) as the separation of a part of political power that is manifested in the independent prerogatives of power and sovereign decision-making.

This, in fact, includes the processes of partial deterritorialization, renationalization and disempowerment of previously exercised sovereign power, i.e. political power over population in a precisely limited state territory. Desovereignization, i.e. expropriation of previous state in one or several its spatial parts, takes place in three important state dimensions that make up sovereign power, namely: the controlled state territory with clearly defined borders, the population committed and loyal to state and effectively established and exercised power in real place.

Transit through Yugoslavia

Obviously, passage or transit is not only an approximately accurate, and perhaps indifferent description of the destructive course of the decomposition of the unique state form by *separation*, but also an emotional reference to the catastrophic and tragic historical drama of involution of the failed social and political community.¹⁹ In the case of the transit of the republics through the federal Yugoslavia, transit could also mean the renationalization of the interethnic Yugoslav policy and ideology. The return to the foundations of the South Slavic nations and ethnic groups also marked thorough de-Yugoslavization. In this way, transit manifested itself as radical dilution (decentralization) and multiple “de”: depoliticization and destatization, desocialization and deculturalization of the former political, social, economic and cultural community.

Historical facts, however, should be arranged in order, i.e. chronopolitically. Yugoslavia was not established before the liberation of Serbia, but by an allied, united action of the free Serbia. The state of Serbia was not a geopolitical consequence of Yugoslavia, but all three Yugoslavias were the consequent fruit in the chain of the Serbian geopolitical causes of the South Slavic integration. Yugoslavia was not only Serbia, but it was mostly in Serbia. Moreover, in critical moments for the common state, Serbia was treated as the essential embodiment of the whole of Yugoslavia. In global conflicts, when necessary, Serbia was supported and praised as the heart and backbone of Yugoslavia, according to the formula that without Serbia, Yugoslavia is neither necessary nor possible. However, also out of opposing needs, Yugoslavia was essentially challenged and rejected precisely because it “too much” represented Serbia and unitarily identified with it. Whereas

¹⁹ See: Jović Borislav, *Kako su Srbi izgubili vek. Tragična sudbina Srba u zajedničkoj državi*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2016.

from the first point of view as much Serbia as possible was sought in Yugoslavia, from the second point of view efforts were made to reduce its influence, presence and importance. Therefore, the Serbian attitude towards the common state of Yugoslavia, not only in terms of responsibility, but also in geopolitical sense, differs to some extent, if not in its entirety, from the attitude of other South Slavic nations.²⁰

In the South Slavic case, the political elites of the new states made sure that Yugoslavia was thoroughly notorious and blamed, which allows them to cover up and justify their failures, mistakes and misconceptions. Yugoslavia, in which everyone once lived, today everyone renounces as if it was not an integral part of their existential, political and geopolitical experience in various ways, and not secondary and of any kind, but the main and emancipatory one. However, over time, the memory of Yugoslavia as an interesting and complex and, one could say, experimental European state, limited in time by the 20th century, is increasingly fading. Nevertheless, becoming an interethnic part of the now unified national heritage, the memory of the Yugoslav past cannot be definitively extinguished by itself. No matter whether you want, no matter what it really was like and no matter how it was interpreted, Yugoslavia cannot be easily forgotten. Not for utopian, sentimental and nostalgic reasons, but out of a realistic feeling and knowledge that the meaning of substitute European integration needs to be carefully considered, primarily bearing in mind the tragic secession experience of the failed Yugoslav community.²¹

In the Yugoslav case, the strengthening of the conflict of national politocracies inevitably led to an open interrepublican conflict. In the internal dimension of the post-Titoist federal crisis, integralists and separatists were confronted, externally supported by interested geopolitical “designers”, revanchists and interventionists. The internal interest in maintaining the common state outweighed the opposing internal/external coalition interest in its disintegration. The opposing strategies and tactics of maintaining and destroying the common complex state were based on platforms of opposing interests. The political means and goals were, in fact, largely antagonized.

The defence of the unity of the interethnic state union and the attacks on it for the purpose of its destruction were based on the contrary and opposing tactics and strategies. The implemented model of polarization of actors indicates essentially important strategic antagonisms of ultimate goals in secession practice. According to the circumstances at various temporal and structural stages of secession transit, divergent teleologies of actors in the increasingly weak political community sunk into the state dissolution were manifested or concealed.

²⁰ Milomir Stepić writes about this, among other things, in the article “Geopolitički smisao jugoslovenstva i jugoslovenske države”, in: *Istorija jedne utopije. 100 godina od stvaranja Jugoslavije*, zbornik, knjiga druga, Catena mundi, Beograd, 2018, pp. 297-320.

²¹ In more details: Knežević Miloš, “Neuspeh jugoslovenstva i srpsko iskustvo integracije”, *Nacionalni interes*, Beograd, No. 1, 2005, pp. 57-90.

The pro-Yugoslav integralism and the anti-Yugoslav, one might say multi-member and allied South Slavic separatism, were articulated in the fields of different national political cultures and strategies. There were attempts to interpret the Yugoslav conflict in terms of the macro-regional and local East and West, Northwest and Southeast and the categories of the conflict of mentality and beliefs, cultures and civilizations. At the same time, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole were defined as an integral part of the continental West, and the "rest" with Serbia in the centre (of the problem?) as the semi-European bulk cargo, a part of the Oriental East. Such a simplified sharpened model of interpretation of the South Slavic limes towards Europe and within itself was based on the patterns of the ethno-national, cultural-historical, religious-ecclesiastical and geopolitical divisions of the South Slavic space.²² At the level of continental and macro-regional geopolitics in such a mode, reasons and excuses were found in the delimitation and division of interest spheres in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

More precisely, the historically profiled secession, however, had an arrhythmic and not always rational historical course. In the political whirlpools of the separation of the Yugoslav republics (1991-1995), accelerations and decelerations alternated. Hesitation and reluctance, delays, deliberate pauses and unwanted paralysis were sporadically present among the secession actors... Various causes of the secession inequality were noticed among the secession researchers. According to Pavković and Radan, there are four reasons for slowing down secession and hiding secession goals: 1) the indecision between political independence and political and cultural autonomy; 2) the majority will for autonomy out of the risk of violent secession; 3) qualifying separatism as treacherous and criminal; 4) the understanding that unilateral secession is contrary to the norms of international law, whereby among secessionists the policy of secession is interpreted as self-defence.²³

Nevertheless, it can be said that few of the abovementioned reasons decisively influenced the blocking of the increasingly strong and fast practice of the secession from the federal Yugoslavia. In the brutal spontaneity of splitting the last traces of the Yugoslav political whole, the final accomplishment of strategic goals was outlined rather clearly. Regardless of sometimes unclear operational and tactical stages in the fulfillment of the opposite aspirations of defence and maintenance, contrary to the offensive break-up of the political community, the final result was increasingly indicated: the national independence of the republics as the ultimate goal of separatism. In the secession practice, this goal is

²² About that: Knežević Miloš, *Balkanska pometnja*, glava "Evropska metamorfoza balkanskih granica", pp. 55-77, DP "Đuro Salaj", Beograd, 1996. From the same author, also: *Evropa iza limesa*, glava "Balkan između svetova", poglavlje "Zemlja iza limesa", p. 27, i "Simuliranje trajnih i nerazrušivih granica", pp. 29-31, Slobodna knjiga Vladimira Maksimovića, Beograd, 2001.

²³ About it: Pavković Aleksandar, Radan Petar, *Stvaranje novih država. Teorija i praksa*, glava "Granice retorike: 'otcepljenje' – reč koja se ne spominje", pp. 84-85, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2008.

patriotically patronized and moralized. In accordance with special internal and external interests, secession is justified by historical and moral reasons, while at the same time integralism is discredited as morally unfounded and unacceptable, delinquent.²⁴

Ideologically and politically, separatism has expressed its needs and values, ideals and visions exactly as it has understood and experienced them. On the path of separating the dissatisfied republican parts from the disturbed state whole, the supreme value and strategic ideal was national and state independence and gaining independence. The separation practice as a whole was imbued with the ideal of independence and self-sovereignty. The emergence and sovereignty of new nation states, as the final secession products of decomposed interethnic communities, has contradicted the theoretical conclusions about general and principled crisis and the dissolution of sovereignty.²⁵

In order to accomplish the obsessive goal of the territorial separation from the entirety of the state territory, objectivity and neutrality in behaviour were not possible among separatists. Although an atmosphere of passionate strategic steadfastness was created in the "struggle for independence", some tricks and improvisations were noticeable as, it would be said, only temporary tactical deviations. Although on a winding, yet one-way route of multiple separation, concessions to weakened integration factors are less and less evident. In the synergistic combination of internal and external factors of the destruction of the federal community, the clear hint of its inevitable disappearance was increasingly striking.

On the other hand, among integralists, especially in the military leadership, tactfulness towards the conflicting parties was initially possible, but only in accordance with circumstances and for a short time. It was implemented, as it turned out, according to the unsuccessful pattern of the so-called equidistance, "stop-and-go" tactics and separation of the parties to the conflict. From the beginning, caution and fear were not based so much on the respect of the real secessionist power of rivals and opponents, but on the bad experiences of interethnic, religious and civil conflicts on the South Slavic soil during World War II. Aware of the multinational character of the army, and also of the mononational intentions of the republican political elites, the military leadership of the YNA wanted to avoid a civil war at all costs.²⁶

²⁴ About this in favour of the "justice-loving" secessionists, writes: Majkl Volzer in: *Pravedni i nepravedni ratovi. Moralni argument sa istorijskim primerima*, poglavlje „Secesija”, pp. 132-137, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2012.

²⁵ See: Vilhelm Henis, „Rastakanje pojma suvereniteta”, in: *Suveren i suverenost. Između pojma, fikcije i političke emocije*, zbornik, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2008, pp. 138-153.

²⁶ On the destiny of the multiethnic character of the Yugoslav military factor, see: Bjelajac S. Mile, *Jugoslovensko iskustvo sa multietničkom armijom 1918-1991*, glava „Nacionalni faktor i vojska 1945-1991”, pp. 47-49, i „Razvoj političke krize i razbijanje JNA 1990-1991”, pp. 102.112, Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, Beograd, 1999.

Why transit preceded transition

According to the considered historical experiences, transit has taken place primarily by political and military means and in political and military forms, by invasive geopoliticization of intrastate relations. The burning internal political issues have distinctly become international because the great powers and their political and military alliances have been interested in them and wanted to decide on them. The great powers are, in fact, increasingly interfering in internal relations, thus becoming an unavoidable factor in internal politics. By spreading and increasing conflicts, internal problems are manifested, while foreign policy of the strongest members of the so-called international community is increasingly penetrating the internal relations of the political community in the phase of institutional disintegration. In that sense, it should be reminded that transit is not only extremization and explosion of internal contradictions, but also geopolitization and internationalization, i.e. the internationalization of intrastate problems.

In some sense, it is possible to say that within the acronym, i.e. the interpretative *formula 3T*, transit, transition and transformation²⁷ are taken into account in the practical and theoretical dimension, so that each of these empirical processes can be interpreted in terms and categories of "its own" theory, for example, transit theory - *transitology*, or transition theory within the framework of *transitology*. These processes can also be considered in other theoretical disciplines: political science, legal theory, economics, sociology, history, anthropology, demography, etc. However, what makes every secessionist practice exciting, often to the point of an irritated tragedy, is that at the beginning and the end of transit as secession it is always a matter of the division of the human community in which groups, collectives and individuals are subjected to divisive temptations. The political, national and state divisions are permeated with troubles and torments.

Even when it is not explicitly mentioned in the coordinates of its own theory, secession transit is considered from different points of other theoretical disciplines. Thus, for example, Allen Buchanan believes that secession can be approached through the prism of two types of normative theories. Aware of the reality of the political paradox of incompatibility of the ideals and practices of absolute sovereignty and territorial integrity, on the one hand, and the practice of desovereignization and territorial disintegration of state, on the other hand, the author makes the difference between the theories of correctional law and primary law. The conditioning and exercising these rights takes place in specific circumstances that may be democratic, but also filled with injustice, autocracy, tyranny and crime.²⁸

Having in mind the totality of the destructive, reconstructive post-communist processes, transit has historically emerged as prework, a secessionist basis and an

²⁷ More about that: Knežević Miloš, *Paradigma raspada. Razlaganje države u ogledalu uzročnosti*, glava "Tranzit - tranzicija – transformacija", pp. 139-165, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, 2009.

²⁸ See: Bjukenan Alen, „Teorije secesije”, glava „Dva tipa normativne teorije secesije”, in: *Secesija, tranziciona pravda i pomirenje, zbornik*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2009, pp. 32-38.

independent basis of the process in the phases of transition and transformation. Only primary transit enables later separate phases of the social, economic and cultural metamorphosis. Hence, the cognitive need for precise conceptual differentiation of mismatched processes of transit, transition and transformation has developed.

The originality of transit in the event of the disintegration of a complex federal state contains, however, hints and promises of transition that is not possible in full in the midst of conflict transit. Only after the completion of transit there are conditions for transitional reforms to be met. Sometimes, and that is exactly the case with Serbia and the violent separation of Kosovo and Metohija, transit remains unfinished and uncertain.²⁹

Secession transit is not a historically random and arbitrary process. Transit is caused by the loss of internal balance and the equality of forces and power of members of the political community. Among integralists, Yugoslavia was not considered as temporary and transient, but as a final formation, so they were defined as the fiercest opponents of the theory and practice of transit. Namely, they believed that equality, and thus the independence of all people/nations, as well as national minorities, had already been accomplished by a consensus in a sovereign federal state. Integralists accepted the disappearance of the Yugoslav federation only when the last state form of the political union of the two republics - Serbia and Montenegro - was agreed upon amicably and peacefully. In that sense, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro were the last interrepublican South Slavic state alliance. With its disappearance, the successive process of disintegration of the federal complex state into the republican parts ended, but the intrarepublican secession continued on the Serbian provincial soil.

The time of transit through a complex state and the time of transition from one socio-economic order to another do not coincide in space or time. It is very important to know what goes before and what goes after something because knowing the point of separation between the before and the after is related to knowing cause of an event. It cannot be that what preceded is caused by what is consequential. If, however, one believes that consequential has preceded, or vice versa, causes and reasons for events are imagined. If its beginning is imagined as an outcome of the process, the cause-and-effect weft is lost and unexplained, and very tangible consequences are included in non-existent causes. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully study the stages and phases in the timely execution of political processes.

Implemented in the national and republican transit through Yugoslavia, the planned and developed strategies had a primary geopolitical character, which was filled with figures of sharp oppositions of separatists and integralists, and also

²⁹ It turned out that not only Serbia, as the last Yugoslav republic loyal to the federation, went through the form of a complex state and reluctantly separated from it, but that one of the two Serbian provinces - Kosovo and Metohija, also passed through Serbia and with foreign assistance forcibly separated from it. Thus, the anti-Serbian position is reflected in: 1) not allowing the federalization of Croatia and the destruction of the Republic of Serbian Krajina; 2) aspirations towards the unitarization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the abolition of the Republic of Srpska; 3) the violent separation of Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia and the proclamation of a false Albanian state on the Serbian soil, and 4) the disruption of relations between Serbia and Montenegro.

secessionist, sovereignist and independent ideologies. The recognition of the secession of Kosovo and Metohija was skilfully guided and accelerated.³⁰

It was only after the accelerated recognition of secessionist formations that the reform restoration of capitalism in the new socio-economic order was set forth, encouraged by the changed types of individual and collective consciousness.

The discrete and weak forms of transition and transformation were noticeable both before and during the war transit, but they were interpreted as a danger to order and conducted reluctantly. It can be hypothesized that the transition that later took place in Yugoslavia with the preserved form of the order of power was difficult to conduct, even not possible. In the continuation of the hypothesis, the position is imposed that in the growing crisis, the post-Titoist Yugoslavia diminished and lost the capability of transitional reforms, exactly to the extent that actualized destructive transit.

Conclusion: the repeatability of the transit experience

On historical horizon (Kardelj's one), transit has appeared as a geopolitical precondition of geoeconomic transition, and restorative transition as a global order of epochal systemic change. The inevitability of change, therefore, did not come only from the South Slavic republican particles of the conditional Yugoslav federal totality, but from the actors of global supremacy, crowned with the glory of the victors in the Cold War. The echoes of the roar of the fall of the Wall in Berlin and Gorbachev's perestroika policy (no matter how it is assessed today) seemed not audible enough, especially warning among the internal actors of the Yugoslav drama. When external actors became directly involved in the Yugoslav secession crisis, it was too late to enlighten integralists.

The complex process of reconfiguration and reconstruction of the Balkan region, developed after the existence of Yugoslavia, expressed its processing prework in the secession, which had the form of transit. By suppressing and in every way disabling the Russian influence, the development of interstate relations in the non-Yugoslav Balkans was undertaken by the Euro-American actors.³¹ The conditional "gap" created by the disintegration and disappearance of Yugoslavia in the Anglo-Saxon post-imperial manner was filled by the aforementioned semantic and diplomatic construct "Western Balkans". This was not done in order to locate the western Balkans geographically accurate, but because the Balkans was geopolitically appropriated by the West by an irresistible action of power! This formula serves as a trademark of geopolitical property.³²

³⁰ About it: Jovanović Miloš, „Pitanje priznanja država u međunarodnom pravu: slučaj Kosova i Metohije”, *Savremeni međunarodni izazovi*, zbornik, Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 2008.

³¹ See: Trud Aleksis Žil, *Razaranje Balkana. Kako su razbili Jugoslaviju*, glava „Američka, ruska i evropska geostrategija na Balkanu od 1991. godine”, pp. 153-181, Xenia, Metella, Beograd, 2013.

³² About that: Đukanović Dragan, *Balkan na posthladnoratovskom raskršću (1989-2016)*, glava „Zapadni Balkan”, pp. 24-29, IMPP, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2016.

The continuous challenges in the Balkan macroregion have led the Western politicians at the end of the unipolar period to treat it in the traditional style as a fragile area of “unfinished business” on the “front line” towards Russia. The diplomatic and militaristic vocabulary indicates the importance of this part of Europe for the Western world. The modern Serbia and Serbs in the wider Serbian territory are in such a geopolitical ambience and atmosphere.

Due to its historical and geopolitical specifics, it is possible, but not cognitively effective, to interpret transit by subsequent methods, concepts and categories of unfinished or completed transition. As stated, in each part of the analysis it is necessary to bear in mind the precise differences in the processes of state destruction and its subsequent transitional reconstruction and restoration. Therefore, in order to understand the current situation in Serbia and among Serbs in the Serbian territory, it is necessary to interpret the primary process of transit, after which the processes of the socio-economic transition and intellectual and spiritual transformation gained momentum.

As a euphemism for brutal war secession, the use of the concept of *transit* can cause confusion and lead to heuristically wrong conclusions. Whether it is the original communist concept of the essence and forms of the Yugoslav state, or only current remarks and good-mixer jokes without deeper secessionist justifications, the transit through Yugoslavia, which ultimately happened to South Slavs and especially Serbs as a punishment for historical misfortune, points to the universal significance of the conflict potential of multinational societies and states in Europe and the modern world. Because, not only the “Yugoslav case” can happen anywhere in the world in the future, but it happens on the already seen and experienced destructive matrix in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh... Almost every European country can experience transit of some of its currently integrated part in the direction of independence. Therefore, transit is interpreted as the passage through a complex federal form of the Yugoslav state and it is necessary to study it and develop lessons learned, primarily because, by all accounts, it is a repeatable destructive experience.

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Стратешка култура у геополитичком тумачењу транзита и транзиције

Аутор образлаже и доказује да се у епохалним променама на размеђи векова и миленијума уочавају два слична, али и у много чему различита процеса: транзит и транзиција. Транзит је пролазак делова државе кроз сложену и јединствену државу у правцу међународног осамостаљења. Емпиријски гледано, транзит протиче на два начина – мирно или конфликтно. Транзит је, заправо, друго име за сепарацију или сецесију. Транзитна сецесија у једној држави обликује више самосталних држава. У том смислу, транзит је екстериторизација унутрашње политике, њена интернационализација и геополитизација. Иако се у сецесионом конфликту испољава драматично, трагично и катастрофално, транзит је у теоријском дискурсу друштвених, националних и државних промена закљоњен процесом транзиције. Стога аутор препознаје три приступа односу транзита и транзиције: транзит делимично диференциран од транзиције, транзит потпуно диференциран у односу на транзицију и транзит поистовећен са транзицијом. Аутор јасно и принципијелно разликује појаву транзита од појаве транзиције. На крају, у раду се истиче хронополитички моменат геополитичких метаморфоза у којима транзит претходи и у много чему одређује каснију транзицију. Транзиција као социоекономски процес, односно политичко-економски структурни преображај социјалистичког у капиталистичко друштво, не може се схватити без разумевања претходног догађаја транзита. Управо би југословенски случај распада сложене државе могао бити поучан за текуће евроинтеграције, али и поједине вишенационалне и мононационалне државе које се суочавају са опасношћу од екстремног регионализма, аутономизма и сепаратизма.

Кључне речи: *сложена држава, транзит, транзиција, интегралizam, сецесионизам, демократија, геополитика, геоекономија, стратегија*