

Predictors of party evaluation in post-conflict society – the case of Serbia

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The goal of present study is to increase understanding of evaluation of political parties by exploring their relations with dispositional constructs conceptually related to political behavior. These are: personality traits, social attitudes and the Ethos of conflict, which emerges from protracted violent conflict between societies. The conflict examined in this study involves Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. Principal components analysis conducted on parties' preferences isolated two dimensions which can be broadly interpreted as Socio-liberal and National-conservative orientation. Regression analyses have shown that these two dimensions are explained mostly by the Ethos of conflict, followed by social attitudes and personality traits. Personality traits of Honesty and Originality predict evaluation towards Socio-liberal parties. High patriotism and a positive evaluation of one's own nation characterize supporters of National-conservative parties, while Socio-liberal participants have low patriotic attitudes and do not consider that the aims of Serbian politics in Kosovo automatically exclude the Kosovo Albanian aims.

Key words: party evaluation, personality, attitudes, Ethos of conflict

Political behavior is important topic in psychological research because it is related to political functioning of the state, thus affecting all individuals living in the state. In parliamentary systems, it is shown that the evaluation of the political parties is important predictor of various forms of political behavior, like voting or political activism (Brasher, 2009). Party evaluation comprises a subjective experience of the person towards political party and it is mainly posited on the positive-negative dimension (Norpoth, 2009). Empirical research also show that party evaluation is a better predictor of voting than evaluation of specific political candidates (Wagner & Weßels, 2012). In this research, we made an attempt for deepening the knowledge about evaluation towards political parties, as an important source of political behavior. Our goal was to explain this evaluation by using psychological constructs which can be plausibly linked to it, as suggested by previous empirical data or theory. We were particularly interested in comparing the stabile personal dispositions toward behavior – personality

traits, social attitudes and social cognitions generated in specific circumstances like protracted violent conflict, in prediction of political party evaluation.

Personality traits. Over the last several decades, a model that comprises five orthogonal factors as an optimal solution for the explanation of variance in personality has become one of the dominant theoretical and pragmatic paradigms in personality psychology (John, Naumann & Soto, 2008; Costa & McCrae, 2008). These traits, called the Big Five, are: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. They have been proved to be valid predictors of various kinds of behavior (Paunonen & Ashton, 2001) including political behavior (Barbaranelli, Caprara, Vecchione, & Fraley, 2007; Schoen & Schumann, 2007). The traits of Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness are consistently related to the ideological orientation of liberalism-conservatism. Precisely, liberalism is, in opposite to the conservatism, associated with high Openness and Agreeableness and low Consciousness (Caprara & Vecchione 2010; Hirsh, De Young, Xu, & Peterson, 2010). So far, there is no clear information about the role of Extraversion and Neuroticism in the determination of political preferences.

Recent revisions of emic lexical studies have shown that the Six-factor solution outperforms the Five-factor one in providing optimal explanation of the variance of individual differences in personality. Six, not five factors showed acceptable cross-cultural replicability (Lee & Ashton, 2008; Saucier, 2009). Personal space described by the model of the Big Five is largely replicated in these studies (except for the rotation of the factors of Neuroticism and Agreeableness), but an existing constellation of factors joins another component, called Honesty/Humility. This personality trait is described by such terms as *integrity, honesty, sense of fair play, loyalty and humility*, while on the opposite pole of the dimension are adjectives such as *fickleness, hypocrisy, arrogance, cunning and greed* (Ashton, Lee, Perugini, Szarota, de Vries, Blas, Boies, & De Raad, 2004). Indeed, it has been shown that of all basic dimensions of personality, only the Honesty factor correlates negatively with Social Dominance Orientation (Lee, Ashton, Ogunfowora, Bourdage, & Shin, 2010). Additionally, Honesty correlated positively with orientation towards liberal parties and negatively with orientation towards conservative parties (Chirumbolo & Leone, 2010). Based on the above-mentioned theoretical reasons and empirical data we chose Six-factor instead of Five-factor model for this research.

Social attitudes. The application of lexical hypotheses has long been restricted to the research of basic personality structure. Saucier was the first to apply this theoretical and methodological paradigm to the field of social attitudes. He tried to formulate a structural model of basic social attitudes, based on the terms that have the suffix *-ism* (Saucier, 2000), which refer to social phenomena. Factor analysis of these terms has revealed four components that explain much of the variance of the original items. Since they are very broad and semantically

heterogeneous, they were named after the first four letters of the Greek alphabet. So, Alfaisms represent confidence in the religious sources of authority, or theistic religiosity. Betaisms appear as egoistical and selfish motives, as well as the rejection of political correctness and the existing political system. Gammaisms represent positive attitudes towards civil society, liberalism and humanism. Finally, Deltaisms are spiritual attitudes based on individualism, such as those representing Buddhism in the East, or so called *New Age* religion in the West. These four broad factors of social attitudes were largely replicated in the emic lexical study in Romania (Krauss, 2006). However, the findings we have previously obtained using Saucier's instrument in the Serbian-speaking area (Petrović & Međedović, 2011), showed the presence of four components, but of somewhat different content than those obtained in the original study. The first component almost entirely matches Saucier's Alfaisms. The second component is made of hedonistic and selfish orientation, but without any reference to ideological or political principles. Therefore, we called it Hedonism. The third factor that describes personal spiritual beliefs together with the rationalist views was called Rational Spirituality. Finally, the greatest difference between the original structure and the one obtained in the Serbian sample is the isolation of the fourth component, which clearly reflects high regard for one's own country, nation, and elements of traditional culture. We called it National adherence.

Although, there are numerous investigations relating social attitudes and political evaluation (Duriez, Van Hiel, & Kossowska, 2005; Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002, Perry & Sibley, 2012; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009; Blais & St-Vincent, 2011, Leone, Chirumbolo, & Desimoni, 2012), there are only few research investigating effects of social attitudes in addition to personality in prediction of party evaluation (e.g. Sibley & Wilson, 2007). Also, the relationship between basic, lexically derived social attitudes, such as –isms, and important social phenomena, such as political behavior, more concretely, evaluation of the political parties, has not yet been investigated. However, this could contribute to understanding a political party evaluation under specific socio-political circumstances, like those in Serbia. So, in this study, we used –ism conceptual framework based on the factors extracted in the Serbian sample as an empirical measure of social attitudes.

The Ethos of conflict. Serbia is a country that has gone through a very turbulent period in the last twenty years at the political, economic and cultural level and it is still in transition, with an unstable economy and industry. Additionally, an important political issue in Serbia is its relationship with Kosovo, which was the part of Serbia until 2008, when it unilaterally declared its independence. This was preceded by the armed conflict between Serbians and Kosovo Albanians in 1990's, which was ended in 1999, when Serbia and Kosovo were bombed by NATO, resulting in making Kosovo an international protectorate. Opposite attitudes toward territorial integrity of Kosovo are in the core of protracted conflict between Serbians and Kosovo Albanians, since Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. Attitudes of Serbs towards the independence of

Kosovo are various, but the Serbian Government is still treating Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia.

When this research was done (in the middle of 2010), there were eight political parties that constituted majority in Serbian Parliament: the Serbian Radical Party (SRP), the Democratic Party of Serbia (DPS), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), New Serbia (NS), Democratic Party (DP), the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), the Serbian Progressive Party (SPP) and the G17+. Common issues addressed in programs of all parties are issues like nationalism, human rights, social and economical issues, attitudes toward Kosovo, joining European Union, etc.

Common explicitly postulated political goals of SRP, DPS and NS are related primarily to preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia and its cultural identity, including obtaining Kosovo as a part of Serbia. Also, they advocate against joining European Union. Therefore, we consider that they largely reflect the political ideology that is more saturated with conservative values and aims. DP (with socio-liberal ideology), G17+ (with liberal ideology) and SPS (with socio-democratic, left-wing nationalistic ideology), all left-centre parties, advocate medium option that consolidates both joining EU and preservation of territorial integrity of Serbia, with the slogan “Both Europe and Kosovo”. Similarly, program of SPP (national-conservatively oriented party) is based on the consolidation of these two issues, but it emphasizes the importance of retraining territorial integrity of Serbia (Petrović, & Kuzmanović, 2012). LDP is only party that explicitly advocates acceptance of Kosovo independence, prompt accession of Serbia to the European Union and it is generally more open to liberal values. Previous analysis of ideological positions of Serbian political parties also resulted in labeling G17+ and LDP as liberal; DPS, NS and SPP as conservative; SRP as nationalistic; DS as socio-liberal and SPS as left authoritarian party (Stojiljković, 2011).

As it could be seen, resolving Kosovo-issue is an important part of the work of every political party in Serbia. But, there is no research relating party evaluation and the beliefs of Serbs towards conflict with Albanians on Kosovo.

For operationalization of the beliefs of Serbs toward Kosovo Albanians we used the concept of the Ethos of conflict, which is defined as a common configuration of central societal beliefs that determine the specific social orientation in times of intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007). When there is a violent conflict in a society, its members develop an ethos that will help them, as much as possible, to adapt to the conditions of the conflict and enable optimum psychological and social functioning. This Ethos of conflict, according to Bar-Tal, consists of eight themes of societal beliefs: *Justification of aims, Beliefs about safety, Delegitimization of the opponents, Positive collective self-view, Victimization, Patriotism, Unity and Beliefs about peace* (for detailed explanation of societal beliefs see: Bar-Tal, 1998; Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Zafran, 2012).

Societal beliefs that form the Ethos of conflict enable members of the society to adapt to the conflict and overcome stress and traumas that accompany it. However, after a violent conflict, they represent a factor that prevents reconciliation between groups and thus prevent the normalization of their relations, facilitating a possibility for new conflicts to emerge (Bar-Tal, 2000; Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsch, 2009). In this research, we presume that beliefs that are in the core of Ethos of conflict can be manifested through political choices and that this concept can be used for prediction of party evaluation in the society such as Serbia. We assume that these specific beliefs that emerged on the violent inter-ethnic conflict will provide additional understanding of party evaluation, above and beyond personality traits and broad social attitudes.

Method

Research goals. The first goal of the present study is examination of latent components of party evaluation in Serbia. Furthermore, we will examine the relationship between personality traits, social attitudes and the Ethos of conflict, on one hand, and the evaluation to political parties, on the other. After that, we will analyze to what extent the used constructs can predict such party evaluation, and identify specific predictors that mostly contribute to the understanding of the criteria.

Sample. The research involved 253 participants of Serbian nationality. The overall mean age of respondents was 39.2 years (SD=14.9). The sample consisted of 66.4% female respondents. The sample included students of psychology and pedagogy from the University of Belgrade (Central Serbia): and Kosovska Mitrovica (North Kosovo), as well as their parents. The number of the students-participants was 102 (65% females, average age was 23.14 years). There were 151 parents included in the study (31% females, average age of the parents sample was 50.12 years). Also, there were 140 (55.3%) participants from central Serbia and 113 (44.7%) from northern Kosovo. Participants were included on a voluntary basis and completed the questionnaires in the middle of 2010.

Measures and instruments. Questionnaire 36QB6 was used for examination of participants' personality structure (Saucier, 2009). This instrument examines six lexical factors that were replicated in the latest emic studies of personality:

1. Extraversion ($\alpha=0.75$). Item example: "I usually enjoy being with people."
2. Resilience (a factor that corresponds to the opposite pole of Neuroticism: $\alpha=0.67$). Item example: "I recover quickly from stress and illness."
3. Originality / Talent (a factor that fits the Openness from the model of the Big Five: $\alpha=0.54$). Item example: "I have a rich vocabulary."
4. Agreeableness ($\alpha=0.68$). Item example: "I am usually a patient person."
5. Conscientiousness ($\alpha=0.78$). Item example: "I like to plan ahead."
6. Honesty ($\alpha=0.71$). Item example: "I am not good at deceiving people."

The questionnaire consists of thirty-six items divided in six subscales which measure personality traits.

For examination of social attitudes, we used a shortened version of the questionnaire which was designed by Saucier (Saucier 2000)¹. However, scores on scales were calculated

¹ Instruments used to measure personality traits and social attitudes can be found on this web page: <http://pages.uoregon.edu/gsaucier/gsau4.html>

according to the factor structure of this instrument in the Serbian sample (Petrović & Međedović, 2011). This modified questionnaire measures four social attitudes, as follows:

1. Religiosity ($\alpha=0.73$). Item example: *“Religion should play the most important role in civil affairs.”*
2. Hedonism ($\alpha=0.66$). Item example: *“The pleasures of the senses are the highest good.”*
3. Rational spirituality ($\alpha=0.61$). Item example: *“Enlightenment can be gained through meditation, self-contemplation, and intuition.”*
4. National adherence ($\alpha=0.69$). Item example: *“I love and am devoted to my country.”*

The Religiosity factor is composed of six items, Hedonism has five, Rational spirituality eight and National adherence is measured with four items.

For measuring societal beliefs that arise during the violent conflict, we used a questionnaire with 48 items developed by Bar-Tal (Bar-Tal et al., 2012). It contains eight subscales, each of which consists of six items. The instrument was developed in order to examine Israeli-Palestinian conflict, so we adapted it to the context of the situation that exists in Kosovo. The scales are:

1. Justification of goals ($\alpha=0.68$). Item example: *“The exclusive right of Kosovo Serbs to land stems from it being their historical homeland.”*
2. Security ($\alpha=0.71$). Item example: *“Enforcing military actions is the most efficient means to eliminate threats to the country’s security.”*
3. Delegitimization ($\alpha=0.73$). Item example: *“Albanians in Kosovo have always been characterized by untrustworthiness.”*
4. Positive collective self-view ($\alpha=0.68$). Item example: *“Serbs have always been known for their wisdom.”*
5. Victimhood ($\alpha=0.70$). Item example: *“During the conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, Serbs were usually the victims of Albanian aggression.”*
6. Patriotism ($\alpha=0.74$). Item example: *“Fostering a feeling of loyalty to one’s homeland should be one of the most important goals of the educational system.”*

Subscales that examine beliefs about Unity and Peace showed low coefficients of reliability (below 0.60) and they are not used in the analysis.

All scales used the Likert’s system of response to the items. After reading the items, the participants circled the answers from 1 to 5 where 1 mean “completely disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”.

In order to measure attitudes towards the parties, we asked the respondents the following question: “How do you assess the general work of the following political parties?” Previous research showed that this single question is a valid measure of party evaluation (Kuzmanović & Petrović, 2010). Participants gave answers on the Likert’s scale where 1 was marked as “very poor” and 5 as “very good”. The study examined attitudes toward eight political parties: SRP, DPS, LDP, NS, DP, SPS, SPP and G17 +.

Results

Latent structure of political party evaluation

The participants were asked to assess general work of eight political parties in Serbia and their assessments were analyzed using principal components analysis (PCA). The initial solution extracted two components that explained 56.37% of the total variance of the answers. In order to increase specificity and facilitate component interpretation, an oblique rotation was performed, using the promax algorithm. Eigen value for the first component is 2.47 (with 30.86% of original

item variance explained) and for the second component is 2.04 (25.51% of variance explained). The Promax rotated latent components are shown in Figure 1.

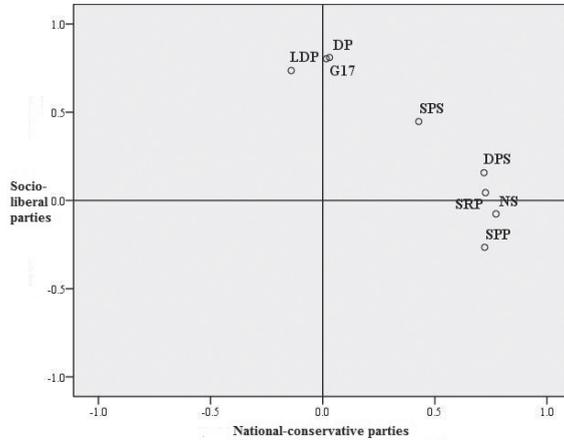


Figure 1. *Extracted components in rotated space*

Note: SRP – the Serbian Radical Party, DPS – the Democratic Party of Serbia, LDP – Liberal Democratic Party, NS – New Serbia, DP – Democratic Party, SPS – the Socialist Party of Serbia, SPP – the Serbian Progressive Party, G17 – the G17 +

The first extracted component is constituted of following parties: NS (with loading of 0.77), SPP (0.73), SRP (0.72) and DPS (0.72), with common explicitly postulated political goals related primarily to preserving the territorial integrity of Serbia and its cultural identity, including obtaining Kosovo as a part of Serbia. On the other hand, parties that constitute the second component: DP (0.81), G17+ (0.80) and LDP (0.74) explicitly advocate, besides preserving the territorial integrity (except LDP), prompt accession of Serbia to the European Union and are generally more open to liberal values. Only the SPS has reached saturation in both factors (0.43 and 0.45, respectively). According to the perception of respondents, this party is actually located between these two dominant components. So, these two factors roughly indicate to conservative and liberal political ideologies (Jost, 2006) and they correlate negatively ($r=-0.28$). More important, these results are in accordance with the previous analysis of party ideologies in Serbia (Stojiljkovic, 2011). Following the latter study, we labeled the first component as National-conservative parties and the second as Socio-liberal parties. The participants' scores on extracted components were kept via regression method and used in further analyses.

Relationships of party evaluation components with personality traits, social attitudes and societal beliefs

We conducted a study of bivariate correlations between the personality traits, social attitudes, societal beliefs and party evaluation components, extracted from the analysis of principal components. Pearson's linear correlation coefficient was calculated as a measure of correlation.

Table 1. *Correlations of examined variables*

	R	E	O	A	C	H	Rel	Hed	Rat	Nat	JUST	SEC	DEL	PAT	SELF	VIC
E																
O	-.17**															
A	-.15**	.37**														
C	-.31**	.11	.15*													
H	-.11	-.02	-.03	.06												
Rel	-.03	-.13*	-.27**	.06	.30**											
Hed	.12	.06	.07	.04	.06	.01										
Rat	-.02	-.11	-.08	-.18**	.11	-.12	-.11									
Nat	.08	-.04	.11	-.06	.03	-.12	.15	.12								
JUST	-.07	-.09	.01	.03	.21**	.07	.31**	.13	.11							
SEC	.04	.10	.01	-.06	.16**	.14*	.31**	.18**	.11	.43**						
DEL	-.03	.05	-.02	-.14	-.02	-.05	.24**	.14*	.09	.28**	.38**					
PAT	.03	-.11	-.04	-.11	.13*	.07	.27**	.17**	-.05	.36**	.65**	.36**				
SELF	.01	-.10	-.06	-.10	-.03	-.04	.27**	.20**	.16*	.57**	.46**	.45**	.47**			
VIC	-.06	-.02	-.01	-.02	.14*	.11	.38**	.18**	.02	.45**	.63**	.38**	.65**	.52**		
Nat-Con	.04	-.05	-.02	-.06	.08	.04	.21**	.19**	-.06	.35**	.56**	.34**	.68**	.46**	.63**	
Soc-Lib	-.05	.03	.08	-.07	-.01	-.07	.24**	.28**	.09	.39**	.42**	.28**	.37**	.44**	.46**	.33**
	-.01	.02	.06	.04	.11	.17**	-.04	.13*	-.01	-.04	-.28**	-.07	-.26**	-.28**	-.24**	-.25**

Note: All statistically significant correlations at the level of $p < 0.05$ are marked with *. Correlations marked with ** are significant at the level of $p < 0.01$. R – Resilience; E – Extraversion; O – Originality; A – Agreeableness; C – Conscientiousness; H – Honesty; Rel – Religiosity; Hed – Hedonism; Rat – Rational Spirituality; Nat – National adherence; JUST – Justness of goals; SEC – Security; DEL – Delegitimization; PAT – Patriotism; SELF – Positive collective self-view; VIC – Victimhood; Nat-Con – National-conservative parties; Soc-Lib – Socio-liberal parties

As it is shown in Table 1, Honesty is the only personality factor that is significantly associated with the components of party evaluation; precisely it is positively correlated with the component of Socio-liberal parties. From the space of basic social attitudes, Religion and National adherence positively correlate with National-conservative parties, while Hedonism is positively associated with both party components. However, societal belief themes that form the Ethos of conflict have a systematic relationship with both components of party evaluation – positive with National-conservative and negative with Socio-liberal parties. Relationships between societal beliefs and party evaluation are not only more numerous compared to the other tested constructs, but also higher in intensity. Finally, correlations of Ethos of conflict with National-conservative parties are higher than those with Socio-liberal parties. No systematic correlations between personality traits and other variables have been found. Only very low intensity correlations of Conscientiousness with National adherence and three societal beliefs were noticed. Also, Agreeableness shows low negative correlation with Hedonism and Beliefs about safety. However, the relationship between basic social attitudes and societal beliefs are numerous and systematic, as shown in Table 1. Religiosity, Hedonism and National adherence correlate positively with all the examined societal beliefs. In addition, all correlations within the Ethos of conflict are positive and significant.

Prediction of political party evaluation

The main goal of this research is to compare predictive abilities of personality, attitudes and the Ethos of conflict, in prediction of evaluation toward Serbian political parties. In order to determine the ability of the studied constructs to predict evaluation of the participants towards the two components obtained by PCA, a series of multiple regression analyses with National-conservative and Socio-liberal parties as criteria variables was carried out. Hierarchical multiple regression is used to determine not only the percentage of variation of party evaluation explained by the predictors set, but also whether the variables added at different stages of the analysis make a contribution above and beyond predictors entered at the previous levels of the analysis.

Table 2. *Characteristics of the models established in hierarchical linear regressions*

Criteria	Predictors	R	R ²	R ² Change	F Change
National-conservative parties	Personality	.13	.02	.02	.62
	Social attitudes	.49	.24	.23	15.66**
	Ethos of conflict	.57	.32	.09	4.47**
Socio-liberal parties	Personality	.21	.04	.04	1.61
	Social attitudes	.29	.08	.04	2.20
	Ethos of conflict	.49	.24	.16	7.01**

Note: R: a multiple correlation coefficient, R²: a coefficient of determination, R² Change: a change of the coefficient of determination created by adding a set of predictors, F Change: F-ratio changes caused by adding a set of predictors, statistical significance of F ratio changes: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01.

Personality traits were entered in the first level of regression, basic social attitudes in the second and societal beliefs that form the Ethos of conflict

in the third level of regression (Table 2). When it comes to predicting the National-conservative party evaluation, there is small contribution of personality traits. The percentage of explained variance of criteria is very low (2%) and statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$). When social attitudes are added to the model, the percentage of explained variance rises to 24% and changes of F ratio in ANOVA model are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). Finally, the best prediction is provided by the Ethos of conflict (32%) and its increment in prediction is significant also (the significance of F ratio change is $p < 0.01$). The situation is somewhat different when we take the Socio-liberal parties as a criterion. Personality traits explain larger part of the variance of this ideological belief (4%) than they did as predictors of National-conservative parties, but it is still insufficient for the model to be statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). When we add social attitudes, the understanding of the criteria is increased almost twice (8%), but still the change of F ratio is too small to conclude that social attitudes help understand the criteria significantly more than personality traits ($p > 0.05$). Again, the Ethos of conflict by itself shows to be the best predictor in this model: the proportion of explained variance is 24%, with a significance of the change of F ratio: $p < 0.01$. The total percentage of the variance explained by predictors is higher for the National-conservative than for the Socio-liberal parties.

The characteristics of the predictors in linear regression models are shown in Table 3. Only the final stage of the regression is presented.

Table 3. *Predictors of models obtained by linear regression analysis*

	National-conservative parties			Socio-liberal parties		
	B	St.E	β	B	St.E	β
Resilience	-.05	.08	-.04	.17	0.10	.12
Extraversion	.01	.11	.06	.08	0.12	.05
Originality	.13	.14	.06	.31	0.16	.14*
Agreeableness	-.04	.09	-.03	.08	0.10	.05
Conscientiousness	-.20	.12	-.10	-.02	0.14	-.01
Honesty	.06	.09	.05	.41	0.10	.28**
Religiosity	.06	.08	.04	.08	0.01	.06
Hedonism	.26	.08	.21**	.34	0.09	.25**
Rational Spirituality	-.06	.13	-.03	-.07	0.15	-.03
National adherence	.24	.12	.15	.24	0.14	.14
Justness of goals	.19	.11	.09	-.36	0.13	-.28**
Security	-.01	.10	-.00	.20	0.12	.13
Delegitimization	.05	.13	.07	-.02	0.14	-.02
Patriotism	.24	.12	.17*	-.35	0.14	-.24**
Positive collective self-view	.34	.12	.27**	-.07	0.13	-.05
Victimhood	-.14	.13	-.10	-.20	0.15	-.12

Note: B: an unstandardized coefficient; St.E: standard error of measurement, β: a standardized regression coefficient, *: significance of t-ratio $p < 0.05$, **: significance of t-ratio $p < 0.01$.

When National-conservative parties are used as a criterion, only three predictors make an independent contribution to explaining the variance of the criterion. By analyzing standardized regression coefficients, we can see that Positive collective self-view of the respondents (in other words, a positive attitude

about the Serbian people and their characteristics) makes the largest contribution to the prediction ($\beta = 0.27$). The contribution of Patriotism is $\beta = 0.17$. These two predictors are societal beliefs belonging to the Ethos of conflict. Hedonism joins them from a set of social attitudes ($\beta = 0.21$).

Patriotism is once again a significant predictor in the model that explains evaluation toward Socio-liberal parties ($\beta = -0.24$). Negative β coefficient tells us that low expression of this belief is associated with evaluation to the Socio-liberal parties. There is a similar situation concerning another significant predictor of the Ethos of conflict: Justness of goals ($\beta = -0.28$). As in the previous model, the only social attitude that contributes to prediction significantly is Hedonism ($\beta = 0.25$). Additionally, two personality traits are included as significant predictors in this model: Honesty ($\beta = 0.28$) and Originality ($\beta = 0.14$).

DISCUSSION

PCA extracted two latent components, revealing the latent structure of the space of political party evaluations. Previous study (Stojiljkovic, 2011) qualified DPS, NS and SPP as conservative and SRP as nationalistic party. Those parties constitute the first principal component extracted in present study, which is the reason for labeling it as *National-conservative parties*. Also, G17+ and LDP are previously characterized as liberal and DS as socio liberal party. These parties, together with SPS are loaded on the second latent component in present research and it is labeled *Socio-liberal parties*. These data seem to correspond to general ideological orientation which can be found in other research (Jost, 2006) and represents a partial empirical confirmation of party ideologies analysis in Serbia (Stojiljkovic, 2011). The correlation between these two components is negative as expected, but it is of small intensity. This indicates that there were individuals in our sample that endorse or are against both of the ideologies represented by the two isolated components. This could be explained by the large disappointment of people in Serbia with the work of the political parties in general, and this is additionally manifested through a rising absence from parliamentary elections (Spasic, 2008). So, the reason for the small intensity of correlation between latent components of party evaluations could be dissatisfaction of participants with both Socio-liberal and National-conservative parties.

Bivariate correlations between the predictor variables and components of party evaluation offer the first answer to the key objectives of this research. Personality traits are not significantly associated with ideological orientation, all but Honesty factor that positively, although low, correlates with evaluation toward Socio-liberal parties. These data did not confirm some of the findings obtained in the previous studies in which negative correlation appeared between Openness and Agreeableness with conservative beliefs (Riemann, Grubich, Hempel, Mergl, & Richter, 1992) and positive correlation with liberal attitudes (Barbaranelli et al., 2007; Schoen & Schumann, 2007). Lack of congruence with the previous data could be due to the fact that we measured evaluation

toward concrete political parties while in the former research participants were asked if they supported liberal or conservative political option. So, the different operationalization of criteria was used in the present study. The previous studies also detected positive correlation between Conscientiousness with conservatism and negative with liberal views. Even though there was no direct connection between Conscientiousness with the party evaluations, it should be noticed that it is positively correlated both with National adherence and with three societal beliefs from space of the Ethos of conflict. On the other hand, positive correlation between the factor of Honesty and liberal views (Chirumbolo & Leone, 2010) is replicated in this research. As one of the most important characteristics that describe the domain of Honesty is sense of fair play (Lee & Ashton, 2004), it can be assumed that people with higher scores concerning this personality trait have positive attitudes towards the principles of social equality, which are an expression of liberal ideology. This hypothesis is confirmed by the data about the positive relationship between fairness and values of Universalism and Mercy (Lee, Ashton, Pozzobon, Visser, Bourdage, & Ogunfowora, 2009), and it seems that it is also plausible for explaining the connection between Honesty and evaluation towards Socio-liberal parties, obtained in this research.

The space of social attitudes is much more connected with party evaluations. This primarily refers to the National-conservative parties, whose evaluation is positively associated with Religiosity, Hedonism and National adherence of the participants. In the earlier studies it was also found that traditionally-oriented religiosity positively correlates with measures of conservatism, such as traditionalism or collectivism, however, such links are either absent, or negative when it comes to the forms of personal or subjective spirituality (Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006). Relations between National adherence and National-conservative parties are also not surprising because nationalistic views are one of the indicators of conservatism in the broader sense (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). However, what is of potential importance is the connection between the Hedonistic view of life with both Socio-liberal and National-conservative parties (Table 2), although the relationship is closer when it comes to the second one. This is congruent with the findings that the original Beta factor, from which Hedonism is mostly derived, achieves significant positive correlations with measures of Social Dominance Orientation (Saucier, 2000). But our data suggest that this attitude is connected with political evaluation in general, and it seems that voters believe that the important part of the politics is orientation towards self-interest and not paying attention to the needs and views of others.

However, as it is clearly shown in Table 1, the societal beliefs forming the Ethos of conflict have the largest ability to discriminate these two components of party evaluation. Connections are very clear and unambiguous: all six examined societal beliefs correlate positively with National-conservative party evaluation while five of six beliefs correlate negatively with Socio-liberal parties. Also, we can conclude that societal beliefs are to a greater extent associated with conservative ideology than with the liberal one. The systematic connection between the Ethos of conflict and party evaluation implies that the Kosovo issue

is the most important question when it comes to the evaluation of the work of political parties in Serbia, in the specific set of predictors that were analyzed in this research. The data presented in Table 2 support this finding with a piece of important additional information: societal beliefs of the Ethos of conflict do not only largely contribute to the understanding of party evaluation, but they also explain part of its variance, which personality traits and basic social attitudes cannot. The relative contribution of the Ethos of conflict to prediction is still lower when it comes to National-conservative parties, which may seem contradictory if we look at the data presented in Table 1, but a more precise analysis tells us that in fact societal beliefs attain higher bivariate association with National-conservative parties, as well as the basic social attitudes. It is obvious that social attitudes and societal beliefs correlate with each other, and it is due to the impact of this collinearity that the relative contribution of the Ethos of conflict to the prediction of National-conservative parties is lesser than to the Socio-liberal parties. Also, other empirical findings of this study present additional confirmation of this point. Table 2 shows that the contribution of basic social attitudes to the prediction of the evaluation to National-conservative parties is statistically significant when added to personality traits and that they explain about 22% of the variance of the criteria above personality traits. However, societal beliefs are able to explain an additional 9% of variance that attitudes cannot. The contribution of personality traits and social attitudes to the prediction of the Socio-liberal party evaluation is not statistically significant. The Ethos of conflict, however, is once again clearly the best predictor. Its contribution to the prediction is statistically significant, and it explains additional 24% of the variance over and above personality traits and attitudes.

Further analysis aimed to find the best specific predictors of all the criterion measures (Table 3). As for the National-conservative parties, once again none of the personality traits participated in the prediction significantly. Among attitudes, Hedonism was a statistically significant predictor. In this set of the predictors, National adherence also has high β coefficient, but it is not statistically significant. It seems that this is a consequence of correlation between National adherence and Patriotism ($r = 0.57$, as shown in Table 1). These measures obviously have a partly common object of measurement, but it is Patriotism as part of the Ethos of conflict that has independent ability to predict evaluation towards National-conservative parties. High opinion of one social group, its positive attribution, particularly in relation to the Kosovo Albanians, is also a significant predictor, conceptualized as a Positive collective self-view, which is the best predictor of all in the set.

As the previous analyses implicated, personality traits are involved in prediction of Socio-liberal parties. Beside Honesty, which showed bivariate correlation with these parties, a significant predictor was Originality and this is consistent with the results obtained in the earlier studies (Barbaranelli et al., 2007; Schoen & Schumann, 2007). It should be noted that Originality did not correlate with this component of party evaluation significantly, but it still has an independent contribution to the prediction. A multivariate analysis that controls the variation of other variables in the model (like linear regression does) was

needed to observe a relation between Originality and National-conservative parties. This connection is probably suppressed by some other variable so it could not be detected by bivariate analysis. Hedonism is again a significant predictor from the space of social attitudes.

As for Socio-liberal parties, variables of the Ethos of conflict largely contribute to their explanation. The liberal attitudes of the respondents are reflected in the perception that Serbs do not have the exclusive right to the land of Kosovo, and that cultural and historical circumstances are not only on the Serbian side when the conflict about Kosovo is in question. These attitudes are reflected in Justness of goals beliefs which contribute to the prediction with negative β weight. It is a similar case with Patriotism. Negative β indicates that respondents who incline to this ideological conception do not consider that the patriotic values and beliefs are of the utmost importance when it comes to their relationship with the state and its politics. Also, low patriotic feelings and thoughts are involved in explaining evaluation toward Socio-liberal parties.

Possible shortage of this study is operationalization of the evaluation of political parties that was based on one general question about the work of each political party. Participants' perception of different aspects of parties' work, including their view towards the Kosovo issue, could be important in this context and should be addressed in future research. Also, it would be very important to explore not only party evaluation and affiliation, but concrete political behavior: voting or political activism. Finally, relevant moderators or mediators between the dispositions and outcomes should be analyzed and empirically evaluated. Future studies should include these measures in the research design.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As it has already been mentioned, certain correlation between personality traits and party evaluations, and the ability of Originality and Honesty to predict Socio-liberal evaluation are expected and also observed in the previous studies. There is a similar situation concerning positive correlation between Nationalism and Religiosity on the one hand, and conservative political evaluation on the other. Important finding is the participation of Hedonism as a predictor of party evaluation, for both Socio-liberal and National-conservative parties. This attitude is composed of the items that describe the orientation toward sensual pleasure (after which it was named), and attitudes that describe the position "everyone for himself/herself": paying attention only to one's own goals and denying the importance of the interests of others. We presume that these latter attitudes are more important for the interpretation of correlation between Hedonism and party evaluation. During the period of great political changes in Serbia in the last 20 years, and with a still very tense situation on the political scene that is reflected in a tough fight between the ruling and opposition parties, it seems that citizens have created the view that the possibility of a compromise between the opposed political parties is not probable. Therefore, orientation exclusively towards their own interests has become something that Serbian citizens associate with

political activities in general. Confirmation of this interpretation of Hedonism can be found in negative correlation between Hedonism and Agreeableness.

However, the most important findings obtained in this study are certainly connections between the Ethos of conflict and evaluation towards political parties, and the ability of certain societal beliefs to predict it. Even though the Ethos of conflict is measured by specific beliefs about the conflict in Kosovo, which occurred in a specific context in Serbia, these data raise serious questions about the relationship between groups in conflict and politics. This relationship should be further explored from the perspective of the parties and their explicit attitudes toward the conflict, as a means of achieving political goals. The data from this study can tell us something about the very societal belief themes, at least concerning the participants from Serbia. On the basis of systematic positive correlations within the Ethos of conflict, we can say that they create a homogeneous, one-dimensional space of beliefs about the social group of people with whom there is long-lasting conflict. Furthermore, they are associated with high religiosity of the group members, orientation to their needs and not recognizing the needs of others, as well as obvious commitment to the nation. It is clear that this set of beliefs holds tension and hostility towards the Kosovo Albanians, although the armed conflict was ended ten years ago. It is reflected behaviorally in sporadic conflicts between the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo, but also in demonstrations in Serbia related to the Kosovo issue, which were frequent in last ten years, and several times these were even violent. Correlations between the Ethos of conflict and evaluation toward National-conservative parties tell us that this is a political option which people with articulated societal beliefs see as an appropriate one in conducting more aggressive politics towards the Kosovo issue. This politics would not compromise with the Albanian side, at least when it comes to the issue of sovereignty over the territory. Such attitudes are certainly an obstacle to the reconciliation between the Serbs and Kosovo Albanians. On the other hand, we can conclude that participants who subscribe to Socio-liberal political opinion do not stress societal beliefs comprising the Ethos of conflict, towards the Kosovo Albanians. Should this be a message to the political parties to continue or even intensify the negotiations and dialogue with the Kosovo Albanians? If at least a certain number of citizens believe that our country should work on the establishment of the relations with the Albanians in Kosovo, it can be a good basis to begin the reconciliation process at different levels, including political, diplomatic and economic relations.

Acknowledgements

Authors would like to express their gratitude to prof Daniel Bar-Tal, from School of Education, Tel Aviv University, as well as Branislava Gemovic, from Center for Multidisciplinary Research, Institute for Nuclear Sciences Vinča, Belgrade University, on very useful comments and suggestions.

Funding

This work was supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Republic of Serbia [grant number 47011].

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