

Securitization of LGBTIQ Minorities in Serbian Far-right Discourses: A Post-structuralist Perspective

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Abstract¹

This article analyses the securitization of LGBTIQ population in the narratives of Serbian far-right organizations, i.e. the discursive construction of the LGBTIQ minorities as a threat. The analysis relies on securitization theory in order to demonstrate how the issue of gay rights is taken beyond ‘normal politics’ and constructed as a security issue. By drawing upon post-structuralist reading of securitization theory, this article argues that the narratives of Serbian far-right groups acquire legitimacy due to their coherence with the mainstream discourses on homosexuality and LGBTIQ rights. Moreover, it argues that through the securitization of sexual minorities in the far-right discourses, the Serbian national identity is being re-defined and strengthened. This article uses discourse analysis as main method. The sources of data include press statements and other media pieces, reports by civil society organizations and government institutions, public opinion surveys and websites of the far-right groups. The analysis is focused on the period from the adoption of the Anti-discrimination Law in 2009 onwards, as the period in which the issue of LGBTIQ rights has become increasingly topical in the Serbian public sphere.

Keywords: LGBTIQ, Serbia, securitization, far-right, extremism, discourse.

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Introduction

Over the past decade Serbia has established a solid legal framework for the protection of human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and questioning (hereinafter: LGBTIQ²) persons. Besides the general ban on discrimination contained in the Article 21 of the Serbian Constitution, a series of laws, including the comprehensive Anti-discrimination Law adopted in 2009, contain provisions that explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity. In spite of the sound normative framework (European Commission, 2014: 13; Gay Straight Alliance [hereinafter: GSA] 2013: 10), LGBTIQ population in Serbia is among the most marginalized and vulnerable groups (GSA, 2013; Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 2014: 451-452; Commissioner for Protection of Equality [hereinafter: CPE], 2014: 85). The most vocal opponents of gay rights are Serbian far-right groups and organizations which, although institutionally marginal, manage to get their voices heard, particularly when it comes to the LGBTIQ issues. Serbian right-wing extremists are engaged not only in the violent attacks and direct threats to the LGBTIQ population, but also in a discursive process of radical othering of the sexual minorities and portraying the LGBTIQ identities as a threat to the Serbian national Self. This discursive construction of a group or a phenomenon as a security threat is called securitization.

The analysis of securitization processes will contribute to understanding of the gap between norms and practices of LGBTIQ rights in Serbia, and the importance of this article stems from this contribution. The article focuses on the securitization moves by the extreme nationalists, and seeks to explain how the extremists' narratives acquire legitimacy and become acceptable for a significant audience or, in other words, how the extreme is getting mainstreamed. The main argument that I am developing is that the audience acceptance of the far-right organizations' narratives is achieved due to their compatibility with the mainstream discourses in which nationalism, gender inequality and homophobia are already installed as dominant norms. I am also arguing that the securitization of sexual minorities by the extreme nationalists contributes to the re-shaping and strengthening of the Serbian national identity through the establishment of a binary opposition between the referent object of securitization (Serbian nation) and the threat (LGBTIQ population).

In this article, I am using a post-structuralist reading of securitization theory as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the Serbian far-right discourses related to homosexuality and LGBTIQ rights. This particular reading of the securitization theory supports the premise that identities and power positions are not stable and extra-discursively determined, but changeable and continually (re)produced through the discourse. The post-structuralist approach has been chosen in order to demonstrate that success of securitization does not depend on positional power of a securitizing actor - in this case Serbian far-right groups - but, on the contrary, that

² The abbreviation LGBTIQ signifies a heterogeneous social group composed of a variety of sexual identities. Without intention to reduce the LGBTIQ population to a single identity, or to represent them as a unified group, this article will use the abbreviation LGBTIQ to signify all the sexual identities that differ from heterosexuality, the dominant sexual norm in Serbian society.

securitization itself could empower certain actors and their agendas. The empirical part of this article is based on discourse analysis. Post-structuralist approach and its central proposition that social reality does not exist independently from our ideas and representations of this reality, renders discourse analysis not only desirable but necessary (Wilhelmsen, 2013: 58). The sources of data in this article include press statements and other media pieces, reports by civil society organizations and government institutions, public opinion surveys and websites of the far-right groups. The empirical analysis encompasses the period since 2009, the year in which the Serbian Parliament adopted the Anti-discrimination Law and the LGBTIQ community, encouraged by the new Law, started with the attempts to organize Pride Parades.³ As a consequence, the issue of homosexuality and LGBTIQ rights became increasingly topical in the nationalist discourse.

Post-structuralist Reading of Securitization Theory as a Framework for Analysis

Unlike traditional approaches to the concept of security that treat security as an objectively given reality existing prior to language, securitization theory places emphasis on the processes of discursive construction of security, i.e. the ways security is spoken about. While the former are primarily concerned with how to maximize security/eliminate insecurity, the latter dismisses the binary opposition security/insecurity and focuses on how an issue becomes a security issue (Wæver 1995). Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, the main architects of securitization theory and central figures of the Copenhagen School of security studies, define securitization as a 'discursive process through which an intersubjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat' (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 491). This process implies that a securitizing actor articulates an issue as an existential security threat to a referent object, and this articulation is accepted by the audience (Buzan et al. 1998: 35-36). Through a speech act, the issue at stake is being moved from the domain of politics governed by established rules and taken to the security realm thus allowing for extraordinary measures (Ibid: 23-24).

³ Since 2009, the Belgrade Pride was held only twice, in 2010 and 2014, although it was announced every year. The other four attempts of the LGBTIQ community in Serbia to hold the Pride Parade ended with Government bans. All four times the Government representatives cited security reasons, i.e. the threats by the far-right organizations, as the reason for banning the Pride Parade. Those bans pointed to the critical lack of will and/or interest of the Serbian Governments to deal with the right wing extremism.

Securitization Process: Key Components

Taking the stance that no subject or object is stable, finished and pre-determined in terms of identity and power position, post-structuralist approach to securitization theory places emphasis on discursivity, intersubjectivity/intertextuality and changeability of structures. In other words, instead of focusing on actors and objects of securitization, post-structuralist approach focuses on representations, processes and interactions/inter-relations between texts. Therefore, I chose to focus on four components of the securitization process that are suggested and taken from Julie Wilhelmsen (2013), however, adapted to fit the scope and case study presented in this article. These four components are: discursive context, securitizing narrative, legitimation process, and re-production of the referent object.

Discursive context: Michel Foucault, who has played the central role in the development of discourse analysis, sees discourses as specific regimes of knowledge consisting of series of statements that impose rules on what gives meaning (Foucault, 1972). Building upon Michael Foucault's conceptualization of discourse, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) developed a theory which aims at understanding of the social world as fully discursive. For Laclau and Mouffe, there is no distinction between discourse and material world, discourses *are* material and, therefore, all social phenomena could be analysed using the concept of discourse (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 34-36). Unlike Foucault, who strived to identify only one knowledge regime for each historical period, Laclau and Mouffe are building a more conflictual picture in which different and often antagonistic discourses exist simultaneously and struggle over the creation of meaning (Ibid: 13). Drawing upon Laclau's and Mouffe's concept of discourse, this article will examine the Serbian context, more specifically, the dominant discourse on gender and LGBTIQ rights. It will seek to identify a series of signifiers - norms, political and everyday practices, statements by public figures, as well as media representations - that taken together represent a specific knowledge regime on gender and sexual difference.

Securitizing narrative: Talking about securitization as a speech act, Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998: 33) point out certain criteria that securitizing narrative has to fulfil in order for securitization to be successful. They argue that such a narrative has to follow the 'general grammar of security', i.e. to signify existential threat, point of no return and possible way out. Moreover, securitizing narrative has to include the 'dialects' of specific domains in which securitization occurs (Ibid). For example, as Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde suggest, in the societal sector securitizing narratives often refer to identity (See also: McSweeney, 1996). Post-structuralists take stance that identity is always relational, in the sense it is being constructed in relation to what it is not, i.e. in relation to the Other that is substantially different (Barth, 1969; Connolly, 1991; Hansen, 2006). Laclau and Mouffe analysed the process of identity formation through a pair of concepts, namely 'the logic of equivalence' and 'the logic of difference' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 44-45). These concepts suggest that identities are constructed along two lines; the series of signs are interlinked in the way they constitute relation of sameness and, at the same time, they are juxtaposed to another series of sign thus constituting the relation of difference. Lene Hansen (2006: 41-45) refers to this process as to the process of linking and differentiation. After

examination of a broader discursive context in Serbia, this article will analyse the securitizing narratives of far-right organizations – the security grammar of these narratives, as well as the ways in which they construct LGBTIQ identities as opposed to the Serbian national identity.

Legitimation process: Securitization, as an intersubjective process, will be successful if the audience, by accepting a specific articulation of a threat, gives legitimacy to the employment of such measures that otherwise would not be legitimate. Since the post-structuralist reading of securitization theory suggests that neither the securitizing actor, the audience nor the referent object are given nor stable entities, the focus of this analysis will be on the relationship between discursive context and the securitizing narrative. In line with this approach, Wæver (2002: 29) points out: ‘Subjects, objects and concepts cannot be seen as existing independent of discourse. Certain categories and arguments that are powerful in one period or at one place can sound non-sensible or absurd at others.’ Within specific terrain of securitization theory, this translates as follows: no securitization attempt, as an individual statement/utterance, takes place nor can produce effects independently of a broader discursive context. Drawing upon Wæver conceptualization, this paper will offer an understanding of how the discursive context in Serbia enables securitization of the LGBTIQ population by far-right actors.

Re-production of the referent object: In order to declare something a threat, the securitizing actor inevitably has to declare what is being threatened, namely the referent object. Post-structuralist reading of securitization theory suggests that all objects of our knowledge are constantly being re-produced through various discourses, thus the referent object in a securitization process is not only being *described* as something that deserves protection, but is also being *re-defined* and *re-evaluated* (Wilhelmsen, 2013:40-41). Through securitization, the referent object acquires new meaning in juxtaposition to the existential threat (Ibid). According to Derrida (cited in Wilhelmsen, 2013:41), such binary oppositions are never neutral in terms of power – one element is privileged and assumes a role of dominance over the other. Therefore, the referent object, as the privileged element in the binary opposition, is being re-produced in such a way that it is being strengthened and empowered. In that sense, I will seek to analyse how the Serbian national identity, as the referent object of the far-right securitization moves, acquires new qualities and a new strength due to the processes of securitization.

Nationalism, Gender and Homosexuality – Theoretical Assumptions

Before starting the empirical analysis of securitization components, it would be useful to outline the theoretical assumptions that helped me understand the dominant discourse on LGBTIQ issues in Serbia, characterized by interplay of nationalism, patriarchy and homophobia. Among scholars exploring the relationship between gender and nationalism it is widely accepted that nationalist discourse promotes women as mothers, wives, and caretakers responsible for the biological reproduction of the nation, while depriving them of political subjectivity. (Papić, 1994; Bracewell,

1996; Yuval-Davis, 1998). Talking about the transition from 'state socialism' to 'state nationalism' in Serbia, Zarana Papić (1994: 13) points out:

[..] One of the most pertinent features of all these new post-Communist democracies is the fact that they are male dominated, overtly patriarchal, traditional, and conservative regarding the position of women, their social role and significance. In the Eastern former socialist countries the new patriarchy is now the prevailing social reality for women, as well as for men.

Papić adds that during the period of Yugoslav socialism⁴ women's legal rights were more progressive and emancipatory than the actual reality of women's lives that were still governed by patriarchal rules. However, nationalism sanctioned gender inequality and formalised the confinement of women to the private domain (Ibid).

With regards to the construction of sexuality and sexual orientation in nationalist discourse, it is important to take into consideration the work of George Mosse who analysed the relationship between nationalism and sexuality in the bourgeois societies of the 19th and the first half of 20th century. Mosse (1985) introduced the concept of 'bourgeois respectability', which signifies a set of norms, morals, manners and sexual attitudes that represent normality. Nationalism, he argues, played the crucial role in spreading respectability to all classes of the society (Ibid: 9). One of the key signifiers of the nationalist/respectability discourse was the ideal of manliness, that reinforced the division between gender roles and also served as a powerful symbol of the nation's spiritual and material vitality (Ibid: 23-24). Most importantly, manliness, as a stereotype, needed a counter-type – an image against which it could define itself (Mosse, 1996). The list of those remaining outside the notion of manliness was rather long and heterogeneous, and it included, among others, homosexuals (Ibid). In the nationalist discourse, those who failed to attain the qualities of manliness were not seen as deserving pity or compassion, but, on the contrary, they were regarded as the enemies of nation, and the ones representing an active threat to the normative order of the society (Ibid: 63).

The alignment between nationalism and masculinity is not imminent only to the bourgeois societies that Mosse's work was concerned with. Wendy Bracewell (2000) points out that in the post-communist Serbia the re-emergence of nationalism was fuelled by an appealing narrative that explicitly linked national honour with the ideal of manliness. In the middle of social and economic crisis, Bracewell argues, the nationalist programme promoted the re-building of national dignity through the enforcement of strict division between genders and a particular type of manliness – militaristic, tough and heterosexual (Ibid: 569-570). Further, Jessica Greenberg (2006) analyses the antagonism between two forms of citizenships in post-Milošević Serbia:

⁴ Yugoslav socialism departed in many ways from the totalitarian Stalinist-Bolshevik ideology and the practice of the Eastern bloc countries – through liberalization of economy, the introduction of workers' self-management, decentralization of political power, openness to the West, etc. However, the patriarchal order remained. 'The socialist regime was a communist, and male dominated, patriarchal, and authoritarian conglomerate which, paradoxically was stabilized even more by the mixture of progressive women's legal rights, and existent patriarchy that governed women's real lives', Papić argues (1994: 13).

nationalist and multicultural citizenship. While the former is organized around the principles of masculinity, ethnic belonging and exclusion of the Other, the latter is liberal democratic, inclusive and based on the recognition of difference, including sexual difference. However, as Greenberg points out, the inclusiveness of multicultural citizenship is paradoxical in that it excludes those who once occupied the site of 'absolute privilege', i.e. it abolishes their privileged position in relation to others (Ibid: 326). Therefore, those who were dominant within the nationalist framework feel threatened by the new forms of citizenship, and their struggle to retain political relevance results in violence, homophobia, misogyny and racism (Ibid: 336).

Discursive Context in Serbia

Throughout 1990s, ethnic nationalism in Serbia was successfully imposed by Slobodan Milošević's regime as the official ideology and hegemonic discourse, thus replacing Yugoslav socialism after almost half a century of its hegemony. After the downfall of Milošević, Serbia started transition from an authoritarian to a democratic regime through a series of reforms. In the course of this democratic transition, new discourses emerged – a Europeanization discourse, a human rights discourse, a transitional justice discourse, a neo-liberal discourse, and a number of other discourses competing over the creation of meaning. The antagonism between the emerging discourses and nationalism reflected the struggle of what Greenberg (2006) calls multicultural and nationalist citizenship. Although the hegemonic position of nationalist discourse was challenged, new elites never made a radical break with nationalism (Kuljić, 2002; Atanacković, 2011). Therefore, it managed not only to survive but to remain dominant and, in some sense, the official discourse. Article 1 of the Serbian Constitution adopted in 2006 states: [the] 'Republic of Serbia is a state of Serbian people and all citizens who live in it, [...]' (National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, 2006), therefore establishing a hierarchy between Serbs and non-Serbs living in Serbia. Other indicators – such as the large ethnic distance of Serbian citizens to the members of some other nations, particularly Albanians,⁵ historical revisionism and glorification of the nationalist past,⁶ as well as the high electoral support for

⁵ According to the public opinion research 'Citizens' Attitudes towards Discrimination in Serbia' from 2013, conducted by CeSID (Centre for Free Elections and Democracy) for the Commissioner for Protection of Equality (Available at:

http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs/downloads/files/izvestaj_diskriminacija_cesid_undp_poverenik_2013_v_21_02_2014_final_sajt.pdf), citizens of Serbia have the largest ethnic distance towards Albanians, comparing with other nationalities, in all eight types of social interactions that were examined – from being citizens of the same country, to being family members. For example, 33 per cent of Serbian citizens would not want an ethnic Albanian for a friend, while 41 per cent would mind an Albanian teaching their children. Ethnic distance of Serbian citizens to other ethnic groups is smaller, but still significant.

⁶ Todor Kuljić (2002) argues that the re-emergence of Serbian nationalism was made possible through a revision of historical memory of the WWII and a radical critique of Yugoslav socialism by the nationalist elites. This process started during the 1990s, but intensified after the democratic changes in 2000. WWII veterans of the ultra-nationalist Chetniks and antifascist Partisan movement were legally declared equal in rights; legal rehabilitations processes of Chetniks started; history textbooks were changed; streets named

nationalist and populist political parties from 1990s onwards – confirm the strength of nationalist discourse in today's Serbia.

Nationalist discourse reinforced traditional gender roles. The Gender Barometer (Blagojević Hughson, 2012), a survey offering complex analysis of the gender dimension of everyday life in Serbia, points out the trends of re-traditionalization and re-patriarchalization of Serbian society that coincide with the re-emergence of nationalism and are discursively connected to it. In spite of a certain progress towards more gender equality in everyday practices, patriarchy is still the dominant discourse on family life (Ibid: 133). Within this discourse, two interdependent normative models are promoted – heterosexuality and care-taking as women's practice (Ibid: 175, 195-199). Therefore, care-taking, as the activity belonging to the private realm, has been naturalized as the responsibility of (heterosexual) women. The implication of this is that women invest more time than men into unpaid work, which affects women's position on the labour market negatively (Ibid: 133). Traditional, patriarchal gender stereotypes dominate not only family relations and labour, but all areas of social life (CPE, 2012: 27-28; 2014: 77). 'Gender-based discrimination is usually inflicted against women, and its key causes are firm traditional and patriarchal stereotypes about gender roles in the family and wider community' (CPE, 2012: 27-28).

Homosexuality has been frequently depicted by Serbian nationalist politicians as an illness and abnormality. In other words, it has been explicitly excluded from the set of 'normal' practices and behaviours that Mosse (1985) calls 'bourgeois respectability.' For instance, Dragan Marković, MP and the president of the right-wing United Serbia party, which is a part of the current ruling coalition, stated on several occasions that homosexuality is 'an illness' (Čongradin et al., 2009; Youth Initiative for Human Rights, 2013: 45). Because of that, in 2011 Palma was found guilty of severe discrimination against the LGBTIQ population and banned by the Court from repeating his discriminatory behaviour. Since the Court of Appeal revoked the first-instance verdict, it took three years for the verdict against Dragan Marković to be confirmed and to become final. Nevertheless, only one day after the final verdict, on 12 July 2014, Marković stated in an open letter that he will never change his views regarding homosexuality, thus making the Court verdict pointless (GSA, 2014). Further, during his mandate as the Prime Minister, Ivo Dačić, the leader of the Serbian Socialist Party (the party of Slobodan Milošević), insisted that homosexuality 'is not normal' and that it 'could not be the model for bringing up children' (Kurir, 2013).⁷ He also stated that the Pride Parade is not a human rights issue, but only a matter of security concern,⁸ implying that this event does not contribute to the

after Partisan heroes changed their names. According to Kuljić (2012), the consequence of historical revisionism is the relativization of fascism and antifascism, which further leads to the affirmation and normalization of nationalism.

⁷ Dačić: Nije normalno biti homoseksualac! (Dačić: Homosexuals are not Normal!). *Kurir*. 25.09.2013. <http://www.kurir-info.rs/dacic-nije-normalno-biti-homoseksualac-clanak-1001325>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

⁸ Dačić: Parada nije pitanje ljudskih prava (Dačić: The Parade is Not Human Rights Issue). *Akter*. 15-09-2012. <http://akter.co.rs/27-drutvo/15110-da-i-parada-nije-pitanje-ljudskih-prava.html>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

betterment of the LGBTIQ minorities but only endangers its participants. Although the mainstream politicians do not explicitly link the LGBTIQ rights with the identity of Serbian nation, they either connect homosexuality with the decline of the Serbian population, like Marković (GSA, 2014), or suggest that LGBTIQ rights are forcefully imposed by the EU, like Dačić (Kurir, 2013), which reveals the connection between their homophobia and nationalist values.

The re-emergence of Serbian nationalism was followed by a drastic increase of the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church that, despite the declarative secularity of the state, openly tends to interfere in political decision-making. The Church's narratives are strikingly similar to the narratives of extreme nationalist organizations. However, the high rate of religious identification, as well as the high level of trust that the Church enjoys in post-communist Serbia, suggest that this institution belongs to the societal mainstream. Therefore, I chose to approach the Church's discourse as a part of the mainstream. On numerous occasions, the Church dignitaries equated homosexuality with paedophilia,⁹¹⁰ claimed that LGBTIQ persons are deviant and ill,¹¹¹² called the Pride Parade the 'Shame Parade' and compared it with Sodom and Gomorrah¹³¹⁴. For instance, after the first Pride Parade held in Belgrade in 2010, Metropolitan Amfilohije stated that homosexuality destroys, among other things, 'the spirit of the folk', which indicates the nationalist character of his narrative. He said:

Something terrible happened yesterday in Belgrade. [...] It is terrible, as the event that took place today poisons; and it is dictated by today's strongmen of the world. That is something that destroys not only the body itself but also the spiritual organism, the spirit of the folk, denies human life, and desecrates the holiness of the human body, human spirit, community, and

⁹ Amfilohije: Homoseksualci i pedofili su isto (Amfilohije: Homosexuals and Paedophiles Are the Same). *Blic*. 27-06-2013. <http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Drustvo/390457/Amfilohije-Homoseksualci-i-pedofili-su-isto>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹⁰ SPC: Paradirajte, ali o svom trošku (Serbian Orthodox Church: Go Parade, but at Your Own Expense). *Večernje novosti*. 23-09-2014. <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:511398-SPC-Paradirajte-ali-o-svom-trosku>

Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹¹ Patrijarh: Homoseksualnost je bolest koju treba lečiti (The Patriarch: Homosexuality Is Illness That Should Be Treated). *Radio 021*. 03-12-2012. <http://www.021.rs/Info/Srbija/Patrijarh-Homoseksualnost-je-bolest-koju-treba-leciti.html>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹² Patrijarh: Gej parada vrh nemoralnog brega (The Patriarch: Gay Parade Is the Top of the hill of Immorality). *Politika*. 15-05-2014. <http://www.politika.rs/rubrike/Drustvo/Patrijarh-Gej-parada-vrh-nemoralnog-brega.sr.html>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹³ SPC o Povorci: Ljubav ili Sodoma (Serbian Orthodox Church on the Parade: Love or Sodom). *B92*. 17-09-2009. http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?nav_id=381865&dd=17&mm=09&yyyy=2009. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹⁴ Amfilohije: Parada srama obesmišljava božje darove (Amfilohije: The Shame Parade Makes God's Gifts Pointless). *Kurir*. 02-02-2012. <http://www.kurir-info.rs/amfilohije-parada-srama-obesmišljava-bozje-darove-clanak-114142>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

leads to nothingness and self-destruction.’ (Amfilohije, cited in Jovanović, 2013: 84)

Equally significant is the discourse of print media and television. Findings of the media analysis conducted by Labris (Organization for Lesbian Human Rights from Belgrade) show that topics related to sexual minorities have become more frequent in the Serbian mainstream media during the past decade. However, the number of media pieces with negative or neutral connotation has been higher than the number of those breaking off with negative stereotypes and promoting a positive image of the LGBTIQ minorities (Labris, 2007; Višnjić, 2012).¹⁵ Labris’s analysis points out that media discourse on LGBTIQ issues abounds in derogatory language and hate speech, which contributes to othering of sexual minorities and generates fear and hatred. The role of media in shaping the public image of the LGBTIQ population is particularly prominent before the announcements of Pride Parades. Mina Pejić (2013) argues that the media contribute to securitization of Pride Parades in four ways: by using derogatory terms (such as ‘faggots’, ‘Shame Parade’, etc.), by giving significant space to the right-wing extremists who threaten the Pride participants, by publishing statements of politicians and other public figures that constitute hate speech, and by presenting Pride Parades as a threat to public order and the security of citizens (Ibid).

To sum up this section, the dominant discourses on gender and sexuality in Serbia are significantly influenced by nationalism, patriarchal values and homophobia. The re-emergence of nationalism in the 1990s, and its normalization after the democratic changes of 2000, entailed a specific gender regime. The ideal of manliness, as an intrinsic feature of nationalism (Mosse, 1985, 1996; Bracewell, 2000), imposed gender inequality as natural, and heterosexuality as the only acceptable sexual behaviour. Therefore, non-heterosexual people remained outside of the notion of normality, which prepared the terrain for the securitization of LGBTIQ identities by the extreme nationalists.

Securitizing Narratives of the Far-right Organizations

Serbian far-right organizations are institutionally marginal, in the sense that the great majority of them are extra-parliamentary actors.¹⁶ Yet, when it comes to LGBTIQ issues, their narratives have a powerful resonance in Serbian society. The analysis in

¹⁵ Media research conducted by Labris analysed twelve TV programmes about lesbian and gay population broadcast on four Serbian TV channels in 2007. The analysis pointed out that only one programme positively contextualised the subject, three media pieces had very negative connotations, while eight pieces were neutral (Labris, 2007: 9, 14). During 2011, the same organization monitored printed media in Serbia and analysed 1785 articles about LGBTIQ persons in 18 newspapers with high circulation. This research showed an unchanging trend in reporting on LGBTIQ population – more than half of the articles used a neutral tone, while the articles with negative attitudes towards LGBTIQ outnumbered those with positive (Višnjić, 2012: 13).

¹⁶ Serbian Radical Party, the party that belongs to the extreme right, was a parliamentary party until the elections in 2012 at which, for the first time in its history, it did not win any seats in the National Parliament.

this chapter will include three organisations: Dveri¹⁷, Obraz¹⁸ and SNP Naši¹⁹. It should be noted that there are other far-right organizations in Serbia that all share the anti-gay sentiment. However, a high level of similarity between their agendas and ideological foundations allows me to focus on the above mentioned three as those with the most elaborated and structured political programmes, including elaborated anti-gay agendas and narratives that explicitly securitize LGBTIQ identities. These three organizations also have the highest media prominence, due to their ambition to enter institutional politics, i.e. the participation at parliamentary elections, as well as due to their continuous involvement in homophobic and nationalist propaganda.

*Dveri: 'We are not a party, we are a family!'*²⁰

Dveri is a Serbian far-right political organization that was founded in the late 1990s as an Orthodox Christian right-wing student organisation. Until today, Dveri participated in two parliamentary elections, in 2012 and 2014, but both times remained below the threshold which left them out of the Serbian Parliament. The political programme of Dveri is based on the values of extreme nationalism with elements of fascism (Dinić, 2010). A very prominent element of the political programme of Dveri is care for the family (Dveri website). In the narrative of Dveri, the notion of family signifies a traditional, patriarchal family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, and with the primary purpose of procreation.

Each year since 2009, as a response to the announced Pride Parades, Dveri has been organising the so called Family Walks - the counter-parades promoting traditional values and patriarchal morals. In 2009, Dveri announced 'Ten reasons to join the Family Walk' (Obradović, 2009). Those ten reasons were ten statements about the Serbian family being threatened, not only by homosexuality and Pride Parades, but also by other trends of democratization and modernization in Serbian society, as well as by market liberalization.²¹ Ten out of nine statements ended with the word 'threatened' and an exclamation mark suggesting urgency of the threat or, in terms of securitization theory, the point of no return (Buzan et al., 1998: 33). One of the statements was directly related to homosexuality and it read: 'Family morality is threatened!' (Obradović, 2009). In the explanation of this threat, Boško Obradović, a member of Dveri, described homosexuality as an ideology that has been forcibly imposed on Serbian people by Western powers and argued that the recognition of rights of sexual minorities would force people to give up parenthood. This narrative, by describing homosexuality as foreign to Serbian people and blaming it for a

¹⁷ Dveri website. <http://dverisrpske.com/sr/>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹⁸ Obraz website. <http://www.obraz.rs/>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

¹⁹ SNP Naši website. <http://nasisrbija.org/>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

²⁰ One of the official slogans of Dveri.

²¹ The reasons are listed as follows: 'The future of your family is threatened! Healthy childhood of your children is threatened! Schooling of your children is treated! Upbringing of your children is threatened! Family morality is threatened! Health of your family is threatened! Privacy of your family is threatened! Financial situation of your family is threatened! Social environment of your family is threatened! Political organization of our families does not exist!'

potential population decline, reveals once again the connection between homophobia and Serbian nationalism.

In 2010, the year in which the first Pride Parade was held in Serbia, Dveri were marked as one of the far-right groups that were campaigning against the Pride and inciting street riots. Srdjan Nogo, a member of Dveri, said on that occasion: 'They [the Government] have destroyed everything, and now they want our family. This is the defence of the family and the future of the Serbian people'.²² This statement was directed against the Serbian Government, but the reason was the Government's support for the Pride. Again, the 'general grammar of security' (Buzan et al., 1998: 33), is striking in this narrative – family is being threatened and, consequently, the future of the nation is at danger. From 2011 onwards, representatives of Dveri started referring to Pride Parades as to the 'promotion of totalitarian ideology of homosexuality' that aims at destroying family values.²³ ²⁴ ²⁵ The association with totalitarianism suggests that the respect for human rights of LGBTIQ persons will lead to the violation of rights of other individuals. It is based on a binary logic in which heterosexuality and homosexuality are opposed to each other and only one can 'win'. This rhetorical move contributed to the securitization of LGBTIQ issues by moving them from the domain of normal politics to the security domain.

Obraz: For the Orthodox Theocracy

The Serbian Patriotic Movement 'Obraz' was a Serbian clerical-fascist organization that was banned by the Constitutional Court in 2012 due to the involvement in violent activities against the constitutional order, violation of human rights, and incitement of racial, ethnic and religious hatred. Nevertheless, this organization continued to exist with a slightly changed name – Serbian Obraz (hereinafter: Obraz), and with an unchanged organizational infrastructure and ideology. The ideological orientation of Obraz is very similar to that of Dveri, except that Obraz is more pronouncedly clerical (Obraz website). They advocate for the establishment of Serbia as an Orthodox theocracy and derive their agenda from the political programme of Serbian fascists from the 1930s and 1940s (Petakov, 2009: 47).

²² Hate in Belgrade. *The Economist*. 10-10-2010.

http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2010/10/belgrades_gay_pride_riots. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

²³ Dveri: Setnja protiv Parade, Tadića (The Walk against the Pride Parade and President Tadić). *B92*. 23-09-2011.

http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2011&mm=09&dd=23&nav_id=544107. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

²⁴ Dveri: Nametanje totalitarne ideologije homoseksualizma (Dveri: The Imposition of Totalitarian Ideology of Homosexuality). *Radio Television of Vojvodina*. 28-08-2013.

http://www.rtv.rs/sr_ci/drustvo/dveri-nametanje-totalitarne-ideologije-homoseksualizma_417151.html. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

²⁵ Gej parada nameće totalitarizam (Gay Parade Imposes Totalitarianism). *B92*. 19-09-2012. http://www.b92.net/info/vesti/index.php?yyyy=2012&mm=09&dd=19&nav_id=644338 Accessed: 10-02-2015.

The discourse of *Obraz* regarding the issues of LGBTIQ rights and Pride Parades is primarily a discourse of violence and threats.²⁶ Nevertheless, anti-gay violence and discrimination need justification in the form of a securitizing narrative. Before the announced Pride Parade in 2009, the leader of *Obraz* Mladen Obradović said: 'We will not let the Pride Parade be held. [...] Serbs have never been in favour of spreading evil, and they [Pride Parade organizers and the Government] are trying to impose what is evil in the eyes of God. Our duty is to defend the traditional values'.²⁷ By referring to religious values, this narrative depicts the emancipatory strategies of LGBTIQ community as evil and godless, and, at the same time, it presents Serbs as good and god-fearing. In other words, it constructs the identity of Serbian people in a process that Hansen (2006: 41-45) refers to as linking and differentiation, i.e. through a binary opposition between Serbs and the LGBTIQ population. Following the security grammar, it establishes the Pride Parade as a security threat to traditional values of Serbian people, pointing out the duty of patriotic Serbs to defend those values.

In 2011, Obradović confirmed his views:

Serbian nationalists are not against the Shame Parade because they have nothing else to do, nor because, God forbid, they hate someone, but because such a parade is the image of a regime that aims at destroying the Serbian nation and everything that is sacred and close to dear God. Thus, by fighting against Sodom and Gomorrah on the streets of Serbian cities, people are actually fighting against the treacherous Government! *Obraz*, therefore, invites all god-fearing and patriotic Serbian men and women, [...] to the Prayer walk for a healthy family. We want it to be a peaceful promotion of healthy family and national values.²⁸

Once again, Obradović portrayed the Pride Parade as opposed to God, the national values and a 'healthy' family and, consequently, as threatening to the god-fearing Serbian nation. Further, referring to Pride Parades as to 'Shame Parades' is typical for the discourse of the Serbian right wing, as well as comparing the LGBTIQ community with Sodom and Gomorrah, which originates in the discourse of the Serbian Orthodox Church. By invoking this religious narrative, Obradović suggested that

²⁶ The leader of *Obraz*, Mladen Obradović, was sentenced twice before the courts of first instance - in 2011 for organizing the riots during the Pride Parade in 2010, and in 2012 for the threats to LGBTIQ population and for advocating discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in 2009. The Court of Appeal abolished both verdicts. In the retrial, Obradović was sentenced to four months of house arrest.

²⁷ Obradović, cited in Luković, D. (2009) Najrizičnija manifestacija u Srbiji: Na gej paradu samo sa narukvicama! (The Riskiest Event in Serbia: To the Gay Parade Only with Wristbands!). *Press Online*. 17-09-2009. <http://www.pressonline.rs/info/politika/79955/najrizicnija-manifestacija-u-srbiji-na-gej-paradu-samo-sa-narukvicama.html>. Accessed: 10-02-2015. Translated by the author

²⁸ Obradović, interview with Malenović, M. (2011) Interview with Obradović, M. *Tabloid*. <http://www.magazin-tabloid.com/casopis/?id=06&br=242&cl=18>. Accessed: 10-02-2015. , Translated by the author

Serbia, if it allows LGBTIQ rights and Pride Parades, will have the same fate as Sodom and Gomorrah.²⁹

SNP Naši: The Law against Gay Pride Propaganda

SNP Naši³⁰ is another extreme right organization in Serbia. Just as *Obraz*, the ideology of SNP Naši represents a mixture of extreme nationalism and Orthodox clericalism (SNP Naši website). At the parliamentary elections in Serbia in March 2014, SNP Naši participated in a coalition with *Obraz* and the Serbian Radical Party. However, this coalition, like *Dveri*, remained below the threshold. SNP Naši actively campaign against LGBTIQ rights and Pride Parades, and their discourse is strikingly similar to those of *Dveri* and *Obraz*. They strongly oppose Pride Parades and refer to them as to ‘satanic’ events³¹ that aim at destroying the Serbian family and the foundations of a ‘normal’ society.³² Also, one of the key points of the securitization moves by SNP Naši is that the Pride Parade violates the rights of Serbian people and is in breach of the Serbian Constitution and other laws.³³ ³⁴ This organization has been the initiator of the ban of the so-called ‘gay pride propaganda’. In 2012, SNP Naši proposed the draft of the Law against Gay Pride Propaganda – an elaborate document that is in violation of anti-discrimination laws, laws prohibiting hate speech, and other laws protecting the human rights of LGBTIQ persons (SNP Naši website).³⁵ The mere word ‘propaganda’, which is one of the key signifiers of this draft, suggests a false or exaggerated narrative that aims at advancing a certain cause. Therefore, the draft is based on the premise that the discourse of LGBTIQ rights actually falsifies facts, which has been explicitly stated in the text. The draft has been supplemented with a section explaining the reasons for the adoption of such a law. This section begins with the statement:

²⁹ Talking about the Pride Parade that was supposed to take place in 2013, Obradović explicitly used security language and pointed out that the term ‘defence’ implies ‘the defence of family, Serbdom and Belgrade, in a dignified, prayerful way’ (Jovanović, 2013).

³⁰ SNP stands for Serbian Popular Movement (Serbian: Srpski narodni pokret).

³¹ Naši: ‘Parada ponosa’ huli na krsne slave, protestom protiv satanske priredbe (Naši: ‘Pride Parade’ is Blasphemy, We should Protest against this Satanic Event). *24 Sata*. 22-09-2013. <http://www.24sata.rs/vesti/aktuelno/vest/nasi-parada-ponosa-huli-na-krsne-slave-protestom-protiv-satanske-priredbe/106637.phtml>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

³² SNP Naši: ‘Parada’ je protivustavna (SNP Naši: ‘The Parade’ is Unconstitutional). *Vesti Online*. 22-05-2012. <http://www.vesti-online.com/Vesti/Srbija/226832/SNP-Nasi-Parada-je-protivustavna>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

³³ In 2011, SNP Naši published a media announcement stating, *inter alia*: ‘The whole project of the “Pride Parade” represents a series of crimes and reveals the connections between state officials and organized crime. The current political regime, in coordination with the organizers of the “Parade of Immorality,” deceives the public by saying that the “Pride Parade” is a “constitutional obligation”. This is based on the false interpretation of some laws, with no regard to the Constitution.’ (Source: SNP Naši, <http://nasisrbija.org/snp-nasi-parada-krsenje-ustava/>)

³⁴ Parada kršenje Ustava (Pride in Breach of Constitution), SNP Naši website. 16-08-2011. <http://nasisrbija.org/snp-nasi-parada-krsenje-ustava/>. Accessed: 10-02-2015.

³⁵ Available at: <http://nasisrbija.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ZAKONGEJPRAIDPROPAGANDA-NASISRBIAorg.pdf>

The adoption of this law banning gay pride propaganda is necessary for a number of reasons, but primarily for the preservation of the public morals of Serbian society, the protection of families and children, for preventing serious forms of discrimination against the Serbian people in their motherland, as well as for the protection of the constitutional right to freedom of expression of moral and religious beliefs. (SNP Nasi website, translated by the author)

Another key signifier in the text of the draft is the word ‘protection’ – of the families, children, public morals, Serbs and their constitutional rights – implying that the Serbian nation is existentially threatened by a distorted image of reality offered by the LGBTIQ community. Consequently, the draft proposes measures – ‘the way out’ of this alleged emergency situation. These measures consist of a series of bans; the ban of the establishment of LGBTIQ civil society organizations, the ban of LGBTIQ advocacy, the prohibition of the use of LGBTIQ symbols such as the rainbow flag, the ban for political parties and media to promote LGBTIQ equality, etc.

The narratives of the Serbian extreme right organizations frame the subject of LGBTIQ rights as a security matter, thus taking it out of the domain of ‘normal politics’ (See: Buzan et al., 1998: 23-24). These narratives follow the ‘grammar of security’ by discursively constructing existential threats, points of no return and possible ways out. First, they portray the LGBTIQ minorities and their activism, as well as other actors supporting gay rights, as an existential threat to the Serbian nation, perceived mainly through family iconography and structured according to the same patterns as a patriarchal family. Second, they suggest the urgency and seriousness of the situation (point of no return) through the use of specific words and phrases such as ‘destruction’, ‘necessity of protection’, ‘duty to react’, ‘defence’, ‘breach of the constitution’, ‘totalitarianism’, etc. Third, they propose extraordinary measures to remove existential threats, and these measures include violations of the guaranteed LGBTIQ rights, i.e. the suspension of the existing laws, as well as violence against sexual minorities. The security grammar in the narratives of Serbian far-right organizations intertwines with the identity construction that, according to Buzan et al. (1998), is characteristic of the specific ‘dialect’ of the societal sector. As was previously said, the identity is discursively constructed in relation to certain Otherness, and through the process of linking and differentiation (Hansen, 2006: 41-45) or, in other words, through the establishment of the chains of equivalence and the chains of difference (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002: 50). I argue that the narratives of the Serbian extreme right re-construct the Serbian national identity by juxtaposing it to the LGBTIQ identities. In these narratives, the LGBTIQ identities are associated with immorality, crime, destruction of family, godlessness, evil, totalitarianism, shame, sin, and Western imperialism, while the identity of the Serbian nation is contrasted to this chain of signifiers. Although the securitizing narratives are focused primarily on the description of the LGBTIQ identities, I argue later in this paper that they also have the function of strengthening Serbian national identity.

Legitimation Process: Acceptance by the Audience

The Serbian audience, as public opinion surveys show, has proven to be pronouncedly homophobic. For example, a survey from 2010, specifically examining the attitudes towards homosexuality, shows that two thirds of the population of Serbia still thinks that homosexuality is a disease, while more than half believes that homosexuality is dangerous for society (56 per cent) and that state institutions should work on suppressing homosexuality (53 per cent) (GSA,³⁶ 2010: 8). More than one third of the population (38 per cent) agrees with the claim that homosexuality was fabricated in the West, with the aim of destroying the family and Serbian tradition (Ibid). Every fifth citizen of Serbia thinks that violence against the participants of Pride Parades is justifiable - 'if it cannot be prevented in any other way', while 14 per cent believes that violence and beatings are the only ways of eliminating homosexuality (Ibid: 16). Also, 45 per cent of citizens of Serbia sees Pride Parades as mere provocations aimed at people of 'normal' sexual orientation (Ibid: 8), and 69 per cent disagrees with the statement that pride Parades are legitimate means of fighting for gay rights and that they should be held (Ibid: 10). Another piece of research from 2013 shows that citizens of Serbia have the largest social distance vis-à-vis LGBTIQ, in comparison to other minority groups. For instance, eight out of ten respondents would not like to have LGBTIQ person in their family, while almost a half of population (46 per cent) would not want a member of LGBTQ population for a friend (CPE³⁷, 2013: 33).

The results of the public opinion surveys indicate that a great part of the citizens of Serbia have negative views on homosexuality and the LGBTIQ population. The attitudes of a significant audience coincide with some of the extremists' representations of LGBTIQ population, such as those of homosexuality being a threat to the family and Serbian tradition. What is even more important, a significant audience approve of the extraordinary measures towards homosexuals - state suppression (53 per cent) and violence (20 per cent). Further, the number of those who oppose the Pride parades - 69 per cent of the population - suggests that more than two thirds of Serbian citizens would not mind the ban of the Parade, i.e. the suspension of the constitutional rights of citizens. The question is how this acceptance of the extraordinary measures towards LGBTIQ persons has been achieved, having in mind the institutional marginality of the extreme right in Serbia. In this article I argue that the discourses of far-right groups acquire hegemony due to their compatibility and coherence with the official discourses on homosexuality and LGBTIQ rights, and this will be discussed in the following section.

³⁶ The public opinion survey for the needs of Gay Straight Alliance (<http://en.gsa.org.rs/>) was conducted by CeSID (Centre for Free Elections and Democracy), the Serbian polling agency specialized on socio-political issues. The survey was conducted on a representative sample of 1405 respondents, in the entire territory of Serbia, during March 2010.

³⁷ This public opinion survey was also conducted by CeSID, at the behest of the Commissioner for Protection of Equality (<http://www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs>). The survey was conducted on a representative sample of 1200 respondents, in the entire territory of Serbia, during November 2013.

As already pointed out, post-structuralist reading of securitization theory suggests that securitizing narratives could not be seen as isolated and self-explanatory moves, nor could the acceptance by the audience be treated as a moment of rational choice (Wilhelmsen, 2013: 45-46). Rather, the securitizing narratives are seen as embedded in a wider discursive terrain, and the acceptance of these narratives by the audience as an on-going process contingent on how a particular representation fits with other representations in a broader discourse (Wæver, 2002; Wilhelmsen, 2013). At this point, it is necessary to go back and look at the main features of the previously discussed discursive terrain in Serbia. I argue here that the securitization of the LGBTIQ population by the right-wing extremists was made possible through the discursive normalization of nationalism and the consequent normalization of gender inequality and homophobia. Normalisation of nationalism occurred after the democratic changes in 2000, when Serbia, instead of making a radical break with the ethnic-nationalist past of the 1990s, provided a legitimization framework for nationalist ideology – through legal norms,³⁸ historical revisionism and the promotion of the co-called ‘democratic nationalism’ (See, for example: Kuljić, 2002; Milosavljević, 2007; Atanacković, 2011). This normalization affirmed the extreme nationalists as legitimate political actors by bringing them closer to mainstream politics, or, perhaps more accurately, by moving the political mainstream closer to the radical right. Further, normalization of nationalism enforced a certain gender regime, based on inequality in rights and duties for men and women. Re-traditionalization and re-patriarchalization of Serbian society led to the establishment of traditional gender roles as being natural and desirable (Blagojević-Hughson, 2012).

Finally, the normalization of nationalism and gender inequality induced normalization of homophobia. Homosexuality could not fit the patriarchal and heteronormative order imposed by the dominant nationalist discourse and, therefore, homosexuals were seen as the enemy Other, threatening the societal order. The degree of otherness ascribed to sexual minorities has not always reflected the hostility of the extreme nationalists. However, the discursive association of the LGBTIQ population with illness, abnormality, sin, and shame, prepared the terrain for securitization moves. As Krebs and Jackson (2007: 46) argue, ‘Arguments can prove powerful only when the commonplaces on which they draw are already present in the rhetorical field, which is shaped both by the unintended consequences of prior episodes of (rhetorical) contestation and/or by campaigns undertaken in advance with the express purpose of reconfiguring the rhetorical terrain.’ The commonplaces of the extremists’ narratives related to LGBTIQ identities already exist in the rhetorical field shaped by the mainstream discourses, and are reflected in the normalization of nationalism, gender inequality and homophobia. Such a rhetorical field provides fertile ground for the securitization of sexual minorities. In other words, once the nationalist and patriarchal image of sexual difference becomes hegemonic, a significant audience is more likely to accept that the LGBTIQ population, by requesting their rights, actually threaten the rights and security of others.

³⁸ Article 1 of the Serbian Constitution adopted in 2006 states: ‘[The] Republic of Serbia is a state of Serbian people and all citizens who live in it, [...]’ (National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, 2006).

Re-production of Serbian National Identity

As previously pointed out, post-structuralism takes the stand that identity is always constructed in opposition to some Otherness (see, for example: Barth, 1969; Connolly, 1991; Hansen, 2006). In the Serbian nationalist discourse the construction of national identity is twofold. The first line of construction is against the external Other – this is the construction of the Serbian national Self in opposition to, for example, NATO (as the symbol of Western power), Kosovo Albanians and other ethnic groups that Serbia had disputes with in the recent past. On the other hand, the national identity has also been built against the internal Other, i.e. through securitization of differences among groups within Serbian population, *inter alia*, the differences related to sexual orientation and gender identity. Serbian nationalist narratives are facing challenges, as a result of the changing regional and global political dynamics and the subsequent de-radicalization of the external Other. The conflicts with neighbouring nations have ended, and Serbia has established solid relations – political, economic and cultural – with the majority of the countries that emerged from the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Regarding the last conflict in the Balkans, the Kosovo conflict, the breakthrough was achieved in April 2013, with the signing of the Agreement on normalization of relations between Belgrade and Prishtina, the so called Brussels agreement. Kosovar Albanians are, nonetheless, perceived by a significant part of the Serbian population as the radical Other, and the Kosovo myth preserved its critical place in the nationalist mythology. However, the mere fact that the Serbian Government has shown dedication to a peaceful dialogue with the Government of Kosovo contributes to de-radicalization of the Albanian Other and holds the potential for releasing the tensions between the two nations. Furthermore, the growing support of Serbian citizens for EU integration indicates that the representation of ‘the West’ as the enemy of the Serbian nation is losing its appeal. The once powerful narrative of the alleged anti-Serbian character of the Hague Tribunal for war crimes, and the Serbian resistance to it, ceased to be one of the major reference points of the nationalist discourse. The issue of cooperation with the Hague Tribunal has become a closed chapter in Serbian politics, after the Serbian authorities had arrested and extradited all the accused sought by the Tribunal.

In the circumstances in which the external Other has been diluted and weakened, the nationalist narratives needed an internal Otherness against which the Serbian national Self would be re-defined. Such an internal Otherness has been found in sexual minorities. All nationalisms define gender in a way that implies inequality between men and women and that does not allow for alterations of the gender roles (See, for example: Papić, 1994; Bracewell, 1996; Yuval-Davis, 1998). As long as both women and men stay within their prescribed roles, they will not be perceived as the enemy Other (Mosse, 1996: 12). However, the demand for recognition of the rights of LGBTIQ persons jeopardized the strict division between genders, thus threatening heteronormativity as one of the core principles of nationalism. Therefore, the LGBTIQ identities have been represented in the narratives of the Serbian far-right as an existential threat to the referent object – the Serbian national identity. According to the post-structuralist reading of securitization theory, the referent object is never only identified and described as such, but also re-defined in relation to the threat

(Wilhelmsen, 2013:40-41). Given that the masculine stereotype and homophobic attitudes are intrinsic to nationalism, some might rightfully ask how the securitization of the LGBTIQ population contributed to re-evaluation of the Serbian Self. First, in the context of de-radicalization of the external Other, homophobia and masculinity – as related to the internal Other – emerged as more prominent features of the Serbian national identity. Patriotic feelings have become incompatible with the tolerance of sexual difference. But, more importantly, the binary opposition between the referent object and the threat has benefited Serbian national identity as the privileged element in this construction. By linking the LGBTIQ identities with evil, immorality and godlessness, the extremists' narratives confirmed the Serbian national Self as the opposite – good, pious and morally superior.

Finally, the securitization of the LGBTIQ minorities by the extreme nationalists contributed not only to re-defining of the Serbian national identity, but also to its strengthening through national cohesion. As was previously established, homophobia is one of the very few remaining threads that connect the right-wing extremists with the political mainstream. Dominant political actors in Serbia departed, at least declaratively, from their nationalist agendas, and announced EU integration and liberal-democratic reforms as the priorities of state politics. However, homophobic attitudes are still widespread among the mainstream political and social actors, as well as among a large part of the Serbian population. In that sense, the securitization of LGBTIQ minorities acts as some kind of glue that keeps the extreme nationalists and a larger audience prone to homophobia unified against the alleged threat. The language of security, ever present in the extremists' securitization narratives, contributes to this unification. Based on the binary opposition between the Serbian nation and LGBTIQ population, securitization moves reinforce nationalist feelings among a significant audience thus providing a solid platform for mainstreaming the extremist groups and their agendas.

Conclusion

This article analysed the processes of securitization of the LGBTIQ minorities in the discourse of Serbian extreme nationalists, as well as the relations between extremists' and the mainstream discourses that result in mainstreaming the extreme. The analysis took a constructivist approach to security and drew upon securitization theory in order to demonstrate how a human rights issue becomes a security issue and how a minority identity is discursively constructed as a threat to the national Self. It adopted post-structuralist view on securitization theory, which emphasizes discursivity, intersubjectivity/intertextuality and changeability of social phenomena. The theoretical framework of this article relied heavily on the work of Julie Wilhelmsen, which grounds securitization theory more firmly in post-structuralism. Following Wilhelmsen's re-writing of securitization theory, the article focused on four components of the securitization process: discursive context, securitizing narratives, legitimation process and re-production of the referent object. This framework allowed me to address the securitization of the LGBTIQ minorities by the right-wing extremists in a structured and analytical manner.

Regarding the discursive context in Serbia, ethnic nationalism, although officially defeated with Slobodan Milošević's fall from power, continues to be a powerful mobilization force in Serbian society. Normalization of nationalism entailed a specific gender regime characterized by inequality between sexes and intolerance of alternative sexualities. Dominant ideas about sexual minorities, promoted by mainstream politicians, religious leaders and the media, associate LGBTIQ identities with abnormality, illness, sin and shame, which provided a fertile soil for the securitization moves by the extreme nationalists. In the focus of empirical analysis were the far-right organizations' narratives related to homosexuality and LGBTIQ rights. The analysis demonstrated how these narratives constructed the LGBTIQ identities as radically different and incompatible with the Serbian national identity. By employing the language of security, they framed the subject of LGBTIQ rights as a security issue and portrayed the LGBTIQ minorities as a threat to the referent object – the Serbian national Self. Further, I argued that these securitizing attempts found their way to a wider audience thanks to their coherence with the mainstream discourses on homosexuality. In a discursive context in which nationalism, gender inequality and homophobia are normalized through the official narratives and accepted by a significant part of the population, the extreme nationalists' representations of sexual minorities cease to be perceived as extreme and become acceptable. Finally, these representations contribute to re-defining of the Serbian national identity that, in juxtaposition to the LGBTIQ identities, acquires new qualities and strength. The binary opposition between the referent object of securitization and the threat benefits the former as the privileged element in the binary. In other words, the extremists' description of the LGBTIQ identities as evil, immoral and godless promotes the Serbian national Self as the opposite. Moreover, the securitizing attempts by the right-wing extremists, situated in the context characterized by widespread anti-gay sentiment, enable unification of the extreme nationalists and a larger homophobic audience around the idea of the threat to the national identity posed by the LGBTIQ population. In such circumstances, nationalist feelings become consolidated which broadens the manoeuvring space for the placement and promotion of extremists' ideas.

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