

Human Security in the 21st Century: Challenges to Health Security – Collection of students’ papers

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Mirjana Stolić-Srdanov

Design

Milica Dervišević

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Challenges to Health Security -
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FOREWORD

Nine months into the Covid-19 outbreak, it is now safe to say that the pandemic is the defining event of 2020 and is highly likely to continue for some time. Given the global impact of the virus on all aspects of social life, this year's prize call for papers focused on the effects of the pandemic on human security and the threat posed by Covid-19 on individuals in a variety of fields. The title of the 2020 collection of papers, *Human Security in the 21st Century: Challenges to Health Security*, highlights the significance of the hitherto under-investigated topic of health security. This year, therefore, we wished to attract students' papers that examined the deterioration of the global health system and the attendant crisis of human security from a wide range of perspectives.

This is the fourth year running that female students seem to have responded better to our prize call than their male colleagues: all three papers we have chosen are by women, and all three examine Covid-19 as a global phenomenon and a threat to security that has continuously been testing every aspect of society in all parts of the world.

'The impact of the securitising actor's gender on the process of (de)securitisation: the example of the Covid-19 pandemic' was authored by Ivana Dimić, undergraduate student at the Belgrade Faculty of Political Science. Her paper contends that the gender of the securitising actor is a highly significant factor for securitisation of the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting responses by women decision-makers in crisis situations and their choice of desecuritisation. The author approaches the issue from a feminist perspective, placing gender at the heart of her assessment of securitisation of the on-going global Covid-19 threat.

In 'Reporting emergencies: war as metaphor for earthquakes, floods, and the Covid-19 pandemic in Serbia', Aleksandra Savić, PhD candidate at the Faculty of Philology, explores the use of the word 'war' in the metaphorical sense in news coverage of the 2010 Kraljevo earthquake, the 2014 flooding in Serbia, and the coronavirus pandemic. This exhaustive review examines press releases of the Serbian Government in the three crises. The author endeavours to identify political intentions of decision-makers that underlie the linguistic strategies deployed in these emergencies.

The effects of Covid-19 on migrations and migrants is explored by Jovana Nikolić, undergraduate student at the Faculty of Political Science, in ‘The impact of Covid-19 on migrations: how migrants and refugees fight against the virus and xenophobia’. Taking the concept of human security as her starting point, the author examines the challenges faced by global healthcare, the reactions of nation-states, and the impact of lockdowns on individuals, such as, in this case, migrants. By investigating the limits of the securitisation of health and its consequences on day-to-day life, the author seeks to show that migrants are engaged in a fight against two foes – the virus and xenophobia.

The Svetlana Đurđević Lukić Prize Fund was established to commemorate our friend, co-worker, and co-founder of the Public Policy Centre, who left us more than four years ago. In her research, Svetlana nurtured a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach to security studies, and this prize call for papers is therefore open to all students, both male and female, of all disciplines and at all levels, who embrace the same method.

The collection before you is the fourth series of students’ papers published by the Public Policy Centre’s Svetlana Đurđević Lukić Fund with support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. We gratefully acknowledge the OSCE Mission’s continued assistance with organising the prize call and their recognition of the importance of encouraging young students to think about key threats to human security. The Centre would also like to thank our expert selection committee, which was for the fourth year in a row composed of Dr Vladimir Bilandžić, Dr Vanja Rokvić, Dr Srđan Korać, and Mari-na Tadić.

Belgrade, December 2020

Filip Stojanović
Secretary, Svetlana Đurđević Lukić Fund

THE IMPACT OF GENDER OF THE SECURITIZING ACTOR ON THE (DE)SECURITIZATION PROCESS: EXAMPLE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ivana DINIĆ*, undergraduate student
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences

Abstract: *The starting point of this paper is the thesis that the gender of the securitizing actor, as part of his/her social capital, is an important determinant in the securitization of the COVID-19 pandemic, which results in a specific response of female decision makers in crisis situations and their commitment to desecuritization as re-establishment of regular democratic procedures. Using the standpoints of feminist theories, taking five world democracies as an example, gender will be examined as a characteristic of the securitizing actor that determines the approach to the process of securitization of the current global threat of COVID-19. It seeks to show how, through specific security discourse but also through active normative commitment to the re-establishment of regular social activity, women leaders express their commitment to democracy, even during a state of emergency.*

Keywords: *women leaders, securitization, desecuritization, securitizing actor, COVID-19, democracy.*

* dinicivannah@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that they have securitized the current global threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic by imposing similar measures to restrict movement and assembly, it is with varying degrees of success that the world democracies are waging a battle to restore normalcy. Countries such as New Zealand, Norway, Germany, Taiwan and Iceland took the lead in this process during the first wave of the pandemic in April 2020, not only because of the low number of deaths, but also due to the fact that they were among the first to mitigate their special measures restricting certain fundamental rights and freedoms. In addition, what remained striking in the case of these countries was that all five were led by women leaders. It is therefore legitimate to ask whether and to what extent women as holders of key executive functions and dominant securitizing actors have contributed to the relatively rapid restoration of regular democratic procedures.

This paper aims to clarify the relationship between the gender of the securitizing actor as part of his/her social capital and the securitization process, as a process that often involves going beyond democratic frameworks and manipulation by the holders of executive power (Aradau, 2004: 392). Using the concept of ethics of care developed by the American feminist author Carol Gilligan (Gilligan, 1982), which gives priority to finding specific solutions that meet the needs of most people in situations involving a moral dilemma, the examples of five world democracies will examine gender as a characteristic of the securitizing actor that determines his/her approach to the process of securitization of the COVID-19 virus as a current global threat. Through specific security discourse, but also through active normative commitment to re-establishing the regular functioning of social activities, women leaders demonstrate their commitment to democracy, even during a state of emergency.

The paper is organized as follows: The first part will explain how the commitment to desecuritization, as the re-establishment of regular democratic procedures, becomes a normative and political choice of securitizing actors that is not only reflected in their security discourse but is also a stronghold from which citizens give legitimacy for the imposition of special measures. Further, the second part of the paper will clarify the role played by gender as a characteristic of the securitizing actor in the (de)securitization process. The way in which the COVID-19 pandemic was securitized will be examined on the examples of five democratic countries in which women are the dominant securitizing actors, noting that each special measure was communicated to the public, in order to return society to normalcy. Finally, conclusion will be made that the approach taken by the securitizing actor in the process of (de)securitization, as a crisis and moral situation, largely depends on the securitizing actor's gender.

Commitment to desecuritization as a guarantor of democratic securitization

According to the definition offered by Wæver and other authors of the Copenhagen School, security is considered a speech act by which a securitizing actor (usually a representative of the executive authority) securitizes (constructs) a certain phenomenon as an existential threat and demands legitimacy from the public (citizens) to impose special measures which would otherwise not be justified, but which are necessary for the successful overcoming of the proclaimed threat (Stritzel, 2007: 360). Referring to this definition, some authors (Hansen, 2012, Ejodus, 2009, Aradau, 2004) warned of the overly constant dependence of the securitization practice on the securitizing actor, and of its identification with the Schmittian concept of the political, the essence of which is seen precisely during the period of the state of emergency, when the ruler is not limited by any procedures in the struggle for survival (Ejodus, 2009: 12-13). In that respect, commitment to desecuritization as a counter-process of returning a certain phenomenon from the sphere of emergency, i.e. securitized, to the sphere of quotidian political debate is a normative and political choice of the largest number of citizens, who see it as a return to the regular democratic debate in which they also participate.

In addition to depicting a state in which the needs for democracy of the largest number of actors in the political process are met, Lene Hansen (Hansen, 2012: 533) emphasizes the ability of securitizing actors to normatively opt for desecuritization when responding to crisis situations. This commitment can be seen already during the state of emergency because, as Hansen (2012: 534) points out, all actors in the political process – especially securitizing actors, should “actively work to achieve desecuritization through security policy”. It means that in addition to achieving desecuritization, the way in which it is achieved is also important, with securitizing actors facing a moral decision on how to pursue security policy.

Whether securitization necessarily leads to desecuritization can be discussed if two elements of the securitization theory emphasized by Claudia Aradau (Aradau, 2004: 391) are taken into account. The first are the special measures that are being imposed, which undoubtedly imply the restriction of certain fundamental rights and freedoms, such as freedom of movement or assembly, which may differ in number, type and duration. For the commitment to return society to normalcy, the second element is particularly important – the way by which securitizing actors introduce, justify or communicate special measures to the public. By analyzing the specific security discourses and practices undertaken by securitizing actors it is possible to examine their commitment to democracy even during a state of emergency.

This is especially important in the context of modern democracies, where citizens need at least some kind of guarantee in order to subordinate their fundamental rights and freedoms to special measures so that desecuritization, as a state in which the needs of most citizens are met, can be achieved as early as possible (Roe, 2012: 255). Considering the commitment to desecuritization as a stronghold from which citizens give legitimacy to imposition of special measures beyond the standard public debate, as well as the ability of securitizing actors to demonstrate their commitment to restoring social life to normalcy, through security discourse and practices, I now turn to the securitizing actor's gender as a determinant of significance for the actor's action during the (de)securitization process.

Securitizing actor's gender as a determinant in the (de)securitization process

Gender, as Hansen (2000: 287) observes, is almost left out of the conceptual framework of the Copenhagen School, because it is treated as an individual characteristic, and as such as less important than the characteristics of a collective identity, such as religion or ethnicity when defining a referent security object. This is questionable in more ways than one. Not only does the adoption of such framework introduce a sort of classification among equally important aspects of identity, thus impoverishing the research field, but also the entire focus of research is placed on the referent object, while neglecting the identity of securitizing actors who take securitization steps to declare certain referent objects existentially threatened. Just as Hansen (2000: 306) observes: "Security is not just a speech act. It is rooted in the production of special subjectivities that represent the starting point for the articulation of the threat and the threatened". This means that security cannot be viewed solely as a speech act. Equally important as *what* is said is the one *who* speaks and the social capital he possesses (Stritzel, 2007). With this in mind, the thesis I would like to examine here is that gender, as part of the securitizing actor's social capital, is of crucial importance for the way in which the (de)securitization process will evolve.

The concept of feminist ethics of care developed by the American theorist Carol Gilligan (Gilligan, 1982) may be helpful in understanding this phenomenon. The ethics of care works by not resorting to abstract moral principles that would be applied in specific situations that require moral judgment, such as crisis and emergency situations (Gilligan, 1982: 3), but by finding unique and creative solutions required by that specific situation (Kymlicka, 2009: 440-468). In the ethics of care, the emphasis is on relationships between people rather than on abstract rules, and it seeks to minimize

the suffering of a large number of actors in a particular situation. Therefore, including the needs of the largest number of actors and enabling their fulfillment in a comprehensive manner is a basic principle when making a moral decision (Kymlicka, 2009: 467). This inclusion is achieved, *inter alia*, through regular communication of decision makers with the actors to whom the decision relates (Gilligan, 1982; Hill, 1994).

Gilligan (1982) points out that the ethics of care is a unique “female” voice¹ in moral decision-making, which exudes empathy and solidarity. This voice is not determined solely by biological properties, but is a product of the socialization and learning process, during which women leaders are taught to be more cooperative, more prone to compromise and more compassionate, and thus more democratic than their male counterparts (Regan and Paskeviciute, 2003: 291).

Her theory is confirmed by empirical studies that deal with the influence of gender on the creation of environmental policies (Hill, 1994). These studies, using like Gilligan (1982) a qualitative interview method, show that in a complex policy-making process, female decision-makers opt for strategies that meet the needs of all parties concerned, especially children, rather than male decision-makers, and that a much larger number of female decision-makers see emotion as an essential component of effective decision-making (Hill, 1994). Also, these strategies are the product of communication of a broad number of actors and the need to consider the “wholeness of the problem”.

If we apply this to the securitization of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a crisis and moral situation, we can expect that women leaders will opt for an approach based on empathy and inclusion of the needs of the largest number of people. Their security discourses and practices should reflect an orientation towards minimizing the suffering of the largest number of citizens, as well as regular communication in order to return society to its daily functioning as soon as possible, when the needs of the largest number of people are met.

The following part of this paper will test these hypotheses on the examples of five democracies led by women leaders.

1 Gilligan (1982) considers the ethics of care, as a special type of moral reasoning, as a dialectical construction that manifests itself in a unique “female” voice and as such reflects on the discourse by which women describe and shape the world around them.

Women leaders and (de)securitization of COVID-19

Using the qualitative method of a comparative case study on the examples of New Zealand, Norway, Germany, Taiwan and Iceland, the impact of the securitizing actor's gender on the approach taken during the securitization of the COVID-19 pandemic during the first pandemic wave of April 2020 will be examined. These countries have been chosen due to the fact that all five are stable democracies, that they are led by women leaders and that they have had notable successes in fighting the virus within a consistent timeframe (April 2020), at least judging by world media reports.

The qualitative method was chosen because it corresponds to empirical research that has already tried to apply the ethics of care in explaining policy making. Newspaper articles and videos from relevant media such as The Washington Post, The New Yorker, Euronews, etc. were used as data sources, describing practices undertaken or containing statements given by women leaders of the countries concerned, their interviews or public addresses. During the detailed analysis of sources, in order to test the hypotheses, special attention is paid to the following indicators: type, number and duration of special measures proposed and introduced, their effectiveness, population group to which measures are communicated, use of specific words and phrases or special emphasis on certain key concepts such as empathy, solidarity, etc.

Madam Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern has shown remarkable ability to manage the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In addition to her determination to close borders, schools and local businesses early and to appeal to all citizens to stay at home and reduce social contacts, already during the first wave of the pandemic she introduced a specific measure – cutting the salaries of her cabinet members by 20 percent in a six-month period, as a show of solidarity with New Zealanders who lost their jobs due to the pandemic (Hassan, O'Grady, 2020). In addition, special measures were communicated to citizens on a daily basis, with very precise indications of the duration of the measures, necessary to show how effective they were (Matthews, 2020). As a result, New Zealand had only nine new cases in April 2020 and suspended most measures as early as on 27 April, 2020, in order to return society to day-to-day functioning, only 4 weeks after the introduction of lockdown (Hassan, O'Grady, 2020). Special attention was paid to the youngest population, who were informed on social networks in a witty and reassuring way (Hassan, O'Grady, 2020). Also, when giving statements, the Prime Minister especially emphasized the importance of empathy during emergency situations, which, according to many, demonstrated that leadership can be both decisive and humane (Hassan, O'Grady, 2020).

Another female Prime Minister who devoted special attention to communicating special measures to the youngest is Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, who called both the youngest and their parents through video conferences, answering questions such as: “What can I do to help?”, “When can I visit my grandparents?” or “How long does it take to make a vaccine?” (Marx, 2020). In several addresses to the media, Madam Prime Minister pointed out that it is important to inform all age groups on how to be responsible in a pandemic, and that it is extremely important for children to feel that they are taken seriously in serious situations, such as a pandemic (Hassan, O’Grady, 2020). At the same time, she reminded the public that it was quite normal to be afraid, thus introducing a “human” dimension in addressing the public. For the sake of comparison, at about the same time in the United States, President Donald Trump, in his address to the nation, devoted attention to big-capital holders, comparing companies with communities (Marx, 2020). Also, unlike the United States, Norway wholeheartedly supports the activities of the World Health Organization, with which it cooperates in the development of the vaccine for the virus, about which Madam Prime Minister regularly informs the citizens. Due to the preventive approach and reliance on the profession and science, Norway was one of the countries with the lowest number of new cases in April 2020, which is why, a month after the introduction of special measures to restrict movement and social contacts, they started mitigating them.

A similar commitment to returning society to normalcy early on during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic was also demonstrated by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. In addition to comparing the severity of the pandemic to the Second World War², in her impressive address to the nation, she refreshed the usual rational tone with empathetic and personal notes, reminding people that every victim is somebody’s partner, father, or mother. Emphasized here, even more than the historical example, was the element of relations and connections between people, in the name of which the Chancellor called for solidarity. Also, Germany is one of the rare countries whose crisis committee, in addition to experts in biology and medicine, also has a considerable number of social scientists such as philosophers and psychologists, which indicates its commitment to both physical and spiritual and mental health of its citizens during the state of emergency (Milanović, 2020). In addition, the Chancellor openly shared the data on the number of infected people and deaths and accordingly urged all citizens to act responsibly (Chazan, 2020). Such measures contributed to the fact that soon after the imposition of restrictions on freedoms such as public assembly and the closure of certain facilities, Germany decided to gradually return its society to normalcy, just six weeks after registering the first deaths from the virus (Chazan, 2020).

2 Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWzpSEFDYJM>

Finally, countries like Taiwan and Iceland, which also have female leaders, demonstrate simultaneously their determination to actively fight the virus through strong preventive measures – Taiwan, but also solidarity and resourcefulness in the use of special measures, including free testing for the virus – Iceland (Hassan, O’Grady, 2020). What these countries have in common is their reliance on the profession and science, while politicians have “managed to control themselves” and to limit themselves to communicating measures and plans proposed by public health experts (Colbert, 2020). This resulted in a small number of deaths (only six cases in Taiwan during the first wave of the pandemic) and the return of society to normalcy in Iceland on 4 May (Hassan, O’Grady, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to show how the securitizing actor's gender, which is part of his/her social capital, determines the approach to the (de)securitization process. The first part of the paper pointed out that the commitment to desecuritization, which is reflected through security discourses and practices of securitizing actors, often represents a stronghold from which citizens give legitimacy for to the imposition of special measures. The second part of the paper examined the way in which gender impacts the securitization of the current COVID-19 pandemic, giving the examples of five countries led by women leaders. In addition to introducing "classical" measures to restrict movement, social contacts and closing borders and local affairs, women leaders introduced some very specific measures, which were actively communicated to all age groups. Their security discourses were adjusted to their audiences, but despite pointing to the extreme seriousness of the situation, they exuded empathy, solidarity and a reassuring tone. Thus, an authentic "dimension of concern" was introduced in dealing with the virus, which, according to European Central Bank Director Christine Lagarde, had been noticed by observers and voters around the world (Arnold, 2020). Finally, this approach has resulted in a relatively rapid mitigation of emergency measures, which is a testimony of the commitment of women leaders to desecuritization.

The discussion about the potential shortcomings of this test could start with the remark that the number of examined cases is insufficient to confirm the hypotheses. However, considering the allowed length of the paper, this number is justified, and even more so if we take into account the use of the qualitative method that shows all the advantages of detailed and in-depth analysis only on a smaller number of cases. On the other hand, despite the fact that New Zealand recently recorded its first new cases after a hundred virus-free days³ and that the number of new cases in Germany is on the rise in August 2020, these numbers are still considerably lower than in other states, especially bearing in mind the speed of mitigation and suspension of emergency measures. Finally, some might point out that the securitizing actor's gender is not a crucial determinant when opting for desecuritization, but rather the fact that these are democratic states. Nevertheless, this does not explain the difference in the outcomes and duration of special measures taken by world democracies led by female and male leaders when faced with the COVID-19 virus.

3 The news is available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53761122>

The ethics of care as a concept developed by some feminist theorists, which gives priority to finding specific solutions in specific situations, rather than to generalizing and invoking abstract universal principles and great historical examples, may explain the approach that female leaders take in managing the current crisis and their orientation toward returning the society to a state in which the needs of the largest number of people are met. If we do not perceive gender essentialistically, but as a product of social practices and socialization processes, we will realize that women leaders have learnt how to be more cooperative, more prone to compromise and more compassionate than their male colleagues, which is especially manifested in times of emergency and crisis situations, when they opt for the approach based on human needs.

On the one hand, this may indicate that there are still different standards in the education and socialization of men and women, due to which female leaders will be more committed to desecuritization than male leaders. Nevertheless, some theorists suggest the possibility that the commitment to desecuritization is instrumentalized to collect political points (Hansen, 2012: 533). Bearing in mind that precisely this commitment is the stronghold from which citizens give legitimacy for the imposition of special measures, it is yet to be seen whether voters will recognize and reward the active and specific fight against the coronavirus that women leaders have undertaken around the world.

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INFORMATION IN EMERGENCY CIRCUMSTANCES (USE OF THE WAR METAPHOR DURING THE EARTHQUAKE, FLOODS AND THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN SERBIA)

Aleksandra SAVIĆ*, PhD candidate
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philology

Abstract: *The paper examines the use of the war metaphor during the 2010 earthquake in Kraljevo, the 2014 floods and the coronavirus pandemic in Serbia. The body of research comprises press releases of the Government of Serbia, including from 3 November 2010, when Kraljevo was hit by an earthquake, to the lifting of the emergency situation in that city on 12 March 2011; from the declaration of an emergency situation due to floods in Serbia on 15 May 2014, to the lifting of the emergency situation on 23 May; and finally, from the first recorded case of coronavirus infection, on 6 March 2020, to the lifting of the state of emergency on 6 May 2020. The data were collected in the course of June 2020. The aim of the research is to find out what political intentions lie behind the stated language strategy. By choosing this rhetorical tool, the speakers strive to achieve solidarity, discipline, unity of the people, but also to secure support for political and economic measures and the overall government policy, for which reason conclusion is made that the use of the war metaphor in emergency circumstances is rather ambivalent as it calls for unity and compassion but simultaneously triggers the feelings of anxiety, panic and fear.*

Keywords: *war metaphor, coronavirus, floods, earthquake, critical analysis*

* aleksandra.suvira@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Metaphor is used in political discourse to make certain topics more understandable to the public (Cammaerts, 2012: 5–6), namely to simplify complicated and often highly technical problems, and it can also be used to oppose views (Cammaerts, 2012: 6). One of the motives for using this language tool is to persuade the masses (Charteris-Black 2004: 248) and they can sometimes be used even unconsciously, because they are “deeply embedded in the historical and cultural context” (Silaški et al., 2009: 55).

War metaphors are very common in politics, so some researchers claim that their use is sometimes absurd (Flusberg et al., 2018: 4). Although widespread, the use of this rhetorical tool is by no means harmless and can have consequences, especially in societies that recently underwent the horrors of war or have a specific war history and tend to develop “unconscious post-war trauma” (Silaški et al., 2009: 57). Many have noticed the enhanced use of war metaphors during the coronavirus pandemic, not only in Serbia but also worldwide, and that war has become one of the most common linguistic ways to conceptualize the virus (Štrkalj Despot, 2020: 5). This hardly comes as a surprise, considering that the metaphor DISEASE IS WAR is one of the most frequent ones in health care (Sontag, 1989, as cited in Chiang, Duann, 2007: 580). In addition to health, this metaphor is often encountered during man-made or natural disasters (Trckova, 2012; Jenkins, 2015). Thus, during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy, a frequent repetition of this metaphor was registered (Jenkins, 2015: 151). Its use is usually preceded by personification of the state (Lakoff, Johnson, 2015: 31), and apart from the fact that the state is considered a living being, an important feature of this metaphor is that it is always based on a certain prototype of war (Flusberg et al., 2018: 8), common to all people, which implies the existence of opposing sides – good and evil; different goals of the conflicting parties; various attack or defense strategies; the army; more than one conflict; the end – be it a defeat or victory (Flusberg et al., 2018: 8). In political discourse, metaphors of war are “used in two cases: to emphasize the fight against a social evil with a negative connotation (e.g. war against drugs, terrorism, disease), or to describe the fight for a positively valued, useful social goal (e.g. fight for human rights, freedoms, etc.) (Charteris-Black 2004: 91, as cited by Silaški et al., 2009: 40). This paper aims to determine what ideological intentions are behind the use of the war metaphor in the political discourse of Serbia and whether in some cases it can be justified.

RESEARCH METHODS, HYPOTHESES AND SOURCES

The theoretical apparatus which serves as our framework includes the following theories and approaches: *political discourse*, which we understand as the use of linguistic tools in a political environment and for political purposes, or as a type of discourse to which political content or context refers (Wilson, 2001: 398); *the theory of conceptual metaphor*, according to which metaphor is not only a matter of language but also of opinion (Lakoff, Johnson, 2015: 5) and represents a tool that shapes the political opinion of citizens (Lakoff, 2008); *critical discourse analysis* that refers not only to the description of linguistic phenomena but also to their evaluation and re-examination (Fairclough, 2012; Van Dijk, 1998; Wodak, 2006); and finally *critical metaphor analysis* (Charteris-Black, 2004), whose task is to reveal the “hidden, possibly unconscious intentions of the speaker” (Charteris-Black, 2004: 34). Within the critical metaphor analysis, we can speak of the following methods: identification of metaphor, i.e. careful reading and recording of the metaphor; interpretation – establishing a connection between the metaphor and the cognitive and pragmatic factors determining it; and finally, an explanation of the metaphor, based on which we reveal the intention of the speaker, namely we identify ideological motivations (Charteris-Black, 2004: 39).

The paper has two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that the war metaphor is common in emergency situations in Serbia. The second hypothesis is that the use of metaphor has been significantly enhanced over the ten recent years and that dual political intentions are behind it.

ANALYSIS

The body of the paper comprises the announcements of the Government of Serbia during two biggest natural disasters in Serbia in the last ten years: the 2010 earthquake in Kraljevo, from 3 November 2010, when the earthquake occurred, to the lifting of the respective emergency situation on 12 March 2011; the 2014 floods – from 14 May, when the emergency situation was declared, to 23 May, when it was lifted; and during the coronavirus pandemic, i.e. from the first recorded case to the lifting of the state of emergency – from 6 March to 6 May, 2020. The material was searched in the course of June 2020, and the metaphors are given chronologically.

The source domain that lends its structure (Klikovac, 2004: 12) is war and by using it we understand the unknown, dangerous and incomprehensible domain of earthquakes, floods and diseases. By linking these two concepts, concrete and abstract, situations such as natural and health disasters that are inexplicable, unpredictable and beyond grasp are conceptualized as something known that we have already experienced. The linguistic tools that enable such replication are personification (the state and the disaster/disease as living beings), war (military) vocabulary, comparison, exaggeration, and confrontation of two sides (“us” – “them”).

The 2010 earthquake in Kraljevo¹

Regarding the statements by the Government of Serbia on the earthquake that hit Kraljevo in 2010, we found the smallest number of metaphors, only three to be precise, which was to be expected considering that the emergency situation was short-lasting and affected a smaller area than in the other two cases.

Today, the Minister of Diaspora in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Srđan Srećković, appealed to the Serbian diaspora to help the citizens of Kraljevo (...) after a devastating earthquake had **hit that city**. (*Diaspora Appeal for Assistance to the Citizens of Kraljevo*, Belgrade, 9 November, 2010);

These days, the citizens of Kraljevo are **waging a battle against** time in order to at least protect the ruins before the announced rains and snow. (*Diaspora Appeal for Assistance to the Citizens of Kraljevo*, Belgrade, 9 November, 2010);

*Members of the Army continue to help the population **affected by the earthquake*** (Belgrade, 29 December, 2010).

The examples above show that the war metaphors are quite simple and unelaborated; mostly used are already established and well-known linguistic descriptions, such as “battle against time”, which is used in a wide range of situations.

1 Examples are given by enclosing the title of the statement and the date in parentheses. In the case of a title, only the date of publication is written in parentheses. Due to limited space, all metaphors found are listed in Appendix 1, while some will be mentioned in the analysis

The 2014 floods

During the 2014 floods, water was often portrayed as aggressive, moody, and elusive, so the war metaphor only intensified animosity toward nature (Trckova, 2012: 147). Water was portrayed as the enemy of huge destructive power.

...that in the floods that **hit Serbia**, it is most important to save people's lives. (*Mlava breaches the embankment and threatens "Drmno" and "Kostolac"*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

... a 20-km-long, wide embankment was built, which should **withstand the surge of water** in the next 24 hours. (*Šabac is ready for the shock wave of the Sava*, Belgrade/Šabac, 17 May 2014);

For 40 hours already they have been continuously **defeating the Sava** and its tributaries. The highest level of the Sava is expected after 19:00 hrs, so we are now preparing for **an efficient and successful defense**, and we will **defend Šabac**. (*Tonight the Sava reaches its highest point in Šabac*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

... the state is **determined to defend the "Kostolac" mine** and thermal power plant and will use **all possible technical and operational methods**. (*The situation in the TPP "Kostolac" is under control*, Kostolac, 19 May 2014);

... in the Tamnava part of the Kolubara basin, which was **hit hardest by the floods**. (*The water continues to threaten the system of "Electric Power Industry of Serbia"*, Belgrade, 21 May 2014).

The inhabitants and the government are on the opposite side and are fighting against the water enemy

Vučić pointed out that **"war measures" would have to be applied** in Šabac. (*Volunteers needed to defend Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

He emphasized that the people participating in the rescue are **real heroes**. (*Volunteers needed to defend Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

Šabac is **well fortified**. (*Serbia is ready for the next flood wave*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

In some cases, the river itself was personified:

Mlava now **threatens the village** of Drmno. (*Mlava breaches the embankments near "Drmno"*, Belgrade/Kostolac, 18 May 2014).

We note that in this case of a natural disaster metaphors are more frequent and more complex, military terms are used often, and contrary to the first example, that of the earthquake, here we see the state emerge as a defender and a party ready to do anything to save the people from the natural disaster. Even though the body of this paper contains many examples of the use of war metaphors, they are more or less similar linguistic constructions.

Coronavirus

Within this metaphor, Serbia is on the side of good, while Covid-19 is evil. The virus is portrayed as an enemy, a plague that needs to be defeated and eradicated, and Serbia, its government, people, doctors, police and army as brave warriors protecting their country and loved ones, whereby in the case of this pandemic the rationalization of war is quite obvious (Silaški et al., 2009:39) because it is presented as positive, inevitable and obligatory. Interestingly, the war metaphors were used equally by politicians and epidemiologists.

In Metaphors

*Serbia is **fighting the coronavirus** in a good way* (Belgrade, 11 March 2020);

... that the state is there and **will protect them in every way**. (*Citizens need to behave more responsibly*, Belgrade, 16 March 2020);

... that the state will **fight twice as hard** as before. (*The third victim of coronavirus infection in Serbia*, Belgrade, 23 March 2020);

Serbia is a protector, a guardian that is ready to do anything to defend its people, which only enhances trust in the state, in which metaphors indicating global solidarity are also helpful.

*A **joint fight** of the EU and Serbia with the coronavirus crisis* (Belgrade, 13 April 2020);

On the other hand, there is an extremely powerful virus. Given that during the pandemic there was little information around the world about the mode of infection and the course of the disease, and that they were often contradictory, this enemy is unpredictable and dangerous.

... an **invisible enemy** at a global level. (*Date of the Olympic Games uncertain*, Belgrade, April 14, 2020);

Every measure is being taken to **protect** the country, because, as he said, **surrender is not an option**. (*State of emergency declared in the entire territory of Serbia, Belgrade, March 15, 2020*);

Each war has several stages and this one is no different – it includes a number of key battles, where the fighting morale must be constantly maintained because the enemy strikes unexpectedly and strongly, and the battle won does not mean that the war is over. The spread of the infection is a battle, and like in any war, there are casualties.

This is in fact a **state of war**. (*A total of 741 cases of coronavirus infection registered in Serbia, Belgrade, March 29, 2020*);

... the **strongest blow to the health care system** (*Citizens are to respect the state's emergency measures, Belgrade, 16 March 2020*);

... another **epidemic strike**. (*The epidemic is under control and its end on the horizon, Belgrade, 15 April 2020*);

The first battle has been won as far as Niš is concerned. It is not the end, there is still **a lot to combat** (*Considerable improvement of the situation expected in Niš, Niš, April 17, 2020*);

Five new coronavirus victims in Serbia (Belgrade, April 21, 2020);

A military vocabulary was used very often:

... **offensive against Covid-19**. (*Serbia to face a more serious situation regarding the epidemic in the coming days, Belgrade, 27 March 2020*);

It is important to understand that each one of us is **on the front line in the fight against coronavirus** and that in this state of emergency **everyone has a war schedule** that reads “stay at home”. (*Respect the measures also during the upcoming holidays, Belgrade, April 15, 2020*).

Health workers are brave warriors who are on the front line and that role was sometimes assigned to the government, the police, but also to the people.

... and **doctors are acting heroically** (*As of 08:00 hrs tomorrow all border crossings to be closed for passenger traffic, Belgrade, 19 March 2020*);

...because they are **the striking fist and the most courageous part of our society**. (*The number of people infected with coronavirus expected to rise in the next 72 hours, Belgrade, April 2, 2020*).

Authors Silaški, Đurović and Radić Bojanić noted that war, together with sport, is part of the “conceptual apparatus through which politics is experienced as a commonly male domain” (Silaški et al., 2009: 38), but our research has shown, albeit sparsely, that in the case of coronavirus there are no gender stereotypes.

... the **heroines of this age** must be cherished and cared for. (*Women deserve special attention in this difficult time*, Belgrade, March 22, 2020).

The war in the statements sometimes acquires mythological forms

I am happy with **the fight so far**, it is a **real war against the invisible enemy** and therefore harder. Now that **struggle is becoming more complex and is waged on several fronts**. (*The state is ready for more rigorous measures if necessary*, Belgrade, 29 March 2020);

...and in some cases it is consciously compared to past wars, as in the following examples:

We are **used to the state of emergency** in Kosovo and Metohija, we have been living in it not merely for 20 years; rather, most people living in Kosmet have been in a state of emergency all their lives. (*A call to our citizens in Kosmet to adhere to the measures of the Government of Serbia*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

... once the **fight against this greatest plague of the modern world since World War II** is over. (*Ban on movement for people above the age of 65 in force as of tomorrow*, Belgrade, March 17, 2020)

Obviously the use of war metaphors has been slowly increasing during these past ten years. From the random mention of already established metaphorical expressions during the earthquake, or often repeated same metaphorical non-inventive tools during floods, during the coronavirus we already distinguish a clear communication strategy. All roles are divided – the disease is a plague to be defeated, the state is a protector, doctors are heroes/heroines, and citizens need to show combat readiness and be determined and disciplined at all times – thus fully establishing the pattern of real war. Likewise, there is a very dangerous parallel with previous wars. In order to point out the necessity of discipline and strengthen trust in the government and epidemiologists, speakers often refer to past battles that evoke emotions in the public, but also a sense of anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Our research shows that the war metaphor is often used in situations of natural and health disasters, which are otherwise abstract and inexplicable phenomena, and it is not specific to this pandemic alone. However, by chronological analysis of communication during the earthquake, floods and the pandemic, we noticed that in recent years this metaphor has been significantly enhanced – from the rare mention of well-known and popular phrases to the fully established prototype of war. The intensified metaphor is accompanied by ever more frequent conferences, announcements and statements, as well as numerous limitations and restrictions of freedom. During the coronavirus pandemic, the metaphor of war is used almost daily by both politicians and epidemiologists, it has the largest numbers of sub-metaphors and it is a very creative tool. While in the first two cases it was possibly used unconsciously, in the case of the coronavirus pandemic it is a very conscious strategy used by politicians, recorded also in other countries, which results not only in emphasizing discipline and solidarity, or in spreading fear and panic, but some hidden political intentions are noticeable as well. We conclude that both hypotheses – that the metaphor is common in emergencies in Serbia and that its use has intensified over time – have been confirmed.

Regarding the view expressed in the hypotheses that the use of the war metaphor for these purposes is extremely ambivalent, we note that this is a complex rhetorical tool that can be used at one time to call for determination, togetherness in tragedy, the importance of helping our loved ones, but if used at a wrong moment, it can intensify the feeling of fear, panic, boost nationalism, cause a sharp division between “us” and “them”, and can even trigger a feeling that any disunity of the people means defeat in war, which in the long run brings big support to only one political option (Štrkalj Despot, 2020: 7). Also, the danger of such tools increases if the communication is accompanied by other steps during the emergency situation, such as economic, health, or political measures. We will offer hereinafter several consequences of the use of the war metaphor in public space during the coronavirus pandemic, when most of these linguistic tools were recorded:

a) Collective readiness

It is achieved by frequent parallels with the specific war experiences that Serbia underwent (World War II, Kosovo), which, in addition to raising morale and discipline among the people, who still remember the horrible collective suffering, brings back memories of great war losses. The dominant feeling associated with this strategy is fear, which is also the primary function of the war metaphor in political discourse (Flusberg et al., 2018: 13). Calls for togetherness, for gathering around one common

goal, where all disagreements are left aside, when individual needs become irrelevant and only collective opinion and reasoning is valued, result in a strong collective sense of responsibility. The danger of this pattern is a fully cooperative mass whose only goal is struggle and victory, and it is much easier to control and any dissenting voice can easily be neutralized.

b) Atomized individuals

Unlike the above mentioned danger, which puts the collective spirit first, other potential, equally possible risks are fully atomized and separated individuals, who in a pandemic situation become a threat to each other's lives and enemies, and the only close collaborator is the state on which they must and can rely. Such communication, together with the recommendations of physical distance between people, creates also a social distance in which individuals cannot gather for another common goal, which is not a disease, and thus they, as in the first case, become an easy target for control.

c) Appeals to make sacrifice for the state

Due to the uncertain outcome of the disaster, as well as alienation and fear, the state becomes the only reliable collaborator. The needs of the state and the collective are beyond the needs of individuals and everything must be subordinated to this battle. Every decision and measure made by the state is in the citizens' best interest, which opens the door for political decisions or means with which the citizens would not normally agree.

d) Security of citizens

The mode of communication during emergencies, together with the accompanying political decisions – abolition of various freedoms and imposition of restrictions, homogenization of public space with daily public addresses, radicalization of the media, contribute to the feeling of insecurity among citizens. We can establish that, in addition to the threat to health and economic and political security, there is also a threat to individual security of citizens, who are pushed by the war rhetoric into hopelessness, anxiety, feelings of fear, panic and despair, and even serious mental disorders. So lonely and insecure, with limited personal freedoms, they can fall victim to any policy.

Politicians and decision-makers should have a clear idea of the rhetorical strategies they use, if they are not aware of them, and if they are, of the effects that such tools can produce, and regardless of the purpose for which they are used each individual should be able to recognize what ideological intentions are behind the use of metaphors, which requires not only an enviable linguistic ability but also a developed political consciousness.

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APPENDIX 1. List of war metaphors in statements of the Government of Serbia during the 2010 earthquake in Kraljevo, the 2014 floods and the 2020 coronavirus pandemic

a) Earthquake

Today, the Minister of Diaspora in the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Srđan Srećković, appealed to the Serbian diaspora to help the citizens of Kraljevo (...) after a devastating earthquake had **hit that city**. (*Diaspora Appeal for Assistance to the Citizens of Kraljevo*, Belgrade, 9 November, 2010);

These days, the citizens of Kraljevo are **waging a battle against** time in order to at least protect the ruins before the announced rains and snow. (*Diaspora Appeal for Assistance to the Citizens of Kraljevo*, Belgrade, 9 November, 2010);

Members of the Army continue to help the population affected by the earthquake (Belgrade, 29 December, 2010).

b) Floods

... a call upon all emergency headquarters on the territory of Serbia to introduce the **readiness of all entities** and take all necessary activities in order to implement **flood defense measures**. (*MoI helps citizens in endangered areas*, Valjevo/Osečina, 15 May 2014);

A huge **struggle** in underway **to strengthen the coast** of Kolubara, both on the left and on the right. (*MoI helps citizens in endangered areas*, Valjevo/Osečina, 15 May 2014);

... volunteers **to defend Šabac**. (*More than 3,000 volunteers sent to Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

He expressed gratitude to all those who volunteered **to help defend Šabac** from the floods. (*More than 3,000 volunteers sent to Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

... to help **defend that city** and **rescue people threatened by floods**. (Massive response of citizens to the Prime Minister's appeal to defend Šabac, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

... major natural disaster that **hit** the largest part of Serbia. (Call to companies to help remove the consequences of floods, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

... called on volunteers to **help defend the country** from the water surge (*Volunteers needed to defend Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

He asked for help **to defend Šabac**. (*Volunteers needed to defend Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014)

Vučić pointed out that “**war measures**” **must be used** in Šabac. (*Volunteers needed to defend Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

He pointed out that the people who participate in the rescue are **true heroes**. (*Volunteers needed to defend Šabac*, Belgrade, 16 May 2014);

... that in the floods that **hit Serbia**, it is most important to save people’s lives. (Mlava **breaches the embankment** and **threatens** “Drmno” and “Kostolac”, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

... a 20-km-long wide embankment was built, which should **withstand the surge of water** in the next 24 hours. (*Šabac is ready for the shock wave of the Sava*, Belgrade/Šabac, 17 May 2014);

... more than 10,000 members of the armed forces of the Serbian Army are on the ground, **on the first line of flood defense**, tasked with **saving human lives and property**. (*Mobilization of businessmen for post-flood reconstruction*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

... for the assistance provided so far in the fight against the **unprecedented natural disaster** that has affected Serbia. (*Dačić conveys gratitude to the states that helped Serbia*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

Assistance to Serbia **in the fight against floods**, both in terms of manpower and the necessary technical equipment, is coming from a number of countries. (*A number of countries send aid and rescue teams to Serbia*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

... **to defend Šabac from water**. (*Commissariat for Refugees and Migration helps the vulnerable*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

... funds provided by the European Union for the purpose of emergency assistance **in the fight against floods** and repair of damage. (*Request to the EU for additional assistance*, Belgrade, 17 May 2014);

Sava **threatens** to spill over. (*Tonight the Sava reaches its highest point in Šabac, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

... **cadets defending Šabac are heroes** of Serbia. (*Tonight the Sava reaches its highest point in Šabac, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

The army was given **the task to save Šabac**. (*Tonight the Sava reaches its highest point in Šabac, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

For 40 hours already they have been continuously **defeating the Sava** and its tributaries. The highest level of the Sava is expected after 19:00 hrs, so we are now preparing for **an efficient and successful defense**, and we will **defend Šabac**. (*Tonight the Sava reaches its highest point in Šabac, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

...to all athletes who, together with others, **defend Serbia day and night** from catastrophic floods. (*Athletes raise aid for Serbia, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

I would like to express my gratitude to all our athletes, sports federations, clubs, youth offices, police, army, firefighters and **all people defending their country**. (*Athletes raise aid for Serbia, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

Šabac is **well fortified**. (*Serbia is ready for the next wave of floods, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

He cautioned that the **Sava embankment had been breached**. (*Breaching of the Sava embankment near TENT poses a new threat to Obrenovac, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

... during the night, more than 6,000 citizens, members of the Ministry of the Interior and the Serbian Army worked hard in the field and as a result **defended this city from water surge**. The embankments at all critical points on the Sava near Šabac **are currently withstanding the water surges**, but the Sava is expected to surge further, so the **defense of that city remains a priority**. (*Breaching of the Sava embankment near TENT poses a new threat to Obrenovac, Belgrade, 17 May 2014*);

.. to the youth engaged in the **protection of the thermal power plant** in Kostolac, and on behalf of the Government of Serbia conveyed gratitude for their **courage, endurance and dedication in defending the country from floods**. (*Udovičić visits volunteers in Kostolac, Belgrade/Kostolac, 18 May 2014*);

Around 200 cadets of the Military Academy are engaged on the ramparts between the villages of Ševarice and Drenovac, where one of the three **critical points of the**

defense of Šabac is located. (*The Army begins rehabilitation and biological decontamination of the terrain in Ub*, Belgrade, 18 May 2014);

As he noted, the First Brigade of the Land Army has been engaged in **defending the city**. (*The Army begins rehabilitation and biological decontamination of the terrain in Ub*, Belgrade, 18 May 2014);

Mlava now **threatens the village** of Drmno. (*Mlava breaches the embankments near “Drmno”*, Belgrade/Kostolac, 18 May 2014);

... the major **threat** is now posed by the Sava river (*The Sava is the **major threat** in the coming two days*, Belgrade, 18 May 2014);

.. all measures must be taken for us to **defend ourselves**. (*The Sava is the **major threat** in the coming two days*, Belgrade, 18 May 2014);

... **in flood defense**, some 223,000 sand bags for constructing the embankment were used in the threatened area. (*Aid from a number of states arrives in Serbia*, Belgrade, 18 May 2014);

... the state is **determined to defend the** “Kostolac” **mine** and thermal power plant and will use **all possible technical and operational methods**. (*The situation in TPP “Kostolac” is under control*, Kostolac, 19 May 2014);

... the **danger of water** has not yet passed, and he added that all measures have been taken **to defend this facility**. (*Defense of TPP “Nikola Tesla” from the new wave on the Sava*, Obrenovac, 19 May 2014);

... **defending** the pumping station. (*Defense of TPP “Nikola Tesla” from the new wave on the Sava*, Obrenovac, 19 May 2014);

... In Serbia, at the moment, the **most important fight is for Šabac**. (*Defense of Šabac is a priority*, Belgrade, 19 May 2014);

... gratitude to the government of that country for the assistance it provided to Serbia **in the fight against the floods**. (*Gratitude to Austria for its assistance to Serbia*, Belgrade, 19 May 2014);

... but that **does not mean that the danger has passed**, and he added that the ramparts are full of water and that **there is a real danger of a breach**. (*Emergency evacuation of villagers in the vicinity of Šabac, Šabac*, 19 May 2014);

This **line of flood defense** was visited yesterday by... (*The Army is engaged on the critical section of Kuzmin-to-Bosut, Belgrade, 19 May 2014*);

Aleksandar Obradović reiterated that the situation was complicated and that the **danger had not passed**. (*TENT must be protected from floods, Obrenovac, 20 May 2014*);

... young people throughout Serbia have shown a high degree of maturity and responsibility by participating in **defending the country from floods**. (*Young volunteers are clearing the terrain in Obrenovac, Obrenovac, 20 May 2014*).

... in the Tamnava part of the Kolubara basin, which was **hit hardest by the floods**. (*Water continues to threaten the system of "Elektroprivreda Srbije" (Electric Power Utilities of Serbia), Belgrade, 21 May 2014*);

... helped in the **defense against water surge** and made invaluable contribution to our efforts to **defend ourselves from this unprecedented natural disaster**. (Vučić sends a letter of gratitude to Russia, Belgrade, 23 May 2014);

c) Coronavirus

*Serbia is **fighting the coronavirus** in a good way (Belgrade, 11 March 2020)*;

*The government has adopted new measures **to combat coronavirus** (Belgrade, 11 March 2020)*;

*A call to citizens to show **solidarity in the fight against coronavirus** (Belgrade, 13 March 2020)*;

...because they are joining **the first line of the fight** (*A Call for citizens' solidarity in the fight against coronavirus, Belgrade, 13 March 2020*);

... and underlined that the **fight against the coronavirus requires joint efforts and coordination of activities** (*Solidarity and support to Switzerland in the fight against the epidemic, Belgrade, 14 March 2020*);

Speaking about hoteliers and caterers, Ljajić said that they too will **be affected** (*Basic foodstuffs market is stable, Belgrade, 15 March 2020*);

He pointed out that **as of today Serbia is at war against the enemy it must defeat** (*A state of emergency declared on the entire territory of Serbia, Belgrade, March 15, 2020*);

All measures are being taken to protect the country, because, as he said, **surrender is not an option**. (*A state of emergency declared on the entire territory of Serbia*, Belgrade, March 15, 2020);

This is a **fight of all of us**. **The individual's discipline** will determine the extent to which we as a country **can combat this**. (*Serbia closes borders due to coronavirus*, Belgrade, 15 March 2020);

Brnabić said that **without solidarity the epidemic cannot be defeated** (*A plea to citizens to respect the state's emergency measures*, Belgrade, 16 March 2020);

... **manage to successfully combat the COVID-19 virus** and that **Serbia will win this battle**. (*First aid to Serbia from the People's Republic of China*, Belgrade, 16 March 2020);

The Government of the Republic of Serbia is **fully committed to combatting the spread of the coronavirus** (*New Government Measures to fight COVID-19*, Belgrade, 16 March 2020);

... **the strongest blow to the health care system** (*A plea to citizens to respect the state's emergency measures*, Belgrade, 16 March 2020);

... that the state is there and will **protect them in every way**. (*Citizens need to behave more responsibly*, Belgrade, 16 March 2020);

We can **conquer this and have the lowest possible number of victims only if we all fight together** (*The possibility of introducing more rigorous measures not excluded*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

... and to achieve **full protection of the health system and medical workers** because they will bear the **greatest burden of the struggle** (*The possibility of introducing more rigorous measures not excluded*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

All adopted measures are aimed solely at **preserving your life and health**, but the Government **cannot win this battle alone** (*New Government Measures to Fight COVID-19*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

... we **can come out from this battle victorious** (*New Government Measures to Fight COVID-19*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

... in order to **combat the coronavirus together and prevent our loved ones from becoming victims** (*Appeal to our citizens in Kosmet to adhere to the measures of the Government of Serbia*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

We are **used to the state of emergency** in Kosovo and Metohija, we have lived in it not merely for 20 years; rather, most people living in Kosmet have been in a state of emergency all their lives. (*A call to our citizens in Kosmet to adhere to the measures of the Government of Serbia*, Belgrade, 17 March 2020);

... when the **fight against this greatest plague of the modern world since World War II** is over. (*Ban on the movement of people over the age of 65 in force as of tomorrow*, Belgrade, March 17, 2020)

The following days are extremely important in the fight against coronavirus (Belgrade, 18 March 2020);

... we react promptly **to all new threats** (*A permanent channel of communication with the Serbian IT community has been opened*, Belgrade, 19 March 2020);

... for us to have a sufficient number of healthy doctors **to protect us** in the long run (*The police files 87 criminal and misdemeanor charges*, Belgrade, 19 March 2020);

.. **and doctors are behaving heroically** (*As of 08:00 hrs tomorrow all border crossings closed for passenger traffic*, Belgrade, 19 March 2020);

... to give our health care system **enough time to defend itself** (*The police files 87 criminal and misdemeanor charges*, Belgrade, 19 March 2020);

to have **the lowest possible number of victims** in this war (*The first coronavirus patient dies in Serbia*, March 20, 2020);

... paying tribute to the doctors and medical staff who **fought like lions for his life**. (*The first coronavirus patient dies in Serbia*, Belgrade, March 20, 2020);

... the **heroines of this age** must be cherished and cared for. (*Women deserve special attention in this difficult time*, Belgrade, March 22, 2020).

... how and by what means to treat and **attack coronavirus** in health and medical terms (*The third victim of the coronavirus infection in Serbia*, Belgrade, 23 March 2020);

... that the state will **fight twice as hard** from now on. (*The third victim of the coronavirus infection in Serbia*, Belgrade, 23 March 2020);

.. switch to a **new method of fighting** coronavirus. (*Serbia registers a total of 303 COVID-19 cases*, Belgrade, 24 March 2020);

... that is intended **to combat the coronavirus**, with a remark that a **battle** to procure equipment is constantly **waged**. (*Providing the best possible conditions for people who will be accommodated at the Belgrade Fair*, Belgrade, 25 March 2020);

... the **offensive against Covid-19**. (*Serbia to face a more serious epidemic-related situation in the coming days*, Belgrade, 27 March 2020);

... by staying there they **protect their families** and that is the most efficient way for us as a society to **fight and defeat the virus**. (*The Belgrade Fair has the best possible conditions for receiving the infected*, Belgrade, 27 March 2020);

I am happy with **the fight so far**, it is a **real war against the invisible enemy** and therefore harder. Now that **struggle is becoming more complex and is waged on several fronts**. (*The state is ready for more rigorous measures if necessary*, Belgrade, 29 March 2020);

Congratulations to the medical staff, doctors, nurses and technicians who are **on the front lines and who are fighting relentlessly**. (*The state is ready for even more rigorous measures if necessary*, Belgrade, 29 March 2020);

... the spread of the infection poses a **threat to all of humanity**. (*Another 90 tons of medical equipment arrive at Belgrade Airport*, Belgrade, March 29, 2020);

This is in fact a **state of war**. (*A total of 741 cases of coronavirus infection registered in Serbia*, Belgrade, March 29, 2020);

... the **heroic efforts** of our national airline. (*NIS donates 270 tons of air fuel to Air Serbia*, Belgrade, April 1, 2020);

... because they are **the striking fist and the most courageous part of our society**. (*The number of people infected with coronavirus expected to rise in the next 72 hours*, Belgrade, April 2, 2020).

We will not win **this war** (*The number of deaths in the last 24 hours is the highest so far*, Belgrade, April 3, 2020);

In the previous period, the Ministry of Interior **bore a significant burden in the fight against coronavirus** (*Movement controls intensified throughout Serbia*, Belgrade, April 5, 2020);

... that the next two weeks are the time when our society **falls or wins that fight**. (*Upcoming two weeks will be crucial in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 5, 2020);

... and that as of today, when it comes to Belgrade, **the core of the fight will be taken over** by the primary health care (*In Serbia, 7 more people die of coronavirus-related consequences*, Belgrade, April 5, 2020);

Together to Victory. (*Support medical workers*, Belgrade, 7 April 2020);

... what we are all doing together is the **basis of a true fight against this infection.** (*The total number of people infected by coronavirus is 2,447*, Belgrade, April 7, 2020);

... because hopefully we are entering something that would look like the **end of the fight against coronavirus** (*Great importance of China's support and assistance in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 8, 2020);

... however, this does not mean that we will soon be able to **declare victory** and end the state of emergency, but it is certainly the part **where we know how to fight** (*Great importance of China's support and assistance in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, 8 April 2020);

... in order to **not only suppress the virus but to completely defeat it** (*Great importance of China's support and assistance in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 8, 2020);

This proved to be one of the key steps in China's **strategy to fight – and to win – against the new coronavirus.** (*China donates two coronavirus testing laboratories to Serbia*, Belgrade, April 8, 2020);

... a **joint struggle of European countries** is necessary in order to overcome as easily as possible the challenges faced by the entire world. The interlocutors agreed that only a **joint fight against this plague** will succeed in **further strengthening both Serbia and Hungary** after the end of the pandemic. (*Joint fight of Serbia and Hungary against the consequences of coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 9, 2020);

... so that together we can **emerge victorious from this battle** in the shortest possible time. (**The Government decides to extend the movement ban during the weekend**, Belgrade, 9 April 2020);

... whether we will be able to **suppress the virus**, which has **strength and activity** only when many people are infected. (*In Serbia, 3,105 people infected with coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 10, 2020);

... in health terms, where **battle is waged** for every life, and in economic terms, where **battle is waged** for every job. (*The state takes on a heavy burden of the crisis*, Belgrade, 11 April 2020);

... encouragement to be **even stronger and even more persistent in this fight** (*Another donation of protective equipment to fight COVID-19*, Belgrade, 11 April 2020);

... and **the courage** we all have today is reflected in our ability to isolate ourselves. (*Another person dies of coronavirus in northern Kosmet*, Belgrade, April 11, 2020);

... **we fight so that no one else gets sick** (*In the Ministry of Interior, 157 persons infected with coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 13, 2020);

Joint struggle of the EU and Serbia against the coronavirus crisis (Belgrade, 13 April 2020);

... on behalf of the Chinese railways, **to pay tribute to the Government of Serbia and the Serbian people for the fight** against the coronavirus. (*Donation of the Chinese CRIC company for the fight against COVID-19*, Belgrade, April 13, 2020);

... an **invisible enemy** at a global level. (*Date of the Olympic Games uncertain*, Belgrade, April 14, 2020);

.... **to fight this crisis with less risk exposure**. (*EU continues to help Serbia fight coronavirus*, Belgrade, 14 April 2020);

... only together can we **defeat our common enemy**. (*EU continues to help Serbia fight coronavirus*, Belgrade, 14 April 2020);

It is important to understand that each of us is **on the front line in the fight against coronavirus** and that in this state of emergency **everyone has a war schedule** that reads “stay at home”. (*Respect the measures also during the upcoming holidays*, Belgrade, April 15, 2020).

...another **epidemic strike**. (*The epidemic is under control and its end is on the horizon*, Belgrade, 15 April 2020);

... because this is a **struggle for people's lives**. (*The epidemic is under control and its end is on the horizon*, Belgrade, 15 April 2020);

The first battle has been won as far as Niš is concerned. It is not the end, there is still **a lot to combat** (*Considerable improvement of the situation expected in Niš*, Niš, April 17, 2020);

We can only win this battle together. (*Blood plasma treatment – a new phase in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 17, 2020);

Our country and all citizens now have the opportunity **to win this war** (*Blood plasma treatment – a new phase in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 17, 2020);

... entered the seventh week of the **fight against the virus**. (*Blood plasma treatment – a new phase in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 17, 2020);

... entered a **new phase in the fight against coronavirus**. (*Blood plasma treatment – a new phase in the fight against coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 17, 2020);

*Construction workers are **our society's true heroes*** (Belgrade, April 17, 2020);

... they **contribute to this fight**, because that is the best and fastest way **to beat the coronavirus**. (*“Jugoimport – SDPR” donates protective equipment*, Belgrade, April 17, 2020);

... we will soon be able to **declare victory**. (*Brnabić welcomes the flight delivering medical equipment*, Belgrade, April 18, 2020);

... the **first and most severe coronavirus attack**. (*Big contribution of members of the First Brigade in the fight against coronavirus*, Bačka Topola, April 19, 2020);

... the invisible people who produce coal and electricity are **our heroes**. (*EPS workers maintain the country's energy stability*, Kostolac, 19 April 2020);

This is a **battle that is not over**. (*Relaxation of restrictive measures with maximum caution*, Belgrade, 20 April 2020);

...**the Chinese and Serbian people are fighting side by side against the novel virus**. (*The new laboratory at the Clinical Center of Serbia performs 2,000 tests per day*), Belgrade, April 20, 2020);

*Five new coronavirus **victims** in Serbia* (Belgrade, April 21, 2020);

... an important segment of the overall **fight against the pandemic**. (*Installation of EU-funded triage containers continues throughout Serbia*, Belgrade, 21 April 2020);

.. a **strategy** should be devised for the so-called import, i.e. re-entry of the virus into the country. (*Further decline in coronavirus cases*, Belgrade, 23 April 2020);

... our army is doing its best to **fight the coronavirus**. (*Serbian Army puts in maximum effort*, Belgrade, April 23, 2020);

... Serbia's **struggle** has support. (*Serbian Army puts in maximum effort*, Belgrade, April 23, 2020);

.... to persevere a little longer **until the final victory over the epidemic**. (*Improvement of the epidemiological situation in Kosovo and Metohija*, Belgrade, April 24, 2020);

... the only way to survive is to **close ranks**. (*Improvement of the epidemiological situation in Kosovo and Metohija*, Belgrade, April 24, 2020);

We still **cannot declare victory**. (*Serbia efficient in fighting the pandemic*, Belgrade, April 28, 2020);

I am proud of our citizens, institutions, the joint team of the Government and the President of the Republic, all our experts, doctors and medical staff, as well as all those who were **on the front line**. (*Serbia efficient in fighting the pandemic*, Belgrade, April 28, 2020).

...that we **fought the best we could**. (*The Assembly confirms the Decision on the introduction of the state of emergency and the adopted decrees*, Belgrade, April 29, 2020);

... to **successfully end the fight against the epidemic**. (*Another 285 people tested positive for coronavirus*, Belgrade, April 30, 2020);

THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 ON MIGRATION MOVEMENTS – FIGHT OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES AGAINST THE VIRUS AND XENOPHOBIA

Jovana NIKOLIĆ*, undergraduate student
University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences

Abstract: *The paper starts from the concept of human security, from the attempt to define it and its significance at a time when the whole world is fighting the COVID-19 virus. Further analyzed is the securitization of health issues, as well as measures taken by governments all over the world to protect their citizens, primarily measures relating to the restriction of movement. The author connects the mentioned theoretical concepts with empirical data on the status of migrants and refugees and their global treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to show that migrants and refugees have been fighting for months already against two enemies – the said virus and xenophobia.*

Keywords: *human security, COVID-19, migrants, health securitization, xenophobia*

* jovana.19.02@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

At the time when the author begins writing this paper, according to the World Health Organization slightly more than 29,155,000 people have been infected with the COVID-19 virus (World Health Organization, 2020b). It should be borne in mind that these are confirmed cases. The outstanding question is how many people actually carry this virus without showing any symptoms and thus without knowing that they are positive and that they may endanger the people around them unless adequate protection among them is applied. The mentioned virus has been a part of our daily lives for months already, so its study from the standpoint of all scientific disciplines is indeed very important. On daily basis there are news about various vaccines against this virus that are being developed around the world¹, as well as statements of renowned doctors and medical professors on that topic. However, apart from the medical standpoint, the problem of the COVID-19 virus spreading is also relevant from the standpoint of social sciences, especially from the human security standpoint.

In this paper the author therefore first addresses the concept of human security – what this concept includes and what possible problems exist when it comes to defining the term. In line with the concept of securitization, the author further addresses the securitization of health issues and the measures taken by governments worldwide to protect their citizens. The author connects all of the mentioned theoretical concepts and relevant empirical data and considers them relevant when it comes to migrants and refugees, their health and the difficulties they face during the pandemic. The core of this paper is the research into the consequences and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants and migration movements and the conclusion that the enemy which migrants and refugees have faced for months already is not only the coronavirus but also discrimination and xenophobia, which they also had to fight even before the pandemic outbreak, but only now that fight, according to the author, has become even more serious with the global spread of COVID-19.

1 Further information about the development of vaccines against COVID-19 can be found at the website of the World Health Organization:
<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/draft-landscape-of-covid-19-candidate-vaccines>

The concept of human security

“Human security is like 'sustainable development' – everyone is for it, but few people have a clear idea of what it means” (Paris, 2001: 88).

The concept of human security emerged after the end of the Cold War as a new level of analysis in security studies. This concept implies that the security policy analysis is no longer focused on the state or the nation but rather on the individual (Ejdus, 2012: 215). What is specific about human security is that it is a “point of contention” among authors around the world (Ejdus, 2012: 216). As can be seen from the aforementioned article by R. Paris, there is a significant part of the population that advocates human security even though a good part of them do not really know what that term includes. According to the 1994 *Human Development Report*, “it includes safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression” (United Nations Development Program, 1994, as cited by Ejdus, 2012: 219), while according to the 2004 *Human Security Doctrine for Europe*, “human security means individual freedom from basic insecurities” (Albrecht et al., 2004, as cited by Ejdus, 2012: 224). Whichever of the mentioned definitions of human security we opt for, the conclusion is the same – that the moments which we have been experiencing for months already, namely the COVID-19 pandemic, is a threat to human security. People all over the world fear for their health and their safety. Considering also the elements of human security cited by Paris, which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, but also community security (Paris, 2001: 90), the author concludes that the current pandemic threatens not only the health of individuals, but also impacts groups of individuals, and that in addition to health related consequences it also has economic and societal consequences.

Securitization of health issues

Regarding the concept of securitization, it would be unjust not to mention the ideological creator of this theory – Ole Wæver. According to Wæver, securitization is a “process that includes establishment of an existential threat, as well as the use of extraordinary measures to counter this threat” (Ejdus, 2012: 107). Applied to the situation we have been experiencing globally in recent months, it is inevitable that we speak of the COVID-19 virus ravaging the world as a threat which governments, i.e. political elites, have recognized as a risk to their societies and have accordingly resorted to imposing certain special measures to combat the pandemic. Considering that it is primarily human health that is most threatened by the spread of the pande-

mic, within that context we can talk about the securitization of health issues. Governments around the world, in their roles of securitizing actors, have taken the securitization steps they deemed appropriate and adopted certain special measures. Presidents or prime ministers, depending on the state, informed their general public about the global spread of the novel virus, which was not sufficiently known at the time but which was already threatening the health of their inhabitants. With the view to preventing the rapid spread of the virus among the population, various measures were taken, mostly relating to the restriction of movement and the prohibition of assembly. Thus, as early as in late January the Italian government suspended flights to and from China, and in late February it formed the so-called Red and Yellow (quarantine) Zones, closed a number of schools, abolished public gatherings, etc. (La Repubblica, 2020). The address of the Serbian President of March 14, 2020 is but an example of a successful securitization move. Namely, using the security grammar that included, inter alia, the “invisible enemy”, “state of emergency”, “most difficult battle” (N1 Belgrade, 2020), he drew the attention of the Serbian citizens to the danger of the novel virus, whose spread was made known to them via various media, and stressed the importance of certain special measures aimed to protect the citizens.

As stated in the 2019 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, “infectious diseases epidemics and pandemics may jeopardize the population of the Republic of Serbia and carry the risk of occurrence of more difficult economic and social effects” (p. 10). Both in our country and in countries worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only endangered the health of the population but has also led to significant economic consequences. Thus, we learned that the United States, the leading global power, registered the highest level of unemployment since the Great Depression (Long, Van Dam, 2020). In order to prevent the spread of the virus and mitigate the economic and social consequences for their populations, governments worldwide have resorted to various measures, of which this paper highlight as most relevant the restrictions of movement, implying restrictions of movement within and between cities and within and between states. Considering that the imposed measures differed from state to state, even today, just like in the previous months, there is an ongoing debate concerning the level and extent of success of particular measures. The media often highlights Sweden as an example of a state that has, so to speak, relied on the conscientiousness of its residents to keep the recommended social distance, avoid contacts with others etc., rather than on imposing coercive measures such as closing of restaurants and clubs, public bathing areas, or the closure of entire cities (Savage, 2020).

Treatment of migrants and refugees during the COVID-19 pandemic

“We must act now to strengthen the immunity of our societies against the virus of hate.”

António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (United Nations, 2020a)

The previous paragraph referred to various forms of movement restrictions as a measure to prevent the spread of the virus. Considering this paper’s topic, the most relevant prohibition for the author is the ban on interstate movement. During the months when the virus “moved” from state to state, millions of people, for various reasons, also tried to cross state borders. People fleeing from war and violence or seeking an opportunity for a better life² have been a part of our daily lives much longer than since the outbreak of the novel virus that has marked our recent months. The statistics for 2018 shows that 2.4 million people from non-EU countries entered the EU, whereas on January 1, 2019, the EU member states hosted 21.8 million people who were non-EU citizens. (Eurostat, 2020). The said numbers show but a part of one continent, namely only a part of the global reality. Regrettably, for people who have the status of migrants and refugees, the reality is even harsher. First of all, as was already said, a large part of them flee from violence and misery of every kind. Furthermore, on the way to their goal they face considerable threats for their lives such as, for example, sailing across the Mediterranean in overcrowded boats (BBC News, 2018), and when they do reach their goal, the treatment they will get in the host country is uncertain. When above all we add the fact that the world is plagued by a virus which is still insufficiently known, and which claims human lives every day even in the most organized states, their reality becomes even more difficult. The position of migrants and refugees in the host countries and on the way to their goal, and how they are perceived during the current pandemic, will be discussed in the following pages.

The importance of migrants in the host countries, from the economic viewpoint, is not negligible. As John Letzing points out in his article for the World Economic Forum, “migrants contribute 10% of global GDP” (Letzing, 2020). Migrants also account for a significant share (15-20%) of the labor force in host countries classified as advanced economies (Jaumotte, Koloskova and Saxena, 2016). According to the authors of the said text, whose claims we can agree with as they are supported by empirical evidence: “High-skilled migrants bring diverse talent and expertise, while low-skilled migrants fill essential occupations for which natives are in short supply and allow natives to be employed at higher-skilled jobs” (Jaumotte et al., 2016). Also, statistics

2 More information about the difference between the terms “migrants” and “refugees” is available at <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/>.

for September 2020 showed that of the twenty states most affected by the COVID-19 virus, in at least seven (Switzerland, Canada, USA, Spain, Italy, Germany, France), the critical health care services sector is dependent on workers born abroad (Migration Data Portal, 2020). Now the question arises: if the migrants living in the host countries bring benefits to them, even if only from the economic standpoint, what treatment do they deserve in a situation where all people are faced with an enemy which does not choose who to attack by skin color, nationality, work status, etc. According to the review of the analytical group KNOMAD (Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development) from April 2020, some states have extended the duration of visas for workers with migrant status, but precisely these workers are more vulnerable to loss of employment due to the economic crisis that has affected the countries worldwide because of the COVID-19 pandemic (KNOMAD, 2020). Following the guidelines of the World Health Organization on the prevention of the spread of the coronavirus, most OECD countries have offered access to treatment for this virus to all categories of migrants (OECD, 2020). On the other hand, globally speaking, the World Health Organization states that migrants are generally excluded from national programs for health promotion, treatment and care (World Health Organization, 2020a). Research has been done and papers have been written³ on the kind of treatment that is generally given to individuals with migrant or refugee status and on what can be done to improve the current practice. As stated in the joint statement by several international organizations dealing with migration and human rights issues⁴, during the pandemic, migrants were placed in overcrowded camps where it was impossible to keep social distance and where they lacked adequate access to health care, clean water and sanitation. (United Nations, 2020b).

Discrimination of migrants and refugees and growing xenophobia

Images of overcrowded refugee and migrant camps in states worldwide have been circulating on the Internet and in the news for months now. Although we keep hearing on a daily basis about the importance of keeping a 2-meter distance, there are thousands of people cramped in small spaces without the necessary hygienic protection, and in some places even without food, waiting and hoping that host countries will take them in their territories. While the people in these camps have an idea abo-

3 Several publications closely related to this topic, as well as some draft strategies can be found on the website of the Belgrade Center for Human Rights: <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/obrazovanje/publikacije/posebna-izdanja/>

4 These include UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency), IOM (International Organization for Migration), OHCHR (UN Human Rights Office).

ut starting a new life, individuals in societies worldwide blame migrants and refugees for the spread of the virus. We cannot deny the fact that these days, in addition to the coronavirus, the virus of misinformation and fake news about migrants is also spreading⁵, and that their movement is brought into close connection with the spread of the pandemic. The migration rhetoric is undoubtedly “adorned” by the fear of the “other” (Chugh, 2020). What is unknown and unfamiliar to people can cause fear, just like it has been the case for centuries. Attributing what is unknown to a certain group of people is not a new phenomenon. Just like cholera was labeled “the Irish disease” in the 1930s, the COVID-19 virus is now called the “China virus” (Banulescu-Bogdan, Benton & Fratzke, 2020). Unfortunately, even today, in the 21st century, individuals use the fear of the unknown to depict in their societies those groups of people which they, for whatever reason, consider undesirable and unwelcome (migrants and refugees), in a bad light. The development of technologies and the influence of social networks have only helped spread the xenophobia and fear of these groups of people even further. At the onset, when the whole world witnessed the emergence of the COVID-19 virus, which took time to be researched into, to establish what it was all about, people faced an ever growing justifiable fear for their health and the health of their loved ones, and rightfully so. However, some people abused the fear of this novel virus to enhance the existing fear of migrants and refugees, which was already enhanced in 2015 due to the migration crisis. This trend did not circumvent our country either. The past months in Serbia were marked by the appearance of the “STOP the settlement of migrants” group on Facebook, the spread of the theory of planned settlement of migrants in order to increase the birth rate in Serbia, as well as the event in which one person crashed his car into the Obrenovac center for migrants (Marinković, 2020). The analysis of the public discourse on migrants conducted by the Belgrade Center for Human Rights has shown that the term “migrants” in Serbia is mostly approached from a security standpoint, for which reason the recipient of information gets the feeling of being threatened. The report states further that the integration narrative, which would bring about a positive connotation, is much less present in the discourse compared to the security one (Belgrade Center for Human Rights, 2020: 47).

In addition to the spread of fake news about them, for months already migrants have been facing various forms of discrimination relative to the local population. In the examples cited by Amnesty International, at Camp Vučjak in Bosnia, and at the Calais camp in France, the camps’ residents faced water shortages amidst the pandemic

5 The Belgrade Center for Human Rights recently launched an online campaign with a view to preventing the spread of fake news about migrants and refugees. More information available at: http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/online-kampanja-proveri_vest-u-cilju-sprecavanja-sirenja-laznih-vesti-o-izbeglicama-traziocima-azila-i-migrantima/

(Amnesty International, 2020a). The reasons for this differed in the given examples, but no reason can justify such treatment of human lives at any time, especially not in the midst of the global fight against the virus. Some migrants and refugees who are facing the threat of persecution or torture in their home countries have also faced expulsion which, as Amnesty reminds us, is considered illegal by international law (Amnesty International, 2020b). Even though states are not allowed refoulement without having considered asylum applications, this is precisely what happened during the pandemic months. The United States returned over 20,000 people in the period from March 20 to mid-May, while the news that the Malaysian government returned the Rohingya refugee boat in February also went viral (Amnesty International, 2020b).

CONCLUSION

The virus with which we live today, and which each of us fights in the way we consider the best, some relying more some less on the recommendations of our governments and doctors, has put the people with migrant and refugee status in a particularly difficult situation. The author of this paper aimed to show that the position of these groups of people today, and for months already, has been considerably aggravated by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic because these groups, in addition to the virus, are also faced not only with discriminatory measures in their host countries but also with the growing xenophobia in the respective societies. Proceeding from the concept of human security and securitization of health issues, it was the author's wish to indicate the role and importance of COVID-19 in our lives today and the ways it threatens human security. Given that the concept of human security applies to all people worldwide and considering the relevant empirical data, the author further indicated that migrants and refugees are particularly threatened and vulnerable groups in light of the virus which we are fighting against at the global level. By linking the mentioned theoretical concepts with the available empirical data, the author concluded that it can be rightly stated that migrants and refugees are currently fighting two enemies – COVID-19 and xenophobia. The paper referred several times to suggestions of various organizations for fighting the growing discrimination and xenophobia, but also for improving the treatment that migrants and refugees receive during the pandemic in the host countries. The author of this paper can only hope that the employees of relevant state institutions worldwide will take the mentioned proposals into consideration and enable equality for all, at least during the global fight against the enemy which does not choose its victims by race, skin color or ethnicity.

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