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LEGITIMACY: MYTH AND POLITICS THE CASE OF POLITICAL SPEECHES OF FRANJO TUĐMAN[1, 2]**

Abstract. *The article explores the significance held by political myths for legimacy and politics. To that end, we examine political myth in line with the contemporary theory of political myth, which understands political myths as an integral part of all political communities that is not inherent to just authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Every political community has their own stories/narratives that are accepted by most of the population and form the base of the legitimacy of the political order, whether it be a democratic or a non-democratic political order. In the final part of the article, we examine which narratives had such a legitimising power by analysing the political speeches of Franjo Tuđman while he was in office.*
Keywords: *legitimacy, politics, political myth, political speech analysis, Tuđman.*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to explore the significance held by political myths for the legitimacy of politics while considering the case of Croatia during the process of re-creating nation-building in the 1980s and 1990s. In pursuit of this goal, we examine political myth as it is theorised in contemporary political theory.

Political myth may be described as an ideologically marked narrative that purports to give a true account of a set of past, present or predicted political events and is accepted as valid in its essential aspects by a certain group (Flood 2002). It represents a summary of narratives about political events (yet at the

same time not too many of them) that are true pertaining to the group which believes in these narratives. In earlier periods of conceptualisation in modern social sciences, mythical thought was understood as belonging solely to primitive or at least antient societies (Eliade 1998). Myth acquired a pejorative connotation in the Enlightenment since it is not based on reason and its connection with politics therefore arouses passions, emotions and the irrational, all of which have been recognised as bad. In this sense, myth has become synonymous with non-reality or fiction. Myth in connection with politics has held a pejorative meaning. This explains why myth is used in modern politics only in connection with totalitarianism, which is supposed to be committed to irrationalism, manipulation of the people, the production of illusions and false political goals, and hence also to myth and mythology. In fact, the concept of myth has met a similar fate to that of ideology. Myth is, from a Gramscian point of view, part of the field of ideology and hegemony (Hočevar and Lukšič 2018).

In the first half of the 20th century, at least two exceptions emerged in the field of political theory. Georges Sorel (see Ohana 1991) and after him Antonio Gramsci[3] used the concept of myth as a tool for understanding politics in the early 20th century.

Today, in contemporary political theory (under the influence of political anthropology) political myth has moved into a new phase of researching as an aspect of everyday life (Edelman [1967] 1975; Flood 2013; George and Bennett 2005). In line with this theory, no polity, i.e., political community, is free from producing, having and believing in myths. Myth creation is a common characteristic of political life and occurs in all communities, ideologies, and orders of political life for the purpose of offering validation to a community, even including liberal democratic orders. Political myths are also employed today as a tool for the emotional engineering of political communities or, more technically, as a tool for energising voters.

Political myths should be based on (some) real historical events. The political communities attached to those myths are not primarily interested in determining the historical reality of those events but in the value and legitimacy a given historical event holds for a specific political community today.

Political myths are political because and to the extent that they are mediated through the relations of political forces and carry their content. They are concentrates of the political situation and therefore can serve to enable individuals and groups to recognise themselves in and identify with them, and thus help to legitimise the political actor or system using it in this form.

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3   In *Quaderni dell carcere*, Gramsci analysed Benedetto Croce and Georges Sorel's position on passions and myth in politics and realised that "'theory of myth' is nothing else but 'theory of passions' in language which is less precision and formally coherent" (Gramsci 1977, 888). Gramsci even noted that the party as a modern ruler should be spoken of as a "myth-prince", i.e., in no way reduced to its legal formal and organisational level. "Sorelian 'myth' should be studied as a political ideology" and as an "expression of collective will" (*volonta coletiva*) (Gramsci 1977, 950). According to Gramsci, with Sorel myth is on the level of a trade union, that is, on the level where the collective will is still in formation.

Political myths that legitimise a certain movement, actor or system are so embedded in the mental structure, they form such a strong part of the ruling ideology and the ruling consciousness that the ordinary eye cannot see them. Yet, in times of the rapid transformation of political regimes they come into view because the new regime needs new myths and must transform or even eliminate the old myths that gave legitimacy to the previous actors and system.

In this article, we look at the creation of new political myths that Croatia needed in the process of gaining independence, which is also a process of building new legitimacy. We analyse the establishing of new myths by considering key speeches President Franjo Tuđman gave during the 1990s.[4]

A point of departure of this article is the cultural approach to political science (Landman 2008) in line with the cultural shift that unfolded in political science in the 1980s (Cipek 2007a). This approach implies "culture as a system of symbols, practice, and values that influence political processes and institutions" (ibid.). The cultural approach provides a strong contribution to comparative politics in terms of both methodology and content. With respect to methodology, it facilitates the removal of certain typical mistakes (like the Galton problem, individualistic and ecological fallacy (Landman 2008)), and solves the issue of the potential travel of a term from one part of the world to another. Culture provides us with the context for understanding political institutions and processes; namely, the entire political system. Culture and history represent key qualitative elements required for supplementing quantitative research and while interpreting results avoiding common methodological mistakes, which often arise from a poor choice of research design due to insufficient understanding of the cases being analysed. In terms of content, the cultural approach explains certain phenomena in the political system that other approaches cannot explain. The fertility of the cultural approach proved quite significant in research of political identities, political communities, and nationalism (Cipek 2007b). In alignment with the demonstrated postulates of the cultural approach, this article does not seek to establish a new model or offer a general theory, but to more deeply understand the processes underway during the disintegration of the former state and formation of an independent state. The study is conducted from a cultural perspective with a central goal to interpret and hence it is focused on understanding more than explaining and on disclosing more than designing (Mudde 2002, 22). This study is be conducted through the cultural approach as the aim of the study is to interpret, more deeply understand, and reveal the nuances of regime change.

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4   Franjo Tuđman (1922–1999) was the first president of Republic of Croatia from 1990 until his death. He served following the country's independence from Yugoslavia. He reached the rank of major general of the Yugoslav Army in 1960. Tuđman participated in the Croatian Spring movement that called for reforms in the country and was imprisoned for his activities in 1972. He lived relatively anonymously in the following years until the end of communism, whereupon he began his political career by founding the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in 1989. While supporters point out his role in achieving Croatian independence, critics have described his presidency as authoritarian.

THE LEGITIMACY OF A POLITICAL REGIME

The concept of legitimacy is perceived as a *par excellence* term in political science[5] today. Nevertheless, it can hardly be understood without political philosophy and a historical context, as well as the emotional dimension associated with the term.[6]

The political theory of legitimacy has established two dominant theories of political legitimacy: normative and descriptive. The normative theory of political legitimacy requires a moral foundation of legitimacy. The descriptive or 'historical-sociological' theory rejects standardisation and seeks to describe sources of legitimacy outside the norms of justice and looks at sources of legitimacy in those who are governed, i.e., the reasons they recognise as valid for being governed. Both theories consider the notion of legitimacy relative to the state, its institutions and the decisions made within the regime.

Although this usage is the most common, it in fact places political science in the position of a handmaiden of morality. Political actions and systems are legitimate if they are in accordance with moral principles, yet with the moral principles of the one who is judging them. Political science must not overlook the fact that this kind of moral judgment is always the judgment of the dominant centre of power, which means it is mediated by its interest. In daily politics, by morally condemning the opponent, the centres of power do not simply strip off the opponent's moral values, but also delegitimise and discredit them politically, meaning that they limit the opponent's power of political action.

Legitimacy as a concept is strictly connected to the concept of the state and politics. Even for Plato, the legitimacy of the state is an important element for ensuring the good functioning of the state. The focus on the importance of education is so strong that even the state is planned as an educational machine. "Obviously, then, we must first control the creators of fables; that fable which they make beautiful must be approved, and that which they do not make beautiful must be rejected" (Plato 2006, 1047). One must not tell fables in which the gods and heroes are portrayed badly, one must not say that the one who is acting unjustly is not doing anything strange, even if he punishes his father who had wronged him. The purpose of politics is to educate people to become virtuous citizens. A good government is one led by men holding the highest of virtues. Leaders without virtue or those ruled by the worst parts of the soul push the political community into a bad state, even into tyranny (Lukšič 2013).

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[5] Pye (1966) defines six key political processes that political science must conceptualise and research: legitimacy, identity, penetration, integration, participation and distribution. Oxford's A New Handbook of Political Science (1996) defines the questions of institutions and legitimacy as two key issues of political science since antiquity.
The German Political Science Association devoted its congress in 1975 entirely to the topic of legitimacy.

[6] Weber uses the term *Legitimitätsglaube* – a thought on legitimacy. Castles highlights that institutions have the need for "moral support, that is, to be recognized as legitimate" (Castles, in Keman (ed.) 2002, 235).

Thomas Aquinas assigned to the monarch the right to rule given by God. Therefore, it is indisputable and unquestionable, and does not require much argumentation, whether there is a Church that has a guaranteed clear hierarchy. The fundamental idea of his political philosophy is the supremacy of popes over secular rulers. It justifies the theocratic absolutism of the Pope in a theological way. He was convinced, and here he follows Aristotle, that there are two parts in man: body and soul. Two types of government correspond to this: secular and religious. "The duty of the king is to look after the good of the community" (Aquinas 1990, 85). Yet, on the other hand: "The common good is found only in God" (Aquinas 1990, 82). If man alone could reach his final destination, the king could rule both spheres, but since this requires God's help, kings must be subordinate to the pope and the church, Aquinas states.

The change is brought about by the Renaissance and Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The power of the bourgeoisie and the new social order (capitalism) changed the legitimation with God and replaced it with the legitimation with nature. The state and monarch no longer work in the name of God but according to the laws of nature. In The Prince, Machiavelli sets himself the task of discovering "what is actually true, not what someone makes up about it" (Machiavelli 1966, 41). A ruler must know the nature of the people well, and he will be able to rule well and for a long time.

Machiavelli opened up space for a different interpretation of the question of when and on what basis rulers can exercise power over the people. While discussing the civil rule in the city (*principate civile*), Machiavelli (1990, 37) stresses that it is established not by crime or violence, but "by the benevolent favor of other citizens", which means "either by the favor of the people or by the favor of the magnates". We may conclude from this that people's republics and oligarchic republics could be separated by this criterion. Whoever comes to power with the support of the people has a better chance of staying in power for a long time than someone else who comes with the support of the bigwigs. The latter must make sure that he also gains the support of the people, otherwise he will have no help in times of trouble (Lukšič 2019). Machiavelli was a republican, not a monarchist.

Social contract theory tried to offer another interpretation with the normative approach using the metaphor of a social contract. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes opposes the revelation of the law and derives legitimacy from the monarch's ability to save his subjects from the natural state of chaos and secure their safety and welfare. The ruler's success secures the obedience of his subjects. Hobbes was aware of the power held by conventional politics in establishing the legitimacy of authority. The context of the civil war in England, together with modern scientific findings, dictated to him "the constitution of completely different arguments for determining the criteria for establishing the legitimacy of the authorities" (Spruk and Lukšič 2017, 465) Even though he referred to nature and the natural in the spirit of the times, Hobbes understood the shortcomings of the naturalistic conception of politics.

For Locke, a social contract equals consent, that is, the legitimacy which creates the regime. When Locke (1978, 11, 13) introduces the understanding of political power, he demands that we must exercise it "from its origin, we must examine in what state all men are by nature". Still, this is a state of complete freedom and equality, one in which "the execution of natural law is committed to the hands of every man". According to Locke, property is "the only legitimizing basis, the pillar of the modern state" (Lukšič 2016, 636).

Rousseau notes that one must first know the natural man to be able to determine the natural law. He wrote a treatise on the origin of inequality based on what he "read, not in books like you, which are false, but in nature, which never lies. All that comes from her is true; nothing is inauthentic except that which is mine" (Rousseau 1993, 30).

Legitimacy is the political process of accepting power, agreeing to the system, to the power holders and recognising the validity of the system and its holders. A legitimate authority enjoys the consent of the people. The consent of those who are governed is a precondition for the exercise of political authority. This compliance is based on higher principles than the legal system since compliance with the legal system is subsumed under the concept of legality, on something that is before the law, and for political science it is political relations that include political ideals, political subjects, their goals, and work methods. Legitimacy is a two-track process in the ruler–ruled relationship: the people supply legitimacy to the system and the government and, on the other hand, the government takes care of and procures its own legitimacy. There are also two levels of legitimacy: internal and external. The system and the rulers within this system must take care of legitimacy in their own country and in the international space. In the transformation of the political system, in our case the system of the Republic of Croatia, ensuring external legitimacy was very important. The international community had to acknowledge Croatia in the new relationship of political forces, which then led to the legalisation of this relationship with the international formal recognition of the new country.

Max Weber (1990)[7] was the first to develop the typology of legitimacy, which is also the best known and most recognised. The three types are: 1) rational, which is legal, bureaucratic, modern; 2) traditional, which is based on unwritten fixed rules; and 3) charismatic, which is based on the leader or his/her charisma. Weber notes that all three types complement each other and that all systems are based on all three types, except that the dominance of legitimacy types varies from system to system. If we look again at the Republic of Croatia as a new country, although it also built a new legitimacy on the charisma of the new leader Tuđman, in our article we are more interested in that part of the new legitimisation related to the forming of a new self-understanding of the country, which is linked to new myths.

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[7]   This theory was first published in 1922 by Marrinae Weber in *Preussische Jahrbücher*.

If legitimacy is understood as the consent of those who are being governed, in a democratic regime it is not essential to talk about legitimacy. The disintegration of the Eastern Bloc triggered key changes in the development of political science and its discipline of comparative politics, chiefly in terms of geographical focus. Comparative politics is faced with the proliferation of geographical areas of research, while political legitimacy, stability of order, opposing regimes and ideologies are becoming key research concepts. The way in which institutions acquire the right to perform the socio-political functions for which they are appointed by those they govern emerges as the central issue. Like their individual parts,[8] entire political systems survive so long as they possess political legitimacy. The end of the Cold War showed that a path that leads to a liberal-democratic regime, a path which would suggest 'the end of history', is not being followed by all countries, and it would be incorrect to say that all of these regimes are illegitimate. Non-democratic regimes, just like democratic ones, need the consent of the majority of those ruled over, or at least powerful elites (military, bureaucratic or others) for their survival. The regime may be legitimate for some, but not for others, and thus legitimacy is something that many undemocratic regimes seek to prove to the international community and to their own citizens, through semi-competitive or non-competitive elections, as a form of procedure that should be unquestionable. But even when a regime uses such farcical procedures to prove its legitimacy, it is impossible to imagine a ruling regime that does not achieve some kind of legitimacy. Illegitimate political systems or regimes cannot survive. A system can be in a crisis of legitimacy and may develop into another type of legitimacy or type of system. "Only governments that have some legitimacy can implement and maintain policies with high short-term costs" (Wintrobe, in Breton (ed.) 2002, 398). Policies lacking legitimacy can only be implemented with the support of force, but no regime can survive only by using force. Further, the use of force must be recognised in the process of legitimisation as legitimate. "The dialectic of repression lies in the fact that it also presupposes what it is supposed to replace: namely, faith in the validity of the supporting norms and their recognized value, a validity that must therefore be maintained even with repressive means" (Offe 1985, 176).

Looking for a single source of legitimacy (justice, tradition, or rational-impersonal rules) is another shortcoming of modern theories of legitimacy. Linz noted that, given the division of power in the regimes for which individual elections are held, it is possible that each branch of government (legislative, executive or judicial) derived its legitimacy from a different source. Moreover, it is reasonable

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[8]   Political legitimacy has been observed in many segments of the political system, such as electoral systems – "democratic electoral systems survive until they suffer from a serious lack of democratic legitimacy" (Pennings, in Keman (ed.) 2002, 110); institutions – "institutions are important because they structure behavior and receive support within the framework of widespread legitimacy of public policies – "governmentalization of function, i.e. the transience of public policy is requested because the legitimacy of its sanctions makes social controls more effective" (Lowi 1979, 37).

to assume that one branch can draw its legitimacy from several sources: rules, traditions, culture etc.

In modern political science, elections are understood as an event where legitimacy is created. And that is what they are, but only in one respect – the transfer of legitimacy from the bottom up. Yet what had was happening before the elections took place? When they go to the polls, in most cases voters know who they will vote for, the legitimacy that they would transfer to the system and individuals by circling names on the ballot was determined earlier. We may thus conclude that elections are acts as both confirmation and the creation of legitimacy; for the elected, they represent the creation of legitimacy, whereas for voters they serve to confirm previously created beliefs, they give legitimacy to the system and the elected representatives.

Which processes were previously implemented to create legitimacy? This question relates to the understanding of an individual who, as a political subject, transfers legitimacy to the institutions and policies of the state. Establishing the legitimacy attributed to the modern state based on rational, impersonal rules implies that those who are governed make their decisions in an equally rational and impersonal way. Yet, people do not make decisions based solely on rational reasons, and it is completely impossible for personal decisions to be made impersonally. Human decisions are mediated by emotions as well as cultural conditioning, and the end of a regime does not mean its complete erasure from the collective and individual memory. Legitimacy should hence be understood as a dynamic process that seeks constant reaffirmation by the state which must be ready to respond to the challenges posed to its legitimacy by various segments of society, explaining why this article uses the definition of political myth while conducting the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the speeches of Tuđman.

TUĐMAN'S SPEECHES: BUILDING THE LEGITIMACY OF A NEW STATE

Already in the process of gaining its independence, the Republic of Croatia began to build the legitimacy on which the new state was to be founded. Franjo Tuđman was one of the key actors in this process; in fact, he was the main individual actor who even personified the movement for independence. This means it is no coincidence that he was elected the first president of the Republic of Croatia. His speeches summarised the core ideas from which new myths about the political community and the newly independent Croatian state were formed.

The speeches by Franjo Tuđman[9] considered for this research were selected to cover the entire period of Tuđman's political involvement and thus all publicly available speeches made during his presidency were included and subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis.

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[9]   All of the speeches along with the research materials and detailed analysis documentation are available from the author.

Among all of the speeches analysed, the narrative about Croatia's 1,000-year statehood and Croatia being at the crossroads of Europe appears in most of them (8 out of 13). The narrative contained in the idea of reconciliation appears in five analysed speeches, four of which were intended for a domestic audience, and just one for an international audience (admission to membership of the Council of Europe). The last narrative analysed, that of Bleiburg, appears in only 2 of the 13 cases considered; of which, one in the domestic context, and that in a narrower domestic context, i.e., upon celebration of the seventh anniversary of the First Assembly of the HDZ, and one in the international context (admission to membership of the Council of Europe). The only two speeches that include all three analysed narratives are the speech on the admission of the Republic of Croatia to becoming a member of the Council of Europe on 6 November 1996, and the speech to mark the celebration of the seventh anniversary of the First Assembly of HDZ on 23 February 1997. These speeches were held 3.5 months apart.

The narrative about the 1,000-year statehood is the narrative most represented in Tuđman's speeches and remains constant over time. The idea of reconciliation appears as early as the 1990s, but not in such a significant proportion. After not being represented for some time, this narrative reaches its peak in 1995 during a speech in Split to which Tuđman had come on the "Freedom Train".

The narrative about Bleiburg appears for the first time in the analysed speeches in 1996 when Croatia was admitted to the Council of Europe, and in a speech held only 3.5 months later on the anniversary of the First Assembly of HDZ. In 1996, the most changes occur in Tuđman's discourse, and it is also the year when he discovered that he was suffering from cancer. It was in November 1996 when Tuđman was staying in the United States of America that he became aware of the seriousness of his condition, while at the same time he was experiencing considerable pressure from civil society and citizens in domestic politics. On 21 November, protests in which 100,000 citizens participated were held in the main square in Zagreb following the decision of the Telecommunications Council to cancel the concessions of Radio 101. Radio 101 was one of the key media establishments that had been strongly critical of Tuđman.

The trend of the three narratives in Tuđman's speeches, which clearly outlines the constant representation of the narrative about the 1,000-year statehood and the strengthening of the idea of reconciliation in the period after 1995, that is, after the war, and the narrative about Bleiburg, which can be described as isolated cases between November 1996 and February 1997. Towards the end of his life, in his speeches Tuđman once again returned to the idea of the 1,000-year statehood as his key political idea which, ultimately, in the last analysed speech, completely took over his speech given to the diplomatic corps at the start of the last year of his life.

The legitimation myth of Yugoslavia was the national liberation struggle, and the secondary legitimation myths derived from it are the leader Tito who personified the idea of brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav nations and nationalities,

antifascism, and socialism. In this part of the article, we consider the presence of this narrative in the speeches of the Croatian sovereign. In his speeches, Tuđman refers to the national liberation struggle and Tito, primarily in speeches in the early 1990s when Croatia was not yet a consolidated state, nor was it internationally recognised. Tuđman did not attempt to devalue the anti-fascist struggle, nor the role of Josip Broz Tito. Likewise, as we know, in 1941, as a 19-year-old, he immediately recognised the Ustasha as a failed Quisling project and left school to participate in the anti-fascist struggle in the Zagorje region.

What Tuđman sees as the key problem of the socialist Yugoslavia in realising the rights of the Croatian people was the one-party communist system. In his speech upon the promulgation of the Constitution, Tuđman devoted a large part to the communist regime, but also to possible challenges to the new constitutional order that had just been established. During that time in December 1990, Tuđman was still hoping that the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) would not side with Milošević and implement his goal of creating a Greater Serbia that was to include all Serbs in the territory of former Yugoslavia. Hence, in a speech on promulgation of the Constitution he called on them to accept the changes that had taken place in the republics. To accept Croatia as part of Yugoslavia through a republican parliament, with clearly defined borders *vis-à-vis* neighbouring republics, thus placing it among European states through the values they share. In his speech during the constituent session of the Parliament, he cites this very fact as one of the vital moments that enabled Croatia to be internationally recognised.

He incorporated the anti-fascist struggle into the preamble of the first Croatian Constitution. Accordingly, the preamble of the first Croatian Constitution, as one of the historical sources of Croatian statehood, cites the decisions of the National Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia from 1943 (AVNOH) in their opposition to the declaration of the Independent State of Croatia (Pavelić's regime during the Second World War, NDH), and in opposition to the later republican constitutions of Croatia during Yugoslavia.

During the whole period of office of the Croatian president, he never deviated from recognising the value of anti-fascism. He also proudly emphasised his participation in the anti-fascist struggle, especially in the international arena, including when Croatia was admitted as a member of the United Nations. This was because anti-fascism is a value cherished by all countries relevant to Croatia's international recognition and since Tuđman wanted to see Croatia in the UN, as a NATO ally, and as a member of the EU from the very beginning. Further, he did not want to allow the narrative to prevail about the Croats as being exclusively Ustasha (the army of the collaborating Pavelić regime of ISC (NDH)) aimed at exterminating the Serbs, a narrative which Milošević used in both the Yugoslav and international arenas.

Two key ideas in Franjo Tuđman's political thinking are inextricably linked. According to him, in fighting for their statehood Croats had fought against empires, first of course the Ottoman Empire. The struggle against the Ottoman

Empire brought Croatia to the bulwark of Europe. The struggle against the Ottoman Eastern cultural circle, that is against the encroaching Islam, brought it to the bulwark of Christianity.

Another central idea in Franjo Tuđman's political speeches aimed at consolidating the nation was the idea of reconciliation. Consolidation is built on a single national entity that must not be torn apart by political divisions on the left and right, mainly into the partisans and Ustasha.

Tuđman deemed it important to reject the narrative about the bloodthirsty Ustashas. This led him to include the Chetniks in the same process of rationalisation:

> *Not all Ustashas in the ISC (NDH) were fascists, not all of them committed crimes, just as, from the Serbian point of view, not all Chetniks were fascists and perpetrators of crimes. Historical circumstances led to the division of the Croatian people into partisans, Home Guards, and Ustashas, and on the other hand, the Serbian people into partisans and Chetniks. Both of them had their own positive ideas, not only crimes.* (Tuđman, 1993a)

The idea of reconciliation also had an element of publicly tackling the problem of low natural growth with respect to which Tuđman saw a way out of the situation in the return of emigrants.

Still, the desired mass return never happened. The now independent Croatia has lost almost one-fifth of its population over the last 30 years. The Washington and Dayton Agreements could have been reached after the Croatian people, with the joint struggle of the homeland and the expatriate Croatia, and particularly with the unity of the Croats from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, prevented the goals of the Yugoslav and Greater Serbian aggression to subjugate both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; yet also the intention to establish a separate Muslim state at the expense of Croatian areas (Tuđman 1993a).

The question remains whether the idea of reconciliation also included the Serbian population in Croatia. Among the analysed speeches, Tuđman addressed the Serbian population of Croatia directly when the Constitution was being adopted in December 1990. The "Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina" was proclaimed on 21 September 1990. In his speech given on promulgation of the Constitution, Tuđman stated that it was a matter of political deception that had misled part of the Serbian population with the aim of achieving the Greater Serbia. In this speech, he states that it is now necessary to "regulate all civil and national rights, which this Constitution guarantees to Serbs and others, but with it we will resolutely protect the territorial integrity and legal order of the Republic".[10] Tuđman therefore does not condemn all Serbs in Croatia in this speech but, of course, expresses the

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[10] Speech on the occasion of the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb, 22 December 1990.

intention of defending Croatia against military and terrorist actions. Moreover, he says that the vast majority of Serbs in Croatia does not question the new Croatian government, for which he cites the example of elected representatives of the Serbian minority participating in the work of the Parliament. This example shows his policy towards the Serbs, which tried to be as conciliatory as possible and with the aim of integrating the Serbian population into the new democratic order. Tuđman further declares a general amnesty for all who have not committed war crimes, and addresses Vojislav Stanimirović directly,[11] who at the time held the position of president of the transitional Executive Council for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem regions, stating that the presumption of innocence is on the side of the Croatian state, which had been attacked.

The post-Second World War at Bleiburg[12] (Austria) and the Way of the Cross belong to a set of topics that have still to be sufficiently historically explored. The responsibility for the large number of extradited civilians and soldiers, who died during this event as victims, has not been fully examined. Precisely for this reason, this historical event is more susceptible to mythological narration. Daily political conflicts often manipulate this event and thus an individual's relationship to Bleiburg is used to determine where the individual is on the political spectrum. Martina Grahek's research on the ways of presenting Bleiburg and the Way of the Cross in Croatian history textbooks is interesting.[13] The author analysed the presentation of events in history textbooks for primary and secondary schools in the period 1991–2004. Grahek shows that "the textbooks in earlier editions (1992–1995) contain more detailed descriptions of the events, which fits perfectly with the picture of the events of that time in these areas, when, after all, Bleiburg and the Way of the Cross have become more written about, which were up until then taboo topics" (Grahek, in Fleck and Graovac (eds.) 2005, 641). The author concluded that a smaller number of textbooks state that preparations for the withdrawal were carried out, that the ISC (NDH) leadership had responsibility for the event, as well as that the British participated in the events.

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[11] Vojislav Stanimirović was the mayor of Vukovar during the Serbian occupation and a minister without portfolio in the Government of Republika Srpska Krajina, while in 1995 he received the Order for Special Merit in the War in Banja Luka, presented by Radovan Karadžić. He was also among the founders of the Independent Democratic Serbian Party (SDSS), and as a member of that party he was also a representative in the Croatian Parliament.

[12] The Bleiburg tragedy in Croatian history refers to a set of post Second World War events that happened in May 1945. At that time, most of the armed forces of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC/NDH) had started to withdraw towards the Austrian border with the intention of surrendering to the Allies, which was a preferred option than to surrendering to the Yugoslav Partisans. A significant number of civilians, who had fled their homes in fear of the Yugoslav Partisan Army, was following these units. The British forces just outside of Bleiburg stopped the group and the surrender negotiations were initiated. Upon the alleged expiration of the surrender deadline, the Yugoslav Army that was also present at the site opened fire indiscriminately. Yugoslav units reported that 95,000 soldiers (NDH Army, Slovenian Domobrans and Chetniks from Serbia and Montenegro) surrendered in Bleiburg. No independent data are available on the precise numbers of dead soldiers and civilians. Further, the troubles of those who survived did not finish there and they had a long way ahead to march for their lives, known in the literature as the Way of the Cross (referring to a tragedy of biblical proportions).

[13] Published in *Dialogue of Historians – Historians 9*, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Zagreb 2005.

It was not until the beginning of the 1990s, after the attainment of Croatian independence, that the topic of Bleiburg ceased to be taboo and, as we discussed earlier, the topic of Bleiburg entered the cultural sphere only in 1999 with Aralica's book *Četverored.* This makes it interesting to consider what Franjo Tuđman's attitude to Bleiburg was in his speeches and whether he intended to mythologise this historical tragedy. Analysis of Franjo Tuđman's key speeches showed that Bleiburg was not a frequent topic of his speeches. Bleiburg and the Way of the Cross do not appear in any of them as a complete narrative, just as they do not appear as a theme of the literary works observed in the earlier part of the article.

As already stated, the only time Tuđman mentions Bleiburg in one of the analysed speeches was when Croatia was admitted to the Council of Europe in 1996, and in just one sentence while comparing potential regional integration with a defeat equal to the one at Bleiburg. In the period during which Tuđman gave this speech, the political context was not particularly favourable to him. He was strongly criticised for his treatment of civil society and media freedom, even though Croatia still managed to fulfil the criteria for membership in the Council of Europe. The second time Tuđman mentions Bleiburg was 1 year later in a speech celebrating the seventh anniversary of the Parliament dominated by his party the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ).

The three basic narratives of political myths in Franjo Tuđman's speeches we have observed are as follows: the 1,000-year Croatian statehood on the bulwark of Europe and Christianity, the idea of reconciliation, and the post Second World War tragedy in Bleiburg. As it emerges, the most represented narrative throughout Tuđman's political career was the one about the 1,000-year-old Croatian statehood at the crossroads of Europe and Christianity. At the same time, it quantitatively occupied the lion's share of his speeches, and was present in the speeches he gave to both domestic and international audiences. It is therefore unsurprising that this myth is incorporated into the preamble of the Croatian Constitution.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored the significance held by political myths for legitimacy and politics using the contemporary theory of political myth. The mentioned theory of political myth understands it as an ideologically marked narrative that purports to give a true account of a set of past, present or predicted political events which a particular social group accepts as valid in its essential aspects (Flood 2002). As such, political myth is present in all political communities as the connecting tissue, contrary to the earlier belief that it can solely be found in authoritarian or totalitarian regimes or as part of primitive societies. Every political community has their own stories/narratives that are accepted by most of the population and form the base of the political legitimacy of the political order, no matter the nature of the order (whether it be a democratic or

a non-democratic political order). Legitimacy is a dynamic concept that seeks constant reaffirmation by the state, which must be ready to respond to the challenges posed to its legitimacy by various segments of the political community. Therefore, even in liberal democratic systems elections are not the only source of legitimacy. Although they are the most practical form, that is a mechanically measurable expression of the political will of the citizens, their will is formed even before they come to the election polls through the established relationship of political forces that operates through all possible channels for creating common-sense such as the media, culture, education system etc. Contemporary political theory has shown that policies lacking legitimacy can only be implemented by force. Nonetheless, even in that case, the force used must be legitimised and that process entails high transaction costs for those who implement such legitimacy.

Political systems must legitimise themselves in various ways in a process that also includes the creating of relevant myths and dismantling of myths upon which previous regimes and political systems were based.

Bearing this in mind, this article has analysed one such source for Croatian citizens in the 1990s – speeches given by the most important political figure of the time. The article identified which narratives served as such a primary legitimising tool for the first Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and analysed publicly available political speeches during the entire time he held office until his death in 1999. Through quantitative and qualitative methods, the research sought to show that for Franjo Tuđman the two most important narratives were the uninterrupted statehood and the idea of reconciliation, whereas the Bleiburg narrative appears in only a small portion of his speeches, namely, just two isolated instances. On the other hand, the first two narratives refer to a more present theme in Tuđman's speeches and as such represent two main ideas that Tuđman used as stories to strengthen the Croatian national identity and served in the process of legitimising the new political system of the Republic of Croatia. The research has also shown that the 1,000-year statehood is the narrative which is the most represented, and remains the only constant narrative in Tuđman's speeches. This allows us to conclude that this narrative is the most fundamental idea of Croatian unity and statehood for Franjo Tuđman.

APPENDIX I

Table 1: LIST OF ANALYSED SPEECHES

List of analysed speeches

30. 5. 1990	Speech during the constituent session of the Croatian Parliament
22. 12. 1990	Speech on the occasion of the promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia
22. 5. 1992	Speech to mark the admission of the Republic of Croatia to UN membership
28. 9. 1993	Speech at a session of the United Nations General Assembly
3. 5. 1995	An epistle on the occasion of the liberation action Bljesak
4. 8. 1995	Proclamation to Croatian citizens of Serbian nationality on the eve of Operation Storm
26. 8. 1995	Freedom Train – speech given in Split
6. 11. 1996	Letter on the occasion of the admission of the Republic of Croatia to membership of the Council of Europe
23. 2. 1997	Presentation to mark the seventh anniversary of the First Assembly of HDZ
8. 6. 1997	Train of Peace – speech given in Vukovar
8. 6. 1997	Train to Vukovar – speech given in Zagreb
5. 8. 1997	Sworn letter – inauguration in Zagreb
15. 1. 1999	Speech for the diplomatic corps on the occasion of the Christmas and New Year's holidays

Source: Authors.

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