

Memory Politics as a defining instrument for political action? A rhetorical analysis of the right-wing ideology in Slovenia and in Serbia

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to identify the relationship between the memory politics of right-wing populist politicians and their perceived ideologies. Collective memory is used by populist politicians to motivate their electorate to political action and to distinguish them from their main competitors. The main purpose of this study is to demonstrate that historical references and certain interpretations of history are essential in shaping an ideological framework, which is then used by politicians to assert their political goals. However, could the analysis of rhetoric be helpful in finding out this relationship between memory politics and ideology? This study is based on a combination of two methods - Rhetorical Political Analysis and Discourse-Historical Approach. A comparative analysis of two politicians, Janez Janša and Aleksandar Vučić in a timeframe from 2017 to 2022, contributes to understanding how populists consolidate their political positions. This study shows that Janez Janša is more concerned about immigration issues and remembering the independence of Slovenia while Aleksandar Vučić in his rhetoric brings the “Kosovo independence issue” and the positioning of Serbia between West and East.

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Introduction

Research Problem

How does populism affect politics in a given country? There are several examples of populist parties in Eastern Europe which managed to achieve decent results. For instance, such parties are Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Alliance in Hungary and Law and Justice in Poland. The specific condition is the transition of the party system from the one-party model to the multiparty model. Moreover, some post-socialist countries have suffered tremendous losses due to civil wars and security issues, as was the case in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). The Financial crisis of 2008 and after that the Migrant Crisis influenced the increase in popularity of populist parties and both the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) are clear examples of these parties. Serbian Progressive Party managed to become more moderate than the Serbian Radical Party¹ and was able to form the government in 2012. SDS, on the other hand, is an example of a populist party with a long history of existence, but it always needed to be in a coalition to form a government and it had clearer populist tendencies at the more recent Janez Janša's premiership (2020-2022). Both parties are mostly oriented towards their own audiences when it comes to rhetoric, but at the same time by understanding their stance towards narratives we can reveal their ideologies. However, their positioning as right-wing parties does not mean that they actually possess the same ideology. The difference can be in the emphasis on a particular set of values that are bonded with historical memory. Slovenian Democratic Party as well as Serbian

¹ Two parties separated in 2008.

Progressive Party have close ties with Fidesz and they collaborate with other conservative right-wing parties in Europe in the parliamentary group “European People’s Party

The main goal of this research is to demonstrate that values that populist accept to be the keystone of their ideologies are crucial for the creation of a collective memory which is then used by politicians for endorsing their political goals. Taking into account the significance of the context on the creation of political rhetoric, *what role does memory politics play in the populist parties’ construction of their ideological frameworks?*

Conceptualization of the key terms

For this comparative study, I would like to introduce the term that will be important for understanding political rhetoric. It is the concept called “**Memory politics**“ which explains how a particular set of narratives is used as a framework for the evaluation of history (Hanska, [2009](#)). Memory politics is not limited to a particular representation of history but also influences the formation of a particular **ideology**, which influences the long-term decision-making process. I understand ideology as the systemic collection of particular values, which have the aim to outline the position of the collective or party (Van Dijk, [2006](#), 116). Therefore, if the party stands for the implementation of a particular rule regarding the most important spheres of social and political life, it creates a connection with values, which can be the same as used for interpreting historical events. It can be argued that populists refer to national values when they aim to use them for approving a particular collective vision that they stand for. Moreover, two ideologies, even very close ones, might not have similar memory politics, because such factors as politicians’ personalities, societal cleavages, and salient issues would cause the creation of different patterns

that can be observed in a political speech. However, one may question: how do narratives or, what politicians might argue, collective memory of the people illustrate the ideologies of far-right parties? In response, the study analyses the individual case studies of both the chosen parties' ideologies.

Methods: RPA and DHA

This study is based on the combination of the two methods of analysis of speeches: *Rhetorical Political Analysis* (RPA) (Finlayson, [2007](#)) and the *Discourse-Historical approach* (Wodak, [2001](#)). RPA was used in my previous research² when I compared two populist parties on their similarities and differences (Stankovich, [2022](#)), but in this case, the focus would be more on collective memory and how memory politics shape the right-wing ideologies. That is why Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak, [2001](#)) perfectly fits with the research objective since it can be used for describing speeches that bring a historical perspective. Discourse-Historical Analysis is a form of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), that aims at understanding the arguments provided in political texts (Reisigl, [2017](#)). Although there are alternative methods, such as *Narrative Analysis* (Feldman, [2004](#)) or *Content Analysis* (Grimmer & Stewart, [2013](#)), they are arguably not very suitable for this study. It is because these methods are unable to provide an in-depth focus on the rhetoric and on the argumentation of the politician's position which is the prime emphasis of this research. In contrast, political rhetoric is not just a mere text, but it has a logical line of argumentation; it is directly connected with its translator (party leader) and the speech can

²This research is the continuation of my previous Bachelor thesis, with the topic as follows: Stankovich, Milan. "Partners or Rivals in Populism? A Comparative Analysis of Right-Wing Rhetoric of the National Rally and Fidesz"[Bachelor thesis] [National Research University Higher School of Economics] (2022). URL: <https://www.hse.ru/en/ba/political/students/diplomas/619264980>

contain emotions and particular phrases can be articulated. The Discourse-Historical Approach contributes to RPA with discursive strategies that explain the use of particular words or phrases in the sentence. RPA addresses in the text the content that motivates the audience to conduct a political action (Finlayson, [2007](#)), while the Discourse-Historical Approach ideally focuses more on the semiotic value of discourses as well as how constructive and context-based they are (Reisigl, [2017](#)). The historical-discursive approach is able to show the argumentation when a politician argues that his/her statement is relevant and also provides insight into the moral legitimization behind the text. This is very relevant to understanding mythopoesis, or the creation of myths as stories designed to teach a particular lesson. Collective memory thus draws on Mythopoesis, and the task of the researcher is to understand their connection (Wodak, [2017](#)). For DHA, reasoning is an important part that constructs topoi, or context-related analytical schemes.

RPA is already well-established in this field of studies and has been already employed by Alan Finlayson & James Martin in their research and Rhetoric analysis of the British Political context (Finlayson & Martin, [2008](#)), analyzing Tony Blair's speeches right before he resigned from office. Moreover, since a particular focus of this research lies on memory formation, the analysis of politician's speeches focused on their interpretation of history could bring us more understanding of the goals that they try to achieve. The usage of Discourse-Historical Approach can be seen in the research done by Salomi Boukala, where she conducted research on the representation of the "Islamic terrorism" discourse in Greece (Boukala, [2016](#)). In this work, she is prepared to use the Aristotelian understanding of topos and the way it is understood in the DHA. This is relevant because Rhetorical Political Analysis has its roots in the Aristotelian argument and the combination with DHA can show the tendencies in political speeches so that it would make them more comparable.

Study Focus

The reason for choosing these two parties lies mainly in the similarities they have. Serbia and Slovenia were previously republics in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but after the breakup of the country in the early 1990s the two countries were going in different directions. Slovenia aimed at closer ties with Western Countries while Serbia became more Europe-oriented after the regime change in 2000. The electoral system in the two countries is almost the same: Party-list proportional representation with presidents who by the constitution are not as powerful as those in majoritarian systems. Moreover, the context in which populist parties operate is similar as there is a pro-democratic and left-wing alternative in both countries which was compromised for financial losses and cultural threats to the nation. While Slovenia is in the EU and in NATO, Serbia is planning to access the EU in the near future. Aleksandar Vučić and Janez Jansa are charismatic politicians who shape party politics and are willing to take on the role of spokespeople on behalf of the state, stating their own position. The difference between them is in the party transformation: SDS emerged from the anti-communist and pro-independence Slovenian movement, while SNS merged from the radical party of Serbia, which was already a right-wing populist. The period from 2017 to 2022 was chosen as the historical timeframe. The choice of this period is justified by the fact that although the SDS and SNS were visible until 2012, immediately afterward they managed to achieve notable electoral success so that their views on politics could directly influence state policy. Janez Janša was the Prime Minister of Slovenia from 2020 to 2022 and Aleksandar Vučić was the Prime Minister of Serbia from 2017 when he became the President of Serbia onwards. Therefore, the selected timeframe should encompass the period of time when

both Aleksandar Vučić and Janez Janša were in power and the rhetorical mechanisms that they both used in their speeches could have apparent parallels.

For this study, a selection of speeches both from Aleksandar Vučić and Janez Janša were selected, and they were found on the websites of the Slovenian and Serbian Governments. Only those speeches that have a connection with the analysis of history were selected and in which history is compared with modernity. This way the Rhetorical Political Analysis could be suitable as the speech with historical speeches is used for a particular political action. This provides the opportunity to have a selection of official texts that encompass the stance of the speaker towards the past and my assumption is that throughout their speeches. One particular aspect that I focus on is the Mythopoesis or the creation of “myths” that are based on imagined history and which should give us a lesson on how to act in current politics.

Review of the existing research

As this study aims to understand the ideology of right-wing populist politicians with nationalist tendencies, it is worth explaining the difference between nationalism and populism. Benjamin De Cleen makes this distinction, according to which populism, like nationalism, aim to create exclusion by dividing society into “us” and “them”(De Cleen, [2017](#)). However, the signs are different: while nationalist discourse is built around 'the nation', populist discourse is much more about “the people”. In right-wing populist discourse, 'people' and 'nation' can be used simultaneously, but this does not mean that they are the same, as it depends on the context in which one will prevail (De Cleen, [2017](#)). The term “nation“ can be explained by Benedict Anderson in his work “Imagined Communities”, in which he outlines the idea that nations are not formed by

nature, but as socially constructed entities and that people who never met would see each other as part of one group (Anderson, [2006](#)).

Collective memory is a term that needs definition. According to Marisa Halbwachs, collective memory is “*a set of narratives that aim to present a particular picture of political reality that suits the elite*” (Halbwachs, [1925](#)). However, it is still not entirely clear what factors influence the creation of collective memory. It could be argued that there are specific socio-economic or cultural/memory factors that explain the creation of the narrative (De Cesari & Kaya, [2019](#)).

This subjective nature of collective memory can even lead to the creation of quasi-historical narratives, which can be based on an imagined reality (Davis, [2005](#)). The difference between facts and history lies in their meaning for a particular group who will interpret them in a particular way (Achugar, [2007](#), 523). Meanwhile, the need for a particular interpretation lies in the idea of legitimization or persuading an audience through certain arguments (Wodak, [2017](#)). This can be seen in Ruth Wodak's chapter on FPÖ discourse since 1986 and especially in the era of Jörg Haider, she notes that specific Austrian history and theories of collective memory and legitimization remain necessary to explain the success of FPÖ (Wodak, [2017](#)).

A characteristic feature of Serbian politics is the use of “old history” with „recent history”, or comparing historical events that happened quite recently with those that are nowadays now well understood and have some level of uncertainty. This can be seen with „Kosovo myth”: two main narratives, that Kosovo is the „heart” of the Serbian nation with medieval monasteries, and that the independence of Kosovo was unfair to the Serbian minority, merge in the speeches of Serbian politicians (Jovanović, [2019](#)). Moreover, populist politicians most often blame the previous government for all the failures the country faces, and we see this in Serbia, where Aleksandar Vučić is presented as the saviour of the country, who does the hard work and tries to make the

country more prosperous (Jovanović, [2018](#)). This narrative is broadcast by specific popular newspapers in Serbia, and a media bias study shows differences in the representation of the SNS leader over the time span from 2012 to 2018 (Jovanović, [2018](#)). Another focus is party change in relation to attracting more voters, which tends to make the party more moderate.

In Serbia's case, the SNS is a more moderate version of the Serbian Radical Party, as it targeted the same groups of voters but also offered an EU perspective and better links to Europe, which at the time was supported by the majority of Serbian citizens (Spasojević, [2019](#)).

There is a link between populist politicians from Eastern Europe and they can draw on the experience of their peers. This was the case with Janez Janša, who supported the implementation of policies similar to those previously proposed by Viktor Orban (Delić, [2020](#)). Thus, populist politicians see populism as a useful tool to promote their own ideology, but it also tells us that there are ideological differences between politicians.

Anticipated results

The research should present a new fresh look at the study of populism: the relationship between the memory politics that populist politicians propagate and their vision of the best for the nation that can be achieved with their rule. Thus, memory politics is a helpful instrument for defining what is the ideology of the dominant party, and how important it is for them. The existing research in this topic remains largely focused on case studies and would greatly benefit from the comparative perspectives that this research offers. This study contributes to discipline by explaining how populist politicians are able to integrate references to the political past within their visions of a better future that they aim to contribute towards. In this way, this research hopes to

offer a unique interdisciplinary and comparative analysis of narratives of the past that two East European political parties utilize. In essence, the research findings will help better analyze current trends in European politics and how populism as a political platform is perceived by political leaders and their audience.

Chapter 1. Theoretical foundations of populist rhetoric

1.1 Conceptualizing memory politics

Although memory politics is a recognized term in political science, its specific definition can be questionable. For instance, what distinguishes memory politics from politics and from memory? If memory politics is used to describe past events, historical figures, or processes, it is more about the interests of a current actor in reaching the actual goals. For example, politicians' use of specific facts is linked to the contemporary goals they want to achieve. Public goals are therefore still strongly linked to personal gain. Maurice Halbwachs is the first who identified the relationship between individual and collective memory (Halbwachs, [1925](#)). According to him, individual memory is meaningless unless it is placed in the broad category of those narratives shared by group members. He considered the division into classes to be an important criterion for the politics of memory, as elites are those who influence the creation of narratives (Verovšek, [2016](#)). These narratives are then disseminated through intermediaries to audiences who have no concept of “absorbing narratives”. The politics of memory are not limited to populist politicians, but they are a prime example of its use. The reason lies at the heart of populism: references to ethnicity, nation, and culture (Verovšek, [2016](#)). Thus, it is possible to divide history into good history, where the importance of culture, nation, and patriotism is celebrated, and “negative” history, where the nation and people have experienced hardship. Collective memory should be distinguished from history, and this is crucial for studying the politics of memory (Wang, [2017](#)). There is no objective history, but what differentiates collective memory from the work of historians

is the absence of argumentation around the alternative views. Hence, historical processes could be argued in many ways, while collective memory is based on acceptance of one interpretation only. While history presents facts about events that happened in the past, memory is constructed solely by interpreting them. Therefore, the narrative that politicians use is not an objective understanding of the past, as individual elements of past events can be selected and evaluated (Roudumetof, [2002](#)). Collective memory has the function of conveying a political message to today's public and is a modern way of communicating with audiences. It allows politicians to relate certain values to memory so that it is more like a moral story to educate the public.

1.2 Narratives and the media

The key to the creation of collective memory is the construction of narratives and their transmission. There are two main mediators of narratives: the formal institutional (through state institutions) and the informal (Verovšek, [2016](#)). The latter can also be used by politicians, as it means that a huge number of experts and activists will use the narrative in their arguments. Formal institutions can also be used by politicians, but with them, they have fewer options, as they cannot use the language they want (too much informal and emotional). This is an important aspect of narrative construction, as informal intermediaries require slightly different narrative construction. In studies of populism, it can be seen that politicians take a more informal approach, trying to use simple language and using emotional language that can stimulate an audience's response. Electoral political speech is a good example of how politicians can express their values through narratives. This speech can either be based on an existing party program or state what the politician as an individual wants to say on an important issue. Another way of communicating collective memory

is through symbols that bind the nation together (Fogu & Kansteiner, [2006](#)). These can also be symbols that are perceived negatively, as in the case of communist symbols in the former communist countries of Eastern Europe (Peach, [2007](#)). Public opinion influences the content, so facts can be distorted by a politician in order to gain public support. It can be seen that populist politicians are responsible because they analyze what the public prefers to hear and what they do not. Most people have an image of politicians based on television or the internet, but do not have the opportunity to meet them in real life (Bos et al., [2011](#)). Politicians are positioned more as a category than as individuals and ordinary people perceive them as an authoritative source when it comes to arguments. However, political leaders are highly dependent on public opinion and have to adjust their rhetoric according to people's needs. Therefore, accountability goes both ways between the politician and the audience.

1.3 Role of the charismatic personality

The role of the leader should not be underestimated when it comes to understanding the reason for the emphasis on history. The main trait that a political leader possesses is charisma, or the ability to attract people to lead them (Pappas, [2016](#)). Charismatic legitimacy is the ability to move away from the traditional and rational/legal, which have many disadvantages such as lack of time and the need to negotiate (Weber, [1994](#)). Moreover, the political leader is the primary narrator of collective memory, and he/she is able to represent the nation through knowledge of these narrative sets (Hanska, [2009](#)). As the one who shapes the national vision, the leader plays a somewhat sacred role as there is a very strong symbolic function embedded in it. One could say that the style of storytelling is significant enough so that it can influence public opinion. A leader

is responsible for representing the collective and the good of the others is put as the highest achievement. This is why there is a close connection between leaders' views and ideologies (Pappas, [2016](#)) because party leaders need to convince their electorate that this is their ultimate goal. In some systems, the role of the leader would be minimal due to institutional constraints. However, in political systems of East European countries, which still lack an effective mechanism for limiting personalistic politics, the political leader would have a crucial role.

The party leaders are those who in populist personalistic parties outline the general position. Right-wing populists see the problem as an elite that favors the minority over the majority. Cultural change is perceived as a threat to the nation. This is why right-wing populist politicians refer more often to “traditional values” based on group membership and the acceptance of certain beliefs as a given (Inglehart & Norris, [2017](#)). Their interpretation of history is closely linked to the methods used by religious organizations to convince believers of their ideas. This is why one can see a prophetic character in the speech of populist politicians: it is not the acceptance of an alternative viewpoint as fair, but the consideration of one's own position as the best. (Hanska, [2009](#)). However, how could we understand the extent to which values influence populist speech and populist ideology?

1.4 Values in shaping ideology

One of the main problems in memory research is the limited ability of quantitative methods to measure these memories. The problem lies in the subjective perception of the past (Davis, [2005](#)), as it is the context, the narrator, and the purpose of the presentation that determine how the past will be interpreted (Roudumetof, [2002](#)). Even with surveys, it is quite difficult to create a

questionnaire that will show what people perceive as a collective memory. These methods may be effective when it comes to memory perceptions among people, but not among the elite, who are responsible for creating collective memory. Moreover, deriving values from memories is difficult because of the problem of defining memories. The particular set of traits that would bind a group together could be found in the collective memory. Therefore, there is a correlation between the identity struggle and the collective memories that an individual utilizes (Halbwachs, [1925](#)). Elites and masses share a desire to interpret the current stage, and analyzing the past is a useful tool for developing a common position. For example, the negative stance of Serbian public opinion towards increased cooperation with NATO is caused by the traumatic perception of NATO's bombing of Serbia in 1999 (Mladenović, [2022](#)). Serbian elites form a discourse that allows them not to go for closer cooperation with NATO, and they can explain this through a narrative. Moreover, this position of non-alignment is linked to the national struggle for independence as well as to the idea of justice (as bombings are portrayed as unfair). Values play a major role in shaping any political party's program. Moreover, values are the constituent part of any grounded ideology.

However, the nature of values is still not evident. Instead, it is possible to use the references that values have. For example, religious values usually play an important role in right-wing populist narratives, representing a positive vision of society as opposed to an atheist decadent one (Hanska, [2009](#)). Politicians link these values to their personal position in order to present themselves as capable authority who needs the support of the people to achieve political goals. Ideology is based on different values that form a logical and rational set of ideas (Maio et al., [2003](#)). An ideology is the aggregation of different values and that is why it is difficult to understand whether a particular value has a significant part in shaping an ideology.

1.5 Populist rhetoric

There are various definitions of populism, as it is a term that cannot be clearly defined. The common one is that populism serves as a strategy and therefore is not an ideology (Betz, [2002](#)). One specific characteristic is the ability to be constructed upon an existing ideology, and it can be either right or left wing. The context defines how populists would attract the audience, and this means that they would be concerned about the salient issues as well as the cleavages that exist in society. This is a different understanding of populism from the classical definition provided by Cas Mudde, for whom it is merely an ideology, which separates “ordinary people” from the elite and proposes that “ordinary people should have a voice in politics (Mudde, [2015](#), 296). Another political scientist rather sees populism as a rhetorical tool because its categorization of political processes and actors is useful when a particular discourse needs to be delineated (Norris, [2020](#)). If we accept this definition of populism, its relationship to ideology is not entirely clear. Populist politicians use an established ideology to attract an audience, but this does not mean that there are any specific ideologies around which populism can be used as a platform. This means that even populist politicians belonging to the same political spectrum (such as the radical right) not only have different ideologies but also contradict each other. The main criterion is “legitimation” or the objectification of meanings through links to already accepted meanings (Wodak, [2015](#)). Legitimization is thus based on a certain “knowledge” that enables the justification of meanings. Values play an important role in shaping legitimation, as the narratives used are usually based on past events in which the narrator has not participated but can judge them through a valuation

mechanism as well as by referring to the opinions of others. This is the basic idea of moral evaluation, which is to identify the values to be found in a particular narrative. These narratives can be myth-based, as these morality-based stories usually refer to some kind of “golden past” in which we should find solutions to our current problems (Hanska, [2009](#)). In populist discourse, the current time is marked by the crucial problem of ordinary people’s struggles. Therefore, it is important for populists to emphasize the urgency of the problem in order to create fear in people (Wodak, [2015](#)). For example, the discourse on immigration in Europe is interpreted by populists in an apocalyptic way, usually referring to events where people’s identities and opportunities will be limited because of the arrival of others. Thus, to justify the idea of stricter rules on immigration, right-wing populist politicians need to encourage their electorate to adopt a more anti-immigrant stance and see the nation, ethnic, or another group identity as the solution to a cultural “disaster”.

1.6 Populism in the post-communist Transition

The post-communist space is characterized by the growth of populist parties. Prominent examples are “Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance” in Hungary and “Law and Justice”(PiS) in Poland. An important aspect of these parties is the strong paternalistic stance of their leaders (Enyedi, [2016](#)). It is characterized by the lack of a clear separation between the public and private spheres of life and the state’s ability to control the population. The changes should be attributed to the topic of national history, and it can be observed that previously praised communist figures and organizations have received negative connotations in populist discourse in Eastern European countries. For example, Viktor Orban calls the socialist party in Hungary a corrupt elite and draws parallels between it and the times of Communist Hungary (Csehi & Zgut, [2021](#)). The negative

stance towards the socialists could be explained in the context of East Europe by the communist past, as it's connected with corruption, absurd policies, and the destruction of traditional values (Stanley, [2017](#)). The banning of religion during communism had the opposite effect on populist parties in Eastern Europe, which emphasized the role of religion in the nation. This means that religion is not only an acceptable, but even an obligatory part of the nation and that religious values are the ones on which the national identity should be based (Zúquete, [2017](#)).

The strong anti-EU sentiment of the ruling parties can cause their misunderstandings with Brussels' elites. It can be seen that the EU is perceived as an organization that is economically beneficial to its members, but the loss of full sovereignty and cultural adaptation are negative consequences of the EU that should be limited. Some implications of this misunderstanding are a ban on abortions in Poland or anti-LGBT laws in Hungary (Roots, [2022](#)). While in some countries, such as Slovenia and the Baltic States, public opinion on EU accession is positive, in other countries, such as Hungary, the public currently takes a more negative stance, which may be due to populist anti-EU discourse.

Chapter 2. An analysis of Janez Janša's and Aleksandar Vučić's rhetoric

2.1 Research Design

For this study, a sample of both Janez Janša and Aleksandar Vučić's official speeches will be used. These speeches should cover some specific events, such as the day of commemoration, or mention historical figures and events in their speeches. The approximate number of speeches collected is 60³, and they were equally distributed between the two politicians⁴. The way of doing the research is to cover a certain topic, which can be found in several speeches so that it represents a certain pattern. Thus, some themes that will be examined are the representation of Kosovo in Vučić's overall historical discourse, and how immigration is presented in historical perspective in Janez Janša's speeches.

The way in which these speeches are analyzed is based on the model of discourse-historical analysis proposed by Ruth Wodak. Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical analysis gives us an idea of how a narrative from a text can be analyzed on the basis of certain criteria (Wodak, [2017](#)). What is important to understand is the logical construction of the *topos* or the topic which covers a particular idea (Reisigl, [2017](#)). These topics are based on a particular knowledge, which would be understood by the audience and would in general cover a particular area of

³ However, not all of these speeches have been mentioned in the Bibliography because I didn't take any quotes from them.

⁴ See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. There it is possible to find all quotes in original languages, while in the body of this research they are in English.

societal interests. Understanding texts through topoi can help the researchers in revealing the existing narratives and to see in what way the language was used in the text. The word *discourse* I understand as the semiotic practices that are located in a particular sociological context (Reisigl, [2017](#)).

Topoi are not usually presented in an explicit form, and they can be represented in the form of metaphors or paraphrases (Wodak, [2001](#)). Moreover, topoi are not static, but they are dynamic concepts (Reisigl, [2017](#)). According to Discourse-Historical Approach, there are several legitimation strategies that “approve” the argument brought by the politician in his speech. First is the Authorization Legitimation, or the reference to the authority and it answers the question of “why it should be that way” with “because I with reference to a reliable source claim it”(Wodak, [2017](#)). Rationalization Legitimation is another way, based on the accepted social practice or the fact that can be found in history (Wodak, 2017). Moral Legitimation is divided into two main parts: the first one is based on the values that are accepted as the “right” ones while the second one stands for evaluations or comparisons (e.g., “right” against “wrong”) (Wodak, [2017](#)). The fourth way of Legitimation is Mythopoesis, or the argument based on the “myth”. Since in my research I focus on the interpretation of collective memory by politicians, mythopoesis would be used when the stories based on imagined history would be able to describe the “values” that politicians seek to adopt (Wodak, [2017](#)).

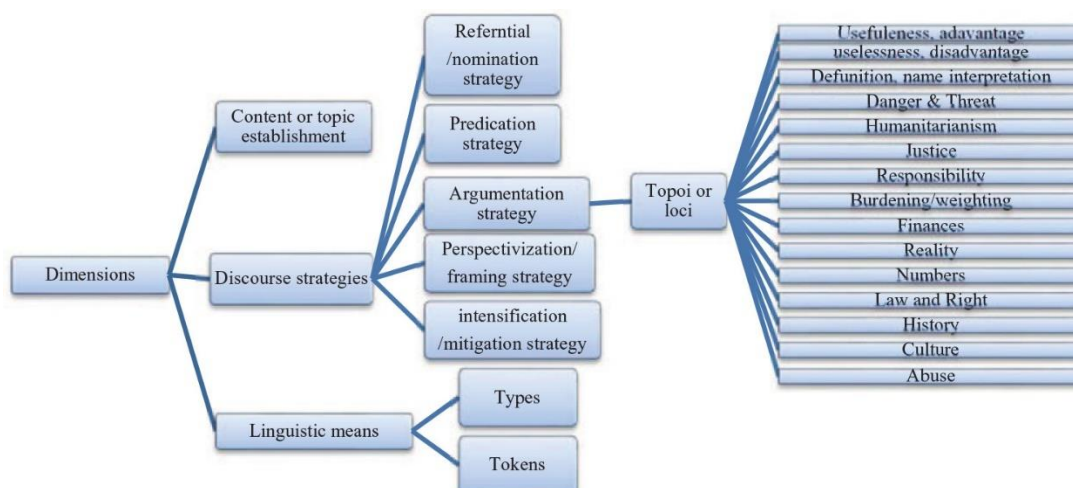


Figure 1 The Discourse Strategies and Common Topoi. Source: (Wodak, 2001, 73) (Image taken from (Mansouri et al., 2017, 3))

There are five discourse strategies that Ruth Wodak mentions in her article: Nomination, Predication, Argumentation, Framing and Intensification (Wodak, 2001). A description of all five strategies can be found below. The Nomination and Argumentation strategies would be used for structuring the analysis, while the other three strategies would be found as used within paragraphs.

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Nomination	Discursive construction of social actors, objects, phenomenon etc.	Membership categorization, metaphors, verbs and nouns that describe action
Predication	Discursive qualification of social actors, objects, phenomenon etc.	Evaluative attribution of positive or negative traits,

		predicative nouns, comparisons, allusions
Argumentation	Justification of a claim of truth or normative rightness	Topoi and fallacies
Framing	Positioning speaker's point of view and expressing involvement or distance	Direct or indirect speech, quotation marks, metaphors
Intensification	Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force and thus the epistemic or deontic status of utterances	Diminutives or augmentatives, hyperboles or litotes.

Table 1 Discursive strategies. Source: (Reisigl & Wodak, [2017](#), 95)

Discourse-Historical Approach was criticized for the emphasis on the representation rather than the understanding of the action in the text itself (Fairclough & Fairclough, [2013](#)). Moreover, by providing the topoi as topics for texts, it neglects the other argumentative schemes that are present in the text. Rhetorical political analysis (RPA) helps to identify the speaker's style and the techniques used to achieve temporal goals. It consists of three main components that help analyze the text: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos (Finlayson, [2007](#)). Logos refers to logical reasoning with the provision of cognitive mechanisms, which suggests the existence of a causal mechanism. The politician provides a statement and right after there is a persuasive part, which explains why their position is the preferred one. Ethos, on the other hand, depends on the character of speakers, and on the personal values they hold. It can be a demonstration of belonging to a particular group by introducing references in the rhetoric that will be accepted by the target community (Finlayson,

[2007](#)). Finally, Pathos represents the emotional basis of the language used by a politician, his/her charisma and passion for a particular issue, and the judgments made will be more effective than rational (Finlayson, [2007](#)).

Thus, in my research, the relationship between DHA and RPA looks like they built on each other. DHA provides an analysis of the text as part of social practice and helps to explain how narratives are formed and how collective memory is used in these speeches, while RPA helps to identify the politician's style and persuasion techniques since the purpose of speech is political action.

2.1 Janez Janša

As the leader of the Slovenian Democratic Party, Janez Janša fits into the category of right-wing populist discourse. He has been Prime Minister of Slovenia three times and his rhetoric may have changed during that time. In my research, I have focused on his last term, which lasted from 2020 to 2022. During these two years, Janez Janša had to take into account the strong opposition, and he had to cooperate with Borut Pahor, who was president of Slovenia at the time. Nevertheless, he had official speeches which helped to understand the peculiarities of his rhetoric. Moreover, his use of Twitter allows us to see his ideas which are found in official speeches in a very hidden form. According to the Discourse-Historical Approach, it is possible to understand the nomination techniques (naming actors, objects in a particular way) and the argumentation strategy (how does he prove that his argument is valid).

Nomination strategy

- 1) **Yugoslavia.** Janez Janša does not have a positive view of Yugoslavia in his official rhetoric, as Slovenians had no actual sovereignty (as Belgrade dictated the rules) and also the socialist ideology did not allow the country to flourish. Yugoslavia was associated with the Yugoslav People's Army, which represented the occupying force during the 10-day war. In addition, Janez Janša mentions the State Security Directorate (UDBA), which was the secret police force that persecuted him in 1988 (GOV.SI, September 1, [2020](#)). The Yugoslav era has been described as totalitarian, according to Janez Janša, and as a response to those who would defend Yugoslavia, he said that 95% of the archives from that period were missing because the communists wanted to hide their atrocities and get away with it.
- 2) **Communism.** Janez Janša is known to be very critical of socialist ideas, and in his speeches, one can notice several synonyms he uses to describe socialists. He refers to them as an internationalist ideology that has blinded the nation in its assessment of the anti-fascist movement during the Second World War. Cultural Marxism is a phenomenon that Janez Janša attributes to the opponents of his party. In his conviction, he is leading the European civilization with their unique understanding of family ties, religion, and tradition toward total annihilation with the acceptance of impostors (such as immigrants). In his speech to the European People's Party, he is convinced of the need to protect the foundations of the EU, as it is values that hold Europeans together. The communist ideology of the times of Yugoslavia and the new “communism”, according to Janez Janša, is an internal threat to Europe. In this respect, he is similar to Viktor Orbán and his negative stance towards the left in Hungary as “communists”. *“We are all watching what is happening and I clearly see the same formula*

written in the communist manifesto some 200 years ago. The communist manifesto said that in order to create a new world, the nation, the family, private property, private education and religion must be dismantled. This is now happening through the mass media, the cultural industry, and some political parties (GOV.SI, July 9, [2020](#)) “. Consequently, he draws an analogy with the 19th century, which must mean why communism will have a negative impact these days (as it did disastrously back then).

- 3) **Europe.** Acceptance of Europe is important to Janez Janša. As he said at the 16th Strategic Forum in Bled, *“The edifice of Europe must continue to be built on stone, on the solid foundations built by the fathers of the European Union”*(GOV.SI, September 1, [2021](#)). The idea of strengthening the EU at the expense of the Western Balkan countries can be found in Janez Janša’s rhetoric. In his view, as these countries (Serbia in particular) continue to value traditional values, they could increase the capacity of a conservative European bloc by supporting more conservative policies and protesting against pro-liberal policies. Janez Janša does not see the current Serbia as a problem, as he attributes it to communist Yugoslavia. Janša usually refers to Slovenia as a Central European country, and this treatment of Slovenia as Central Europe may be the result of collaboration with Viktor Orbán and maintaining a similar ideological stance. When it comes to LGBTQ+ rights, Janez Janša warns that these values are alien to Central Europe and supports Viktor Orban's ban on the promotion of homosexuality among children. He mentions the example of Yugoslavia, where there were *“five or six nations, three religions, six republics, two autonomous provinces and the country fell apart for different reasons but the last nail in the coffin was when some people started using special criteria for themselves, applying double standards”*(Boffey, [2021](#)).

- 4) **Slovenia.** Janez Janša uses several synonyms to refer to the country, all with positive connotations. Homeland is the most used, and it is meant to emphasize the deep emotional connection Slovenes have with their land. Because of the negative events in history, he says that every mountain, river or valley is a sacred grave (GOV.SI, June 6, [2020](#)). The nation is seen as a human organism, with different parts responsible for its role. By maintaining the traditional ties between people, the nation maintains the existing status quo, and this sustains the life of the nation. Creating a mythopoetic narrative is necessary because, by creating myths, the politician adds something sacred to his words, an idea that is epic and inspiring.
- 5) **Slovenians.** One of the key characteristics of his nationalist discourse is the topos of the people. Its essence is that people agree on specific political actions and decide what is in their best interest. In the context of Slovenian statehood, the 1990 Slovenian referendum was the foundation for collective action. Maturity and wisdom are qualities used to describe the Slovenian nation at the time, and this is also in line with the idea of the nation as a people united to have freedom over their lives and relations among themselves. The topos of the people cannot be continued without explaining who the people are. For Janez Janša, Slovenes, who speak the Slovenian language and are fully aware of Slovenia's complex history as well as historical discourses, are the ones who have to decide the fate of the country. In his discourse he therefore separates the people from those who live in Slovenia, as the people have a higher meaning. As he puts it, *“without Slovenians, the Slovenian language and Slovenian culture a country may exist, but that country would not be Slovenia”*(GOV.SI, December 23, [2021](#)). People, thanks to Janez Janša, are Slovenes, ordinary people who oppose elites and foreign minorities. There are also those Slovenes who are ideologically excluded from this category (socialists/communists and LGBTQ+), who, according to nationalist discourse, are still part of

the Slovenian nation, but in populist discourse they belong to the others because they have adopted 'foreign' values (such as immigrants) and LGBTQ+ supporters) (GOV.SI, July 4, [2021](#)). Revisiting the past for Janša is an important part of shaping the future, and through his references to past events one can see the message he gives to Slovenia's current politics. *“We the Slovenians have proved that everything is possible: not only thirty years ago and the thirty years that followed, but also now, when we remember these great events of the war for independence, when we look ahead, we see no reason why the next thirty years should not be even more successful than those before”*(GOV.SI, June 27, [2021](#)). Speaking in RPA terms, here we are able to find the concept of ethos, because of Janez Janša’s credibility since he also participated in the described events. Moreover, the emotional appeal in this speech (as “Slovenes“ are capable of everything if they want) is meant to persuade the audience that his position is right.

- 6) **Slovenian territorial defense.** These paramilitaries played a significant role during the War of Independence. Janez Janša notes that these forces were formed by enthusiasts, and even former emigrants came to defend their desired future state: *“In trying times, the nation's decision was defended together by the sons of partisans and home guards. The sons of prosecuted and deported emigrants volunteered to join the Slovenian Territorial Defence”*(GOV.SI, June 6, [2020](#)). Slovenians living abroad supported the idea of independence and contributed to the new state. In this case, the proud Slovenian emigrants were patriots who returned to their country to defend it (GOV.SI, June 6, [2020](#)) *“We were united then, so we succeeded. Without this help, everything would have been much more difficult, a fact that is often forgotten*(GOV.SI, June 6, [2020](#))”.

Argumentation strategy

- 1) **Border defense.** Janez Janša fits into the discourse of mythopoesis by providing imaginative metaphors related to Slovenia's history. The topos of comparison can be illustrated by the use of historical events, some of which have symbolic rather than practical significance (Wodak, [2017](#)). For example, referring to the defenders of Ormož against the Yugoslav army, he compares the battle to the battle of Thermopylae, where 300 Spartans fought to the death against the mighty army of the Persians (GOV.SI, June 27, [2021](#)). By mentioning the idea of a traitor who helped the Persians to defeat the Spartans, Janez Janša may have been referring to the pro-Yugoslav Slovenes, who at the time were loyal to both the Socialist Party and the Yugoslav authorities. The topos of danger/fear can be discerned in this speech. The formation of the Slovenian national state is deeply linked to the 10-day war between self-proclaimed Slovenia and socialist Yugoslavia, and it was this battle, according to Janez Janša, that preserved the new state. He says the following: “*The Spartans were defending the already existing confederation of city-states, and we were defending a state that had barely been proclaimed*”(GOV.SI, June 27, [2021](#)). The Spartans defended an already existing confederation of city-states, while we defended a barely proclaimed state. Comparing the battle of Ormož, a city on the Slovenian-Croatian border, to Thermopylae, one can see the discourse of border security and the idea of a nation limited by its borders. Janez Janša stated: “*Here, too, the bridge did not fall and was defended, a bridge that then symbolized the new border of the new state* (GOV.SI, June 27, [2021](#))”. The basic idea was that by not allowing the Yugoslav army into Slovenia, the Slovenian people had de facto separated themselves from the rest of Yugoslavia by a national border. This national border was not physical; it was created by the

presence of Slovenian soldiers who fought against the Yugoslav army. The Pathos can be found in this section as there is a storytelling, connected with the belief that Slovenia at that time had to be defended and that the legacy of that time should exist nowadays.

- 2) **Migration.** He compares migration to today's Europe to the fall of the Western Roman Empire and sees borders as cultural. It is not the EU as a whole (as he speaks positively of the EU and NATO in his speeches), but the international left that contributes to this migration. He has a particular antipathy towards immigrants, as they are perceived as imposters of Slovenian traditional cultural space. On the influx of refugees from Afghanistan after the victory of the Taliban in 2021, he tweeted that Europe should not repeat the mistake of 2015, when it opened its borders to migrants (GOV.SI, August 23, [2021](#)). Janez Janša's moralization around borders can be compared to the strategies of other right-wing populist politicians. The idea is the border itself, because for them borders not only provide security but also maintain existing social ties between people. Migrants are therefore a danger to ordinary people because these ties can disappear, as has happened in some EU countries (according to Janša). Comparing the acute Covid-19 crisis to migration, he noted that the danger of migration is long-term and potentially more dangerous: „*Covid is currently more dangerous, while mass illegal migrations are definitely more dangerous long-term, should the EU fail to stop them* (GOV.SI, December 10, [2022](#)). Hence, the logic behind this claim is that immigration is an imminent danger as it will destroy the Slovenian culture, and that is why Janez Janša's view on immigration is valid.
- 3) **Notable historical figures.** One of the most effective ways to see how Janez Janša uses collective memory is to turn to Slovenian writers and public figures from the 19th and 20th centuries. Although Slovenia was proclaimed as an independent state in 1990, the Slovenian people even before that felt that they were separate from the other nations around them - and

these famous people can prove this claim. The table below shows the key Slovenian figures who are positively used in Janez Janša's speeches, fitting in with some of the topoi discussed earlier.

Referenced historical figure	Topos/Fallacy	Full citation
Franc Jeza	Topos of the people (The story about ordinary people, those that are left behind and need the structural changes)	<i>“We can find solace in the fact that, across Slovenia, there are many ordinary, unknown people who remain the true unknown fighters of freedom and national consciousness also in a political sense and who will, as if by a miracle, sprout up – like flowers in the spring, even though the winter might make it seem as if everything were lifeless beneath the snow – and play a</i>

		<i>crucial role ...”(GOV.SI, December 23, 2021)</i>
France Prešeren	Topos of Liberty	<i>“For all Slovenes will then dawn brighter days and kindlier stars upon their land will gaze, more brilliant songs will come with better times.”(Gov.si, February 8, 2021)</i>
Rudolf Maister Vojanov	Topos of Liberty (Comparison between spring and liberation as well as using King Matijaž as the national hero).	<i>“...Brothers! Our spring is rising from the ground, Clear as a gale, strong as a wave: It has descended on our homes, Dispelled the darkness, brought out the sun, The sun – the day of King Matjaž”(GOV.SI, October 25, 2021).</i>
	Topos of danger	<i>“Where people read and know what it is all about, there they</i>

Josip Jurčič	(Here the meaning of danger is illiteracy, but it is more about the knowledge of collective memory by people)	<i>are unwavering. Where there is a lack of awareness, there is no certainty and there is a safe haven for impostors and strangers. (GOV.SI, March 3 2022) “</i>
Dr Jože Pučnik	Topos of Comparison (The comparison between the Austrian and German differences and the Slovenian Nation uniqueness).	<i>“Why do you, Germans, think that only you have the right to self-determination, but not others? Is it because you’re bigger, or is it about values?”(GOV.SI, March 3, 2022)</i>
Boris Pahor	Topos of People (Slovenians needed to form the Nation-state as that is what their hearts require).	<i>“Despite all the ascents of the human mind, despite the acquisitions of the human spirit with which we rise above ethnic boundaries, the national community is still the most noble homeland of the human heart”(GOV.SI, September 15, 2020).</i>

Simon Gregorčič	Topos of Liberty (The idea of independent Slovenia protected by God)	<i>"My first song was glorified by her, the last will be sung to her, and the last voices will be: God save my homeland!"</i> (GOV.SI, September 15, 2020)
Jože Plečnik	Topos of People	<i>"for all Slovenes will then dawn brighter days"</i> (GOV.SI, February 3, 2022)

Table 2. Mythopoesis as the legitimization strategy via referencing famous poets.

- 4) **Relevant topics.** A contemporary shift in discourse can be observed in his speeches. Whereas in 2020 it was mainly about the coronavirus and protecting people's lives, in 2022 the main topic was the war in Ukraine. In the case of Slovenia, there was not some strong territorial conflict that was a catalyst for the myth. Quite the opposite, for Slovenians it is their country, within its current borders being independent is an achievement, and the EU is seen even by populists as a right to belong as an equal member of the European family. One of the latest developments is the support for Ukraine, which Janez Janša compared to Slovenia's struggle for independence in 1990. According to him, just as Slovenians wanted to be accepted as an independent and European nation, so do Ukrainians today (GOV.SI, March 3, [2022](#)).
- 5) **The use of statistics.** The topos of numbers can be found in Janez Janša's speeches, where he uses quantitative information as a moral justification for a claim (GOV.SI, March 3, [2022](#)). For example, statistics about the Slovenian economy, which are then compared with other European countries (or with the European average). For example, as a justification for

Slovenia's independence he points out that *“Slovenia represented 8% of the then Yugoslav population and generated 16% of the GDP of the former Yugoslavia. We used to contribute a quarter of the federal budget to Belgrade”*(GOV.SI, December 21, [2021](#)).

2.3 Aleksandar Vučić

Nomination strategy

- 1) **Serbs.** For Aleksandar Vučić Serbs are those who self-identify as such, speak the Serbian language, are Orthodox Christians and they love their Nation. Therefore, it is not the same as the “Serbians” because in Serbia many minorities live. Meanwhile, there are Serbs in Republika Srpska (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and in Montenegro, many of whom have strong support towards Aleksandar Vučić. As Aleksandar Vučić points out in his speeches, Serbs are all people who call themselves Serbs, speak the Serbian language and follow a certain set of values. There are certain names used for Serbs in other countries. For example, the Serbs living in some parts of Croatia are called “Krajišniks”(Jutarnji.hr, August 4, [2020](#)), because their ancestors had defended the Austro-Hungarian border against the Turks. This means that Aleksandar Vučić is not focused on borders when he talks about the people, because there are Serbs in the region who will support him.

- 2) **Political Opponents.** It is worth noting the representation of the opposition in Aleksandar Vučić's speeches, as he used negative campaigning tactics during the 2017 elections. In particular, he referred to representatives of the former regime as those who want to implement the Macedonian scenario in Serbia. By this he means the disagreement between the government and the opposition in northern Macedonia in 2016, when the switch of the ethnic Albanian party to another party gave the opposition the opportunity to form a government that the incumbent party refused to accept. The reason Aleksandar Vučić used this phrase is that protests and violence in the streets (Fonet, March 3, [2017](#)). The democratic opposition fled the country during the wars, and Aleksandar Vučić still refers to them as “traitors” and “cowards”. Moreover, referring to the former Serbian government formed by the Democratic Party, he calls them “thieves” and “foreign agents”(L.G., August 29, [2019](#)).

Argumentation strategy

- 1) **Topos of the people.** In line with this goal, Aleksandar Vučić cites historical figures that all Serbs should praise. He singles out the work of Vuk Stefanovic Karadžić on the unification of the Serbian language, and this puts him at the top of the list of the most important Serbs. The reason lies in the language itself, because it is also the means of identification, and the Serbian language with its Cyrillic alphabet is one of the recognizable tools that set Serbs apart from the rest (PTC, September 17, [2017](#)). Another cornerstone is religion, and for that he quotes the story of St Sava, who was the son of Stefan Nemanja, one of Serbia's most famous medieval rulers. Saint Sava devoted his life to serving God and doing good to others, and this devotion,

willingness and generosity are values that should appeal to Serbs today. His father Stefan Nemanja represents a successful politician who was able to keep good relations between East and West and started the process of unification of the Serbian lands (centralization) (Predsednik.rs, January 27, [2021](#)). Moreover, it was medieval historical figures such as Stefan Nemanja, St Sava and Stefan the First Crowned who laid the foundation for the emergence of the modern Serbian state in the 19th century. Stefan Dušan's empire stretched across the territory of today's Serbia, Albania, northern Macedonia, Bulgaria and Greece, and it was the time of the culmination of the Serbian conquests. After his death, however, the Turks came to the former lands of the Serbian Empire for almost five centuries (Predsednik.rs, January 27, [2021](#)).

The fight against foreign invaders (Ottomans and Austro-Hungarians) is presented as the only possible way for Serbs to become a nation and gain freedom. That is why medieval figures are credited with the existence of Serbia today. Given the struggle for independence, today's Serbia is the result of the bloodshed of the past, and it is the new generation that needs to understand the value of its sovereignty. In addition to famous politicians, Serbian writers also played an important role in shaping Serbian identity. Aleksandar Vučić refers to them as they set out their views on the struggle for Serbian identity.

As Table 3 shows, Serbian writers take a critical approach when it comes to collective memory, but at the same time, Aleksandar Vučić finds their views appropriate for his maxim. He argues that there is a false perception of reality because of the neglect of history, and by this he is following the Logos as persuading the audience by providing the logical arguments. However, history carries morals and stories that can be useful in setting goals for the state. The

Serbian people's spirit for freedom is a virtue that can be found in Aleksandar Vučić's speeches, as well as respect for other cultures and patience if something is unavailable in a given period of time. That is why Aleksandar Vučić uses the contrast between large and small nations (such as Serbs), as it shows that time can sometimes favour one side and after a while the other. Freedom, independence and sovereignty of the state are combined with patience and tolerance of the people (Predsednik.rs, March 24, [2020](#)). He considers the repetition of history a problem, as the Serbs have gone through a lot of hardships and deprivation over the past decades, as well as the hatred that has accumulated during that time. That is why he advocates keeping the memory of history alive: *„we must not forget, just as we must not stop on the common path for a more beautiful, richer and happier Serbia.”* (Predsednik.rs, October 1, [2017](#)).

Serbian writer	Topos	Quote
Borislav Pekić	Topos of Time (Goldend Age or Crisis vs Nowadays)	<i>„One should look forward because if the point was in looking backwards, we would have got the eyes on the back of the head”</i> (Predsednik.rs, May27, 2020).
Petar Petrovic Njegos	Topos of Burdening	<i>„Self-deception is fatal both to people and nations”</i> (Predsednik.rs, May27, 2020)
Isidora Sekulic	Topos of the people	<i>„We are a nation that does not believe in reality and that does</i>

	(in the meaning that the understanding of the nation is false)	<i>not like reality</i> ”(Predsednik.rs, May27, 2020)
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Table 3 Famous Serbian writers referenced in Aleksandar Vučić’s speech

2) **The heroization of a historical figure.** There is a need for people to have a certain set of beliefs that bind them together. Mythopoiesis plays a role in providing this set of beliefs because it refers to supposed historical events that did the right thing. For example, Milos Obilic, famous for killing the Ottoman Sultan during the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, has qualities such as the will for freedom and patriotism that Serbs need to take as an example from him. Aleksandar Vučić even refers to Milos Obilić, asking if there is a hero in our time who would be like Obilić and who would help restore Kosovo, realizing that no one can do that (Predsednik.rs, October 1, 2017). Moreover, the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Prince Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip is presented in Serbian mythopoetry not as a terrorist act, but as a heroic act, because he wanted the unity of Serbs. The actions of those rebels are as significant as those of politicians like Milos Obrenovic, Karadjordje Petrovic and King Petar I, in achieving Serbian unity and preserving the soul of the Serbian nation (Predsednik.rs, February 15, [2021](#)). Mythical heroes, such as Marko Kraljevic, are compared to ordinary Serbs who were patriots of their country and showed heroism (B92, March 24, [2022](#)). Karadjordje and Miloš Obrenović were the initiators of the Serbian uprisings, they had a vision of a state that would unite Serbs, and it was at that time that national myths (including the myth of Kosovo) began to form. In spite of the losses of that time and the pain and suffering that Serbs experienced at the beginning of their independence, the fact that the state has been preserved

is seen as a significant achievement. King Petar I Karadjordjevic and Aleksandar Karadjordjevic had the vision of the new Serbian state, which resulted in the state of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (from 1929 Kingdom of Yugoslavia).

- 3) Victimization in Vučić's discourse.** Since Serbs were expelled from Croatia during Operation Storm in 1995 by the Croatian armed forces, Serbs should understand the tragedy that had occurred and support their compatriots forced to flee. Speaking of Serbians, Aleksandar Vučić noticed that *"Serbs are a numerically small, proud people, victorious in great wars, strong, gifted, ready to sacrifice, but also to reconcile, with that small condition, important for our survival"*(MOD.GOV.RS, March 29, [2019](#)). He says that because of the victim status, Serbs had to keep quiet and not use words like „pogroms”and „cleansing”. Today, however, Serbia is able to protect its citizens in their self-expression (Predsednik.rs, March 24, [2020](#)). And finally, he urged not to forget about the past and that the past must coordinate the Serbs in the future(Predsednik.rs, March 24, [2020](#)). As Vučić said about Serbs : *„Today is the time when we can finally say who we are, where we come from, and who and what our country is”*(Kurir, February 15, [2022](#)). By remembering and understanding the status of the victim, future generations will be able to truly love their country. This further contributes to the international community's recognition that Serbs can grieve and feel emotional damage because of NATO aggression. Jasenovac, the concentration camp where many Serbs died during the Second World War, is meant to illustrate the suffering of the Serbian people, to show the price that Serbs paid for their nation. At the same time, this rhetoric is anti-war and aims to prevent any conflict (Predsednik.rs, April 26, [2020](#)). Aleksandar Vučić emphasizes that the life of the people is the most valuable asset for the state, and is worth more than any success

(Predsednik.rs, May 24, [2019](#)). The Serbian president notes that crime is the virtue not of the strong, but of the weak, and that the victors (the powerful nations such as the United States) must remember and forgive (Predsednik, March 17, [2021](#)). He says that people do not remember because they want to return back to the Golden era (especially among older generations). The discourse of victimization is used by him to adapt to the new reality and to explain to the audience that the past cannot and should not be returned. The dissolution of Yugoslavia Aleksandar Vučić categorize as the beginning of a crisis. Consequently, he knows what happened in the 1990s and early 2000s as the country's disintegration (Predsednik.rs, November 11, [2018](#)). However, the regime change in 2012 was a turning point for Serbia's new rise. The historical references he makes encourage citizens to praise national history and learn from it (Predsednik.rs, November 25, [2018](#)).

- 4) **Foreign Policy.** Injustice towards Serbia is one of the discourses Vučić raises during negotiations with traditional partners. This is why he refers to Martin Luther King, who fought against injustice (Predsednik.rs, September 22, [2022](#)). One reason for the change is that under Vučić, Serbia has begun to treat its traditional allies differently, and now they will not remain silent if danger arises. Aleksandar Vučić has managed to forge close ties with Russia. He has used the narrative of Slavic brotherhood and common Orthodox heritage when it comes to ties with Russia, and this is evident from the strong support for Russia among the Serbian public. This was not the case 20 years ago and it has to do with the creation of the myth of Kosovo. The reason is that Russia, like China, opposes recognizing Kosovo's independence and can veto resolutions on Kosovo's status or amend Resolution 1244. Vučić attributed the silence of traditional allies to the foreign policy of the Democratic Party under Boris Tadic

(Predsednik.rs, May 24, [2020](#)). One way to get closer to allies is to celebrate the same events, such as Victory Day in Russia. Before Aleksandar Vučić it was not celebrated, but he justified it by saying that the Serbs fought against the occupiers and they are born winners because they have the spirit in them (Predsednik.rs, May 11, [2021](#)). Therefore, the arrival of Russian President Vladimir Putin was warmly welcomed by Serbian society. Besides the traditional partners, Aleksandar Vučić justifies the normalization of relations with the “NATO” countries, such as USA and Great Britain, saying that the future is uncertain and cooperation is necessary (Predsednik.rs, May 24, [2020](#)). History teaches people a lesson, but that does not mean that one cannot agree with „hostile” countries. In addition, he would stress the importance of the Serbian community in the United States, as well as the shared history with inventors such as Mihajlo Pupin and Nikola Tesla (Predsednik.rs, July27, [2018](#)).

- 5) **Kosovo Issue.** Construction of the nationalistic discourse. Justification and relativization refers to the reasons why particular past events are mentioned and are representative of particular values that stick the society together. For instance, whenever Vučić refer to the Kosovo issue and possible solutions, he would mention the external factor among the most important ones. He says that in case the US and Europe want peace in Balkans, the negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina will be productive (Predsednik.rs, July27, [2018](#)). This puts Aleksandar Vučić more in a position of mainstream pragmatic politicians who calculate their chances rather than a populist who relies on public opinion. This pragmatic approach is useful for Vučić because this way he can look more serious and dedicated in the eyes of the public.

The Kosovo Myth is the key national constructing myth as it was used by the Serbian authorities to outline what is Serbian identity (Bazić, [2012](#), 254). The Serbian culture is based on the relevance of the religion on the lives of Serbians. And since Kosovo is the place where are still many medieval Serbian monasteries and churches, the link between Kosovo issue and Church could be seen (Jovanović, [2019](#)). Vučić in his speech emphasizes the significance of the Orthodox church by mentioning the restoration attempts as well as protection of the religious sites there. He points out that *“having in mind the invaluable historical and spiritual, national and cultural importance we finance facilities of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the territory of the AP of Kosovo and Metohija”* (Predsednik.rs, May 24, [2020](#)).

Serbia didn't recognize Kosovo as the state, but according to the EU accession agreement one of the conditions is the normalization of the relationships between Belgrade and Pristina. Therefore, Vučić holds different discourses when he speaks with the Serbian public, which would not accept any surrender of the current policy towards Kosovo, and his negotiations with Kosovo institutions. *“My job isn't myths or dreams or hallucinations or twisted visions of Kosovo without Albanians or Kosovo without Serbs. My job is the reality. What it is today, here and now, in today's Kosovo, in today's Serbia, not some heavenly Serbia. We fell from that heaven. We fell and seriously injured ourselves. Our heads are covered in blood, our arms are broken”* (Ciric, [2018](#)). This division between the imagined Serbia and actual Serbia is the technique that Vučić uses quite often to express his inability to influence the life of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija. This discourse is of a nationalist origin since he speaks of Serbia as the nation of Serbs who had their successes and failures. However, the imagined past is still relevant when it comes to describing the state of the negotiations. For instance, Vučić describes the history of Kosovo from the middle ages (since Slovenes came to Serbia) up to declaration

of Kosovo independence. By that he wanted to emphasize the quite long period of Serbian history. The idea of the created narrative behind Kosovo Battle 1389 is the separation of the Serbs as well as the lack of trust among them, which helped the Turks to conquer Serbia.

The young generation is the target of historical narratives, and the narrative of defending the country is used as the best strategy to use in the future. For example, the Battle of Košara, where young Serb soldiers prevented Albanian paramilitaries from entering Kosovo, is an example of the right decision a young Serb can make (Predsednik.rs, June 14, [2022](#)). The purpose of collective memory is not to forget, and in the case of the Kosovo myth it plays the role of keeping the memory of the conflict with NATO alive. Serbia had to defend itself against a coalition of 19 countries, and the war was fought only on the territory of Yugoslavia (Predsednik.rs, September 22, [2022](#)), so there was no Serbian aggression towards neighboring states. NATO bombing led to the death and suffering of innocent civilians and destroyed the country's growth prospects (such as economic prosperity and stability). Vučić expressed sorrow over the mistakes that he made in the past and expressed his desire to improve (Predsednik.rs, September 22, [2022](#)). At the same time, he points out that it is still very important for the Serbian state to support its citizens living in the Serbian enclaves in Kosovo and Metohija and to stop the decrease of the Serbian population there. The thought of poor Serbs living in a hostile environment should be a lesson for the new generations who need to defend their country and nation (Predsednik.rs, September 22, [2022](#)).

6) Time Comparisons. The use of time is very prominent in Aleksandar Vučić's speeches.

The comparison between the wars in 1990s in former Yugoslavian republics and the Second World War can be found when it comes to victimization. The ethnic cleansing that took place

under Operation Storm was in fact a repetition of the history of the 1940s, when Croatian fascists carried out massacres of peaceful Serbs (Predsednik.rs, April 26, [2020](#)). Moreover, Aleksandar Vučić points to the victimized status of Serbs in Croatia, comparing Operation Storm to the Holocaust. He compares the treatment of Serbs during Operation Storm to the extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany and draws a parallel between the 1990s and World War II. History comparison plays an important role in Aleksandar Vučić's discourse. In order to support his claim that Serbs had the battle for Kosovo in 1999, he refers to Knez Lazar, who led the Kosovo battle in 1389 against the Ottoman Empire (Semenov, [2022](#)). Thus in both cases Serbs had to fight against the foreign mighty power and in both cases managed to survive. This thought shows the pragmatism in Aleksandar Vučić's words. A similar idea applies to his comparison of Serbia with the great powers. It is argued that Serbia suffers the consequences of the fact that its territory is quite small, and Vučić emphasises this fact by suggesting that the citizens of Serbia are what make it big. Furthermore, this comparison is used to explain Serbia's foreign policy, where both Eastern and Western partners are seen as legitimate negotiators, and that Serbia cannot choose with whom to be neighbors.

- 7) **Topos of Numbers.** One of the special techniques Vučić likes to use is numbering. In his speeches he cites statistics and calculations, which should position him as a more intellectual debater and his words to be taken more seriously. For instance, he points out the change in the population of Kosovo, where the percentage of Serbs has dropped from 27 percent in 1961 to 15 percent in 1981 (Predsednik.rs, March 24, [2019](#)). Moreover, the figures should emphasize the seriousness of the issue. For example, when describing NATO's intervention, he says “*We were alone, facing the largest military force in the world, with a coalition of the rich and*

powerful , with 22,000 tons of bombs and rockets and their clear goal - to humiliate us and hand over part of our territory to someone else”(Predsednik.rs, March 24, [2019](#)) .

- 8) **Minority rights.** Aleksandar Vučić talks about LGBTQ+ ideology as something that should be accepted in society. As his core narrative involves moral values related to family, he mentions that there is a “gay” person in his family, but he would never reject this person because of their identity: *“I have a woman in my extended family who is gay and I would never trade her for anything else, I don't think there is any evil. Many of my co-workers are gay and they help me so much that I can't tell you”*(N.V., September 10, [2022](#)).

Chapter 3. Comparative analysis between two politicians

1. **General observation.** The analysis in this study gives us a broader understanding of right-wing populism through the analysis of two similar cases. It shows that in two countries with very similar socio-political transformations, recent history has been used differently. It can be seen that Aleksandar Vučić is much more pragmatic and has his own unique language, which is meant to push him up in the eyes of the public, explaining the shortcomings of his rule through the prism of otherness and adopting some rules of the game. Janez Janša takes the immigration issue very seriously, considering it a threat to the national culture in the future. Meanwhile, Aleksandar Vučić doesn't have a strong anti-immigrant position, but he is more concerned with the position of the Serbs outside of the borders of Serbia. Hence, for him the discrimination of Serbs in neighboring countries is a

serious threat to the preservation of the national culture. Such characteristics of the Serbian people, as Orthodox Christianity, Serbian language and a special place for patriotism would be for him the ideal ones for describing the Serbs.

2. **The difference of time frame.** What strikingly differentiates Janez Janša from Aleksandar Vučić is the perception of the national history. According to Janez Janša, 30 years ago the Slovenians managed to get independence and start building their own future. Meanwhile, for Serbs the same exact period of time is considered to be the time of decadence and sufferings, and the breakup of Yugoslavia brought many issues to the Serbian community. For instance, Aleksandar Vučić speaks of Serbs overall, including those who live in neighboring countries and have much less the discourse of the national state between its borders as is the case of Slovenia. The communist past is put in a negative way much more by Janez Janša than by Aleksandar Vučić. The reason is the existence of Yugoslavia, which, even under communism, fulfilled the goal of being the state of Serbs as a dominating nation. Meanwhile, according to Janez Janša, it is the various malpractices and the destruction of the nation that communism brought to Slovenians.
3. **Heroization/victimisation.** The victimization part as well as the heroic part are those that does not differ much. We are able to observe the heroic action done by young Slovenes in 1990 as well as the young Serbian defenders of Kosovo and Metohija in 1999. However, the emphasis on the clear historical figures from medieval times, such as references to Milos Obilic or to Kraljevic Marko shows the willingness of Aleksandar Vučić to use the „legendarized” history for current affairs by rising national awareness.
4. **Foreign policy.** Moreover, the current affairs reflect their usage of memory politics. For instance, Aleksandar Vučić is much less Western-centric and even in the discourse of the

EU accession he is not speaking about it as the ultimate goal and he keeps good ties with Russia and China. Meanwhile, Janez Janša's clear anti-Russian stance is caused by his support of smaller and newer countries, such as Ukraine. Janez Janša would draw a parallel between nowadays war in Ukraine with the war for independence in Slovenia.

5. **Treatment of others.** Janez Janša's speeches have many negative connotations with nomination for certain groups of people. These groups are supporters of left-wing parties and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The reason lies in the strong divisions among Slovenians, in which young and educated members are more likely to support the opposite side, and this is why this side is perceived as a threat to future generations. Although Aleksandar Vučić treats the issue of gay rights more neutrally than Janez Janša, he accepts the inevitability rather than supporting it. For example, he argues that the LGBT Pride parade is organized because of Western powers and that it would make more sense for LGBTQ+ people to turn to secure their own rights instead. In 2014, Vučić stated that it is his right as a citizen of the country not to attend the parade, even if he supports the right of homosexuals to do so. *„It is my democratic right not to be at Pride or the Gay Parade, call it what you will, I have other commitments. But it is my constitutional obligation to guarantee everyone's rights. I will not be at the Pride Parade, it never crosses my mind, but that is my democratic right. Let whoever wants to walk, I won't”*(Klix, September 25, [2014](#)).

Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper was to understand how the narratives used by politicians influence their ideology. In particular, how the use of collective memory shapes the rhetoric of populist politicians in relation to the widespread debate among political scientists about the rise and consolidation of populism as a tool without a particular ideology. Thanks to the analysis that was conducted with the usage of Discourse-Historical approach and Rhetorical Political Analysis, and the speeches of Aleksandar Vučić and Janez Janša were compared. Even though the techniques that these politicians use are the same, the context plays a significant role in determining the relationship between memory politics and ideology. We could observe that the issue of Kosovo and the loss of sovereignty played a significant role in the rhetoric, because these are the topics that populist electorates are concerned about.

Despite the particular advantages of the method used in this study, it is worth mentioning the limitations. A clear separation between the discursive-historical approach and rhetorical political analysis has not been present. The reason is the construction of the RPA on the systematicity of the text carried out by the DHA. Hence, the RPA method is applied together with the Discourse-Historical Approach and is implemented simultaneously. The particular complication is caused by the much larger time frame provided for Aleksandar Vučić (2017-22), than for Janez Janša (2020-22). The analysis of political leaders in Eastern Europe has its own specifics with regard to the EU, as both Aleksandar Vučić and Janez Janša recognize the need for the EU for their countries. Meanwhile, the context we have in these countries (fear of immigration in Slovenia and the Kosovo issue in Serbia) should make the rhetoric towards the EU more negative. What is clearly missing from this study is a comparison of the selected politicians with their domestic counterparts. Thus, as an idea for future research, it would be useful to trace the rhetoric used by

the main opposition candidates at the time and how Aleksandar Vučić and Janez Janša reacted to it. The following studies bring new insights into populist/nationalist politics, and the analysis of memory politics is useful when it comes to describing ideology.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. List of used quotes for conducting the Empirical Analysis on Janez Janša.

Date	Quote in Original Language	Quote in English	Source
June 6, 2020	“V težkih časih so odločitev naroda skupaj branili sinovi partizanov in domobrancev. Sinovi preganjanih in deportiranih izseljencev so se prostovoljno pridružili slovenski Teritorialni obrambi.”	“In trying times, the nation's decision was defended together by the sons of partisans and home guards. The sons of prosecuted and deported emigrants volunteered to join the Slovenian Territorial Defence”	GOV.SI “Thousands of memories remind us that here every mountain, river and valley is a sacred grave” GOV.SI, June 6, 2020 https://www.gov.si/en/news/2020-06-06-thousands-of-memories-remind-us-that-here-every-mountain-river-and-valley-is-a-sacred-grave/
July 9, 2020	Vsi opazujemo, kaj se dogaja, in jasno vidim, da je v komunistične m manifestu pred 200 leti zapisana ista formula. V komunistične m manifestu je pisalo, da je za ustvarjanje novega sveta treba odpraviti narod,	We are all watching what is happening and I clearly see the same formula written in the communist manifesto some 200 years ago. The communist manifesto said that in order to create a new world,	GOV.SI “Prime Minister Janez Janša: We have a responsibility and a duty to make the dreams of the founding fathers of the European Union come true” <i>Republic of Slovenia</i> GOV.SI July 9, 2020. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2020-07-09-prime-minister-janez-jansa-we-have-a-responsibility-and-a-duty-to-make-the-dreams-of-the-founding-fathers-of-the-european-union-come-true/

	družino, zasebno lastnino, zasebno izobraževanje in vero. To se zdaj dogaja prek množičnih medijev, kulturne industrije in nekaterih političnih strank.	the nation, the family, private property, private education and religion must be dismantled. This is now happening through the mass media, the cultural industry, and some political parties	
July 4, 2021	Pet ali šest narodov, tri vere, šest republik, dve avtonomni pokrajini in država je razpadla iz različnih razlogov, a zadnji žebelj v krsto je bil, ko so nekateri začeli uporabljati posebna merila zase, uveljavljati dvojna merila.	“five or six nations, three religions, six republics, two autonomous provinces and the country fell apart for different reasons but the last nail in the coffin was when some people started using special criteria for themselves, applying” double standards	Boffey, Daniel “Imposing ‘imaginary’ values risks EU collapse, Slovenian PM claims” <i>Guardian</i> , July 4, 2021 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/04/imposing-imaginary-values-risks-eu-collapse-slovenian-president-claims
June 6, 2020	“Takrat smo bili enotni, zato nam je uspelo. Brez te pomoči bi bilo vse veliko težje, kar se pogosto pozablja.”	“We were united then, so we succeeded. Without this help, everything would have been much more	GOV.SI “Thousands of memories remind us that here every mountain, river and valley is a sacred grave” GOV.SI, June 6, 2020 https://www.gov.si/en/news/2020-06-06-thousands-of-memories-remind-us-that-here-every-mountain-river-and-valley-is-a-sacred-grave/

		difficult, a fact that is often forgotten”	
March, 3 2022	Zakaj Nemci mislite, da imate samo vi pravico do samo-odločbe, ne pa tudi drugi. Je to zato, ker ste večji, ali gre tukaj za vrednote	Why do you, Germans, think that only you have the right to self-determination, but not others? Is it because you're bigger, or is it about values?	GOV.SI “Prime Minister Janez Janša attends ceremony to mark the unveiling of the bust of Dr Jože Pučnik” <i>Republic of Slovenia - GOV.SI</i> , March 3, 2022. https://www.gov.si/novice/2021-12-21-predsednik-vlade-janez-jansa-ob-osamosvojitvi-smo-bili-kot-narod-enotni/
December 21, 2021	Pred 30 leti je Slovenija obsegala 8 % takratnega jugoslovanskega prebivalstva, ustvarila je 16 % BDP nekdanje SFRJ. Včasih smo v Beograd prispevali četrtno zveznega proračuna.	30 years ago, Slovenia represented 8% of the then Yugoslav population, and generated 16% of the GDP of the former Yugoslavia. We used to contribute a quarter of the federal budget to Belgrade.	Gov.SI, “Predsednik vlade Janez Janša: Ob osamosvojitvi smo bili kot narod enotni”, Republika Slovenija – GOV.SI December 21, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/prime-minister-janez-jansa-at-the-time-of-independence-we-were-united-as-a-nation/
June 27 2021	Tudi tu most ni padel in je bil ubranjen, most, ki je takrat simboliziral novo mejo nove države.	Here, too, the bridge did not fall and was defended, a bridge that then symbolized the new border of the new state	GOV.SI Prime Minister Janez Janša at the ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of Slovenia's independence organised by the Slovenia in the World expatriate association GOV.SI June 27, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-06-27-prime-minister-janez-Janša-at-the-ceremony-marking-the-30th-anniversary-of-slovenias-independence-organised-by-the-slovenia-in-the-world-expatriate-association/
February 8, 2021	“za vse Slovence se	“for all Slovenes will	GOV.SI „Prime Minister Janez Janša: Culture is one of the key foundations of the Slovenian nation

	bodo takrat začeli svetlejši dnevi”	then dawn brighter days”	and the independent Slovenian state”GOV.SI February 8, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-02-08-prime-minister-janez-jansa-culture-is-one-of-the-key-foundations-of-the-slovenian-nation-and-the-independent-slovenian-state/
September 15, 2020	“Moja prva pesem je bila slavljenja z njo, zadnja ji bo zazvenela in zadnji glasovi bodo: Bog varuj mojo domovino!”	“My first song was glorified by her, the last will be sung to her, and the last voices will be: God save my homeland!”	GOV.SI Prime Minister Janez Janša's official letter for the Day of the Return of Primorska to its Homeland GOV.SI September 15, 2020 https://www.gov.si/en/news/2020-09-15-prime-minister-janez-jansas-official-letter-for-the-day-of-the-return-of-primorska-to-its-homeland/
September 15, 2020	“Kljub vsem vzponom človeškega uma, kljub pridobitvam človeškega duha, s katerimi se dvigamo nad etnične meje, je narodna skupnost še vedno najplemenitejša domovina človeškega srca.”	“Despite all the ascents of the human mind, despite the acquisitions of the human spirit with which we rise above ethnic boundaries, the national community is still the most noble homeland of the human heart”	GOV.SI Prime Minister Janez Janša's official letter for the Day of the Return of Primorska to its Homeland GOV.SI September 15, 2020 https://www.gov.si/en/news/2020-09-15-prime-minister-janez-jansas-official-letter-for-the-day-of-the-return-of-primorska-to-its-homeland/
June 27, 2021	“Špartanci so branili že obstoječo konfederacijo mestnih držav, mi pa državo, ki je bila komaj razglašena.”	“The Spartans were defending the already existing confederation of city-states, and we were defending a state that had barely been proclaimed”	GOV.SI Prime Minister Janez Janša at the ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of Slovenia's independence organised by the Slovenia in the World expatriate association GOV.SI June 27, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-06-27-prime-minister-janez-Janša-at-the-ceremony-marking-the-30th-anniversary-of-slovenias-independence-organised-by-the-slovenia-in-the-world-expatriate-association/

March 3, 2022	Kjer ljudje berejo in vedo, za kaj gre, tam so neomajni. Tam, kjer ni ozaveščenosti, ni gotovosti in je varno zatočišče za prevarante in neznance.	Where people read and know what it is all about, there they are unwavering. Where there is a lack of awareness, there is no certainty and there is a safe haven for impostors and strangers.	GOV.SI “Prime Minister Janez Janša attends ceremony to mark the unveiling of the bust of Dr Jože Pučnik” Republic of Slovenia - GOV.SI, March 3, 2022. https://www.gov.si/novice/2021-12-21-predsednik-vlade-janez-jansa-ob-osamosvojitvi-smo-bili-kot-narod-enotni/
October 25, 2021	“...Bratje! Naša pomlad se dviguje iz zemlje, jasen kot vihar, močan kot val: spustil se je na naše domove, razpršila je temo in prinesla sonce, Sonce - dan kralja Matjaža”	“...Brothers! Our spring is rising from the ground, Clear as a gale, strong as a wave: It has descended on our homes, Dispelled the darkness, brought out the sun, The sun – the day of King Matjaž”	GOV.SI Message by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, Janez Janša, on Sovereignty Day GOV.SI October 25, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-10-25-message-by-the-prime-minister-of-the-republic-of-slovenia-janez-jansa-on-sovereignty-day/
March 3, 2022	Za vse Slovence bodo potem zoreli svetlejši dnevi in prijaznejše zvezde bodo gledale v njihovo deželo, z lepšimi časi bodo prišle bolj bleščeče pesmi.	“For all Slovenes will then dawn brighter days and kindlier stars upon their land will gaze, more brilliant songs will come with better times.”	GOV.SI “Prime Minister Janez Janša attends ceremony to mark the unveiling of the bust of Dr Jože Pučnik” Republic of Slovenia - GOV.SI, March 3, 2022. https://www.gov.si/novice/2021-12-21-predsednik-vlade-janez-jansa-ob-osamosvojitvi-smo-bili-kot-narod-enotni/

Decem ber 23, 2021	V tolažbo nam je lahko dejstvo, da je po vsej Sloveniji veliko navadnih, neznanih ljudi, ki tudi v političnem smislu ostajajo pravi neznani borci za svobodo in narodno zavest in ki bodo kot po čudežu vzkli li - kot cvetje spomladi, čeprav se je pozimi zdelo, da je pod snegom vse brez življenja - in odigrali ključno vlogo ...	“We can find solace in the fact that, across Slovenia, there are many ordinary, unknown people who remain the true unknown fighters of freedom and national consciousness also in a political sense and who will, as if by a miracle, sprout up – like flowers in the spring, even though the winter might make it seem as if everything were lifeless beneath the snow – and play a crucial role ...”	GOV.SI, “Prime Minister Janez Janša as keynote speaker at the main state ceremony marking Independence and Unity Day 23. 12. 2021”– GOV.SI December 23, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-12-23-prime-minister-janez-jansa-as-keynote-speaker-at-the-main-state-ceremony-marking-independence-and-unity-day/
Decemb er 10, 2022	Covid je trenutno nevarnejši, medtem ko so množične nezakonite migracije dolgoročno zagotovo nevarnejše, če	Covid is currently more dangerous, while mass illegal migrations are definitely more dangerous long-term,	GOV.SI Interview with Prime Minister Janez Janša for the Hungarian weekly Mandiner GOV.SI, December 10 2020 https://www.gov.si/en/news/2020-12-10-interview-with-prime-minister-janez-Janša-for-the-hungarian-weekly-mandiner/

	jih EU ne bo zaustavila.	should the EU fail to stop them	
June 27, 2021	“Slovinci smo dokazali, da je vse mogoče: ne le pred tridesetimi leti in tridesetimi leti, ki so sledila, ampak tudi zdaj, ko se spominjamo teh velikih dogodkov osamosvojitve vojne, ko gledamo naprej, ne vidimo razloga, da ne bi bilo naslednjih trideset let še uspešnejših od prejšnjih.”	“We the Slovenians have proved that everything is possible: not only thirty years ago and the thirty years that followed, but also now, when we remember these great events of the war for independence, when we look ahead, we see no reason why the next thirty years should not be even more successful than those before”	GOV.SI Prime Minister Janez Janša at the ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of Slovenia's independence organised by the Slovenia in the World expatriate association GOV.SI June 27, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-06-27-prime-minister-janez-Janša-at-the-ceremony-marking-the-30th-anniversary-of-slovenias-independence-organised-by-the-slovenia-in-the-world-expatriate-association/
December 23, 2021	“brez Slovencev, slovenskega jezika in slovenske kulture lahko obstaja država, a ta država ne bi bila Slovenija”	“without Slovenians, the Slovenian language and Slovenian culture a country may exist, but that country would not be Slovenia”	GOV.SI, “Prime Minister Janez Janša as keynote speaker at the main state ceremony marking Independence and Unity Day 23. 12. 2021”– GOV.SI December 23, 2021. https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-12-23-prime-minister-janez-jansa-as-keynote-speaker-at-the-main-state-ceremony-marking-independence-and-unity-day/
September 1, 2021	“Zgradba Evrope mora še naprej	“The edifice of Europe must continue	GOV.SI Prime Minister Janez Janša at the 16th Bled Strategic Forum international conference GOV.SI, September 1, 2021.

	temeljiti na trdnih temeljih, ki so jih postavili očetje Evropske unije."	to be built on stone, on the solid foundations built by the fathers of the European Union"	https://www.gov.si/en/news/2021-09-01-prime-minister-janez-Janša-at-the-16th-bled-strategic-forum-international-conference/
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Appendix 2. List of used quotes for conducting the Empirical Analysis on Aleksandar Vučić.

Date	Quote in Original Language	Quote in English	Source
March 24, 2019	И једино морам да додам да, тада, скоро да нисмо имали пријатеље. Хвала онима који нису били против нас, али нам нико није помогао. Били смо сами, суочени са највећом војном силом на свету, са коалицијом богатих и моћних, са 22.000 тона бомби и ракета и јасним циљем - да нас понизе и предају део наше	We were alone, facing the largest military force in the world, with a coalition of the rich and powerful, with 22,000 tons of bombs and rockets and their clear goal - to humiliate us and hand over part of our territory to someone else	Predsednik.rs "Day of Remembrance for the Victims of NATO Aggression" <i>Predsendik.rs</i> March 24, 2019 https://www.predsednik.rs/lat/pres-centar/vesti/dan-secanja-na-stradale-u-nato-agresiji

	територије неком другом		
September 10, 2022	Imam u široj porodici ženu koja je gej i nikada je ne bih mijenjao za nešto drugo, ne mislim da je bilo kakvo zlo. Mnogi od mojih saradnika su homoseksualci i pomažu mi toliko da nisam u stanju da vam kažem.	I have a woman in my extended family who is gay and I would never trade her for anything else, I don't think there is any evil. Many of my co-workers are gay and they help me so much that I can't tell you	N.V. „Vučić: Imam u porodici ženu koja je gej i ne bih je se odrekao ni da me tuku”Klix., September 10, 2022. https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/regija/vucic-imam-u-porodici-zenu-koja-je-gej-i-ne-bih-je-se-odrekao-ni-da-me-tuku/220910024
September 10, 2018	Мој посао нису митови или снови или халуцинације или изопачене визије Косова без Албанаца или Косова без Срба. Мој посао је стварност. Оно што је данас, овде и сада, на данашњем Косову, у данашњој Србији, а не некој небеској Србији. Пали смо са тог неба. Пали смо и тешко се повредили. Главе су нам крваве, руке сломљене	My job isn't myths or dreams or hallucinations or twisted visions of Kosovo without Albanians or Kosovo without Serbs. My job is the reality. What it is today, here, and now, in today's Kosovo, in today's Serbia, not some heavenly Serbia. We fell from that heaven. We	Ciric, Milos. "Vucic's Kosovo Speech Promoted a Dangerous Fantasy. "Balkan Insight, September 10, 2018. https://balkaninsight.com/2018/09/10/vucic-s-kosovo-speech-promoted-a-dangerous-fantasy-09-10-2018-1/ .

		fell and seriously injured ourselves. Our heads are covered in blood, our arms are broken	
September 25, 2014	Moje demokratsko pravo je da ne budem na Paradi ponosa ili homoseksualac a, zovite to kako hoćete, imam druge obaveze. Ali, moja ustavna obaveza je da svima garantujem prava. Ja neću biti na Paradi ponosa, ne pada mi na pamet, ali to je moje demokratsko pravo. Neka šeta ko hoće, ja neću.	It is my democratic right not to be at Pride or the Gay Parade, call it what you will, I have other commitments . But it is my constitutional obligation to guarantee everyone's rights. I will not be at the Pride Parade, it never crosses my mind, but that is my democratic right. Let whoever wants to walk, I won't	Klix. “Vučić o Paradi ponosa u Beogradu: E baš neću da šetam, ne pada mi na pamet!”Klix, 25 September 2014 https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/regija/vucic-o-paradi-ponosa-u-beogradu-e-bas-necu-da-setam-ne-pada-mi-na-pamet/140925068
May 24, 2020	„Имајући у виду непроцењив историјски и духовни, национални и културни значај финансирамо објекте Српске	“Having in mind the invaluable historical and spiritual, national and cultural importance we finance facilities of	Predsednik.rs. President Vučić addresses the nation on remembering the 21 years as of the beginning of NATO aggression. Predsednik.rs March 24, 2020. https://www.predsednik.rs/lat/pres-centar/vesti/predsednik-vucic-obratio-se-naciji-povodom-21-godine-od-pocetka-nato-agresije

	православне цркве на територији АП Косова и Метохије”.	the Serbian Orthodox Church in the territory of the AP of Kosovo and Metohija”.	
February 15 2022	„Данас је време када коначно можемо да кажемо ко смо, одакле долазимо и ко је и шта је наша држава”.	Today is the time when we can finally say who we are, where we come from, and who and what our country is”.	Kurir. „VUČIĆ URUČIO ORDENJE POVODOM DANA DRŽAVNOSTI: Budućnost srpske politike je da naše odluke donosimo samostalno i nezavisno”Kurir, February 15, 2022 https://www.kurir.rs/vesti/politika/3872595/vucic-urucuje-odlikovanja-povodom-dana-drzavnosti-srbije
October 1 2017	„Не смемо заборавити, као што не смемо стати на заједничком путу за лепшу, богатију и срећнију Србију. “	„we must not forget, just as we must not stop on the common path for a more beautiful, richer and happier Serbia. “	Predsednik.rs „Komemoracija u Jajincima”Predsednik.rs, October 1, 2017 https://www.predsednik.rs/pres-centar/vesti/ne-smemo-da-zaboravimo-kao-sto-ne-smemo-da-stanemo-na-zajednickom-putu-za-lepsu
March 29 2019	„Срби су бројчано мали, поносан народ, победник у великим ратовима, јак, даровит, спреман на жртву, али и на помирење, са том малом државом, важном за наш опстанак”.	“Serbs are a numerically small, proud people, victorious in great wars, strong, gifted, ready to sacrifice, but also to reconcile, with that small condition, important for our survival “	MOD.GOV.RS. „We will forgive if we can, but we will forget only if we perish”MOD.GOV.RS March 29, 2019 https://www.mod.gov.rs/eng/13747/oprostitemo-ako-budemo-mogli-zaboravicemo-samo-ako-nas-ne-bude-bilo-13747
May 27 2020	„Ми смо народ који не верује у стварност и	„We are a nation that does not	Predsednik.rs. „Speech of President of the Republic of Serbia in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia”Predsednik.rs May 27,

	који не воли стварност”	believe in reality and that does not like reality”	2019. https://www.predsednik.rs/en/press-center/news/speech-of-president-of-the-republic-of-serbia-in-the-national-assembly-of-the-republic-of-serbia-27052019
May 27 2020	„Самообмана је погубна и за људе и за народе”.	„Self-deception is fatal both to people and nations “.	Predsednik.rs. „Speech of President of the Republic of Serbia in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia”Predsednik.rs May 27, 2019. https://www.predsednik.rs/en/press-center/news/speech-of-president-of-the-republic-of-serbia-in-the-national-assembly-of-the-republic-of-serbia-27052019
May 27 2020	„Треба гледати напред, јер да је поента у гледању уназад, имали бисмо очи на потиљку”.	„One should look forward because if the point was in looking backwards, we would have got the eyes on the back of the head “.	Predsednik.rs. „Speech of President of the Republic of Serbia in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia”Predsednik.rs May 27, 2019. https://www.predsednik.rs/en/press-center/news/speech-of-president-of-the-republic-of-serbia-in-the-national-assembly-of-the-republic-of-serbia-27052019