

JOURNAL FÜR ENTWICKLUNGSPOLITIK

vol. XXXX 1/2-2024

ENACTING THE FUTURE: ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM WORLDWIDE

Special Issue Guest Editor: Antje Daniel,
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Published by:
Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik
an den österreichischen Universitäten

Journal für Entwicklungspolitik (JEP)
Austrian Journal of Development Studies

Publisher: Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik an den österreichischen Universitäten

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NORMA TIEDEMANN

Ecological Uprisings in the European Periphery: Serbian Environmental Movements against Authoritarian Extractivism

ABSTRACT In the Post-Yugoslav region, ecological movements have become the most radical oppositional contestation in a context of increasingly authoritarian post-transition regimes. In Serbia, where the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) has been monopolising power since 2012, a protest cycle around ecological destruction has recently been unfolding. The article portrays how these conflicts and actors have emerged in resistance to an extractivist regime, which is implemented by local political-economic elites as well as fractions of international capital and institutions. It discusses how the ecological movements navigate in a context where politics is a deeply discredited concept, and shows how these movements have partially shifted from a strictly apolitical self-understanding to a green-leftist political identity, even forming an electoral alliance.

KEYWORDS environmental movements, authoritarian regimes, extractivism, Serbia

1. Introduction

“There is nothing left to privatize, now you have to extract natural resources. So it is really a fight for economic and social justice.” (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022)

In the Post-Yugoslav region, ecological movements have become the most radical form of oppositional contestation in a context of increasingly authoritarian post-transition regimes. Ecological destruction has become the most tangible and uniting outcome of years of less visible

destruction of immaterial common goods such as political rights and democratic freedom, as the mainly de-industrialised Post-Yugoslav economies are drifting towards an extractivist mode of accumulation. This mode is based on “the depletion of raw materials, natural resources, land and soil degradation” (Chagnon et al. 2022: 762). For centuries, natural resource extraction focused on Serbia’s ore, copper and lead (Manojlović/Kabanga 2023: 69), but lately expanded to water and lithium under the auspices of a ‘green’ demand for renewables and for batteries. Extractivism is inherently connected to natural resource rents (cf. Warnecke-Berger/Ickler 2023). The Serbian government secures the patronage-based mechanisms of rent appropriation in the extractivist realm with authoritarian means, undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law. Serbia’s record of democratic demise since 2012, when the Serbian Progressive Party started monopolising power, is a testament to these developments (European Parliament 2019). However, such authoritarian extractivism is contested: a protest cycle (cf. Tarrow 1993) fueled by ecological destruction has recently been unfolding (Kojanić 2022). From the movement against small hydro-power plants (Todorović 2020) to the spread of militant resistance to lithium mining (Rajković 2022) and mobilisations over disastrous air quality (Index HR 2020), these have been the biggest protests of the last decade before the months-long “Serbia against violence”-protests from May to December 2023 outnumbered the ecological actions (RFE 2023). Parts of the ecological movements have even decided to challenge the regime on the electoral front with the Moramo (We have to) alliance in national and city parliament elections in April 2022, which marked a notable deviation from previous instances of apolitical environmental activism (Fagan/Ejđus 2022).

This article asks which difficulties the Serbian political-economic background generates for a civil society when shifting towards the institutional political sphere, and how a politicisation of the environmental question has been pursued by movement activists. By understanding the series of protests as a connected cycle, it brings into view the underlying, systemic contradictions that have caused the unrest and argues that the politicisation of the environment, turning it into a question of dignity, democracy and equality, presents a potential rupture in a closed political system.

In the following, I explore the context of the environmental movements using the concept of the Serbian Post-Yugoslav patronage-state (II), depict its intertwining with so-called ecologically sustainable transition agendas in the Western capitalist core countries, and portray the local contestation that 'green' extractivist projects have provoked (III & IV). I further discuss how the ecological movements navigate in a context, where politics is a deeply discredited concept (Kralj 2023), and show how these movements have partially shifted from a strictly apolitical self-understanding to a green-leftist political identity (V). I finally conclude with a reflection on the opportunities the parliamentary terrain offers the ecological movements' endeavours (VI).

Methodologically, the research moves within the Critical Grounded Theory (CGT) framework. The starting point of CGT is the assumption that the researcher enters the field with theoretical concepts and continuously oscillates between theory and empirical work (Belfrage/Hauf 2017: 261). Accordingly, I analyse the ecological movements against the background of a materialist conception of state, society and social movements, tracing visible conflicts in the political arena to the less visible structures of capitalist societal formations. Such an approach is interested in the correlation between actors and the structurally sedimented forms of the state. The goal is to situate the ecological movement in a specific political-economic setting, instead of treating it as an isolated event, following the approach of materialist movement studies (cf. Gomes de Matos/Mullis 2021; Sorg 2020).

I collected, during frequent field studies, the bulk of this article's underlying empirical data for my PhD on Post-Yugoslav municipalist platforms from 2018 to 2022. Serbia has been one of the cases for which I conducted 26 semi-structured, problem-centered interviews (cf. Döringer 2020) with activists from the green-leftist networks in Serbia, activists of the political alliance Moramo, employees of environmentalist NGOs, as well as NGO workers concerned with international networking, journalists and researchers (for details cf. Tiedemann 2024: 431). I used snowball as well as theoretical sampling (Merriam/Tisdell 2016) to cover a wide range of actors whom I understand as experts (Meuser/Nagel 1991) possessing process and interpretative knowledge (Bogner/Menz 2009) about the Serbian political and civil society sphere. Of the entire 26 interviews, seven are quoted in this article to illustrate conclusions from the broader analysis (see appendix

for details). Beyond that, I engaged in political-ethnographic research (cf. Benzecry/Baiocchi 2017) during several protest events and international gatherings, and complemented the data with secondary research literature, documents and media reports, all of which have undergone a retroductive process of theory-oriented and problem-centered qualitative analysis (Belfrage/Hauf 2017: 261).

2. The political-economic context of the Serbian Post-Yugoslav patronage-state

To unpack the significance of the ecological protest cycle, it is necessary to understand the societal conditions from which these movements emerged. For this endeavour, the concept of the Post-Yugoslav patronage-state can be useful, as it describes the re-production of this state form that does not conform to the ideal of the liberal-democratic rule of law (cf. Tiedemann 2024: 92). Although by constitution Serbia is a liberal-democratic country, it is de facto marked by a widespread authoritarian tendency, a decline of democratic freedom, and a state apparatus that has been ‘captured’ (Pavlović 2021) by the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS - Srpska Napredna Stranka). The governing practices established by the SNS are often described as a form of ‘patronage’ (e.g. Petrović 2020). The term refers to relationships that are constituted through the direct exchange of favours and mutually personal dependencies (cf. Graziano 1976). A patronage state is thus built on ruling via the clientelistic allocation of resources and not via abstract, universal laws. Since the SNS came to power in 2012, state institutions, the SNS-party apparatus, organised crime networks and economic elites have gradually become indistinguishable (Günay/Dzihic 2016; Radeljić 2019; Tepavac 2019). Through these networks, (public) resources are exchanged and allocated for the private benefit of individuals. Serbia’s status as a patronage-state, where citizens become members of the ruling party to gain access to the patronage-networks or to avoid negative consequences, and not because of value-based affinities (Kekic 2023), correlates to its economic status. The country is integrated into the political economy of Europe as a source of cheap labour, agricultural and simple industrial goods and services (OECD 2019: 88ff.; Uvalić 2021; Živković 2015).

This constellation is the result of developments over at least three decades. The experiment of Yugoslav self-management-socialism (Unkovski-Korica 2015) ended with ethnicised, nationalist civil wars in the 1990s, followed by an autocratic government under Slobodan Milošević, which escalated the Kosovo conflict in 1998. Subsequent economic sanctions and international military intervention led to new instability and the fall of Milošević in 2000. In the transition to a market economy, neoliberal adjustment programmes were implemented, while political and economic elites secured substantial assets for themselves without investing in productive capacities, leading to systematic de-industrialisation (Lončar 2013: 163; Živković 2015: 56). Dependency on foreign capital increased (Dzajic-Weber 2020; Uvalic 2007: 179), and, with the global economic crisis of 2008, the credit-financed model of economic growth came to an abrupt end (Živković 2015: 50): the inflow of foreign direct investments fell to almost zero (Musić 2013: 107), exports and economic output shrank, and the value of the Serbian dinar fell by 20 percent (cf. Dzajic-Weber 2020). The effects of the crisis were long lasting (Živković 2015: 53): in 2019, GDP and real wages remained below the 1989 level (Lazić/Pešić 2020: 392). Similar to the rest of Europe, neoliberal austerity recipes dominated the crisis management in Serbia, and were answered by an intense wave of labour struggles (Musić 2013: 111). The political, social and economic crises intensified and the minor democratic improvements – achieved since Milošević’s downfall – reversed again (Pavlović 2021: 19). When the SNS won the regular parliamentary elections in May 2012, it formed a coalition with the Socialist Party and a regional party. The SNS was a spin-off from the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party (Srpska Radikalna Stranka – SRS), which Aleksandar Vučić joined in 1993 (Pavlović 2021: 25). As the SNS split from the SRS in 2008, he became a member, and in 2012 its chair. Since then, practices of intimidation, power concentration and a cult of personality around Vučić (Lutovac 2020: 194) have reduced political liberties and the democratic quality of the political system (cf. Milivojevic 2020), while structures of party patronage and state capture have (been) consolidated (cf. European Parliament 2019; Pavlović 2021: 22).

Economically, the SNS-led government followed the dogma of fiscal discipline, cooperated with the IMF and turned to Russia and China to

attract investments and loans (Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index 2014: 3). Compared to the rest of the South-East European region, the share of public investments is particularly low, since the Serbian government is primarily concerned with foreign direct investments (Radenkovic 2016: 27). In the early 2010s, it launched a programme of financial incentives to attract foreign companies with government grants and tax breaks (Musić 2013: 138). Through these policies, the country's political class secures itself access to networks, capital and money.

In 2017, Vučić successfully ran for presidential elections, further strengthening the authoritarian elements of the regime. Private TV stations and publishers are almost entirely connected to the SNS, while public broadcasters are politically pressured (Pavlović 2021: 26). The SNS dominates national and local state apparatuses (cf. Petrović 2020) with its approximately 750,000 members (11% of the total population). This large number is held together by strict discipline and privileges acquired through membership (Pavićević 2017: 33). Public contracts are systematically awarded to companies that are close to members of the government. By charging prices well above the market average the networks around the SNS thereby extract money from public budgets (cf. Curic 2021). The Serbian state is thus characterised by party-political patronage, ingrained in domestic politics over the past few decades (Pavlović 2021: 21).

While EU institutions remain relatively silent on the erosion of democracy in Serbia, the diminishment of political rights has provoked civil society resistance. Besides the movement against the gigantic urban development project Belgrade Waterfront (Fagan/Ejdus 2022), it has been ecological movements which have brought many thousands onto the streets, addressing much more than environmental protection issues (cf. Mašina 2022). The specific Post-Yugoslav constellation constitutes the background of the herein depicted cycle of ecological protests and helps to understand the difficulties that movement actors confront in their engagement with the institutional field of politics. In the cases of small hydropower and lithium mining, I show how the contradictions of Serbia's authoritarian extractivism are entangled with European sustainability agendas and how these in turn are challenged by local initiatives.

3. Small hydropower: ecological uprising I

The case of small hydropower plants (SHPP) shows how a renewable energy policy in the context of an authoritarian patronage state is used as a mechanism of rent extraction (cf. Marković 2018; Piletić 2023). Via the Green for Growth Fund, financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank provide loans for governments to subsidise investments in renewable energy (Balkan Green Energy News 2017; Piletić 2023: 7). Using such loans, the Serbian government has pushed public and private businesses to invest in SHPP (Kostić/Đorđević 2018). Although SHPP have proven to impair biodiversity and threaten local water supply while producing very little energy (Neumann 2021; Kostić/Đorđević 2018), hundreds of SHPP have been built throughout Serbia for more than 10 years (Matovic 2021). This can be explained by the patronage-system of personal favours between economic and political elites, which guides policymaking and the allocation of state funds. The state gives a special status to selected producers to then purchase electricity at relatively high prices guaranteed for 12 years from them. This so-called feed-in-tariff-system assures long-term-profits for the producers, ultimately paid for by citizens through their utilities bills. A considerable share of these profits goes directly to state-owned companies in the hands of the governing parties and private firms connected to the SNS, such as companies owned by Nikola Petrović, godfather to President Aleksandar Vučić (Marković 2018; Piletić 2023).

In reaction to the socially and environmentally harmful effects of these strategies of rent and natural resource extraction, citizens started to organise. And since only very few people stood to profit from these policies and in light of the increasingly authoritarian practices of the government, for many they represented more than “an environmental protection issue, [but an] issue of functioning of the state” (an inhabitant of an affected village, in: Kostić/Đorđević 2018). By 2018, an “authentically local movement in the mountains” (Interview 02 – 24.09.2018) had started to contest the SHPP and turn ecology into a wider question of democracy and dignity. The activists blocked roads and disrupted construction work (cf. Save the Blue Heart of Europe 2019), and after a few months, more than 40 local groups formulated common demands, which went beyond

particular cases. “For our rivers, for our forests, for our land” was the agreed slogan for a common action in June 2020 in Belgrade (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022). In organising these local initiatives, NGO activists from the urban centres navigated a field where people did not “have much political experiences, they are not left, not right”, and needed support “to go into some political articulation” (Interview 03 – 04.04.2022).

In April 2021, thousands of people gathered in Belgrade to protest extractivist and environmentally destructive investment projects under the heading Ecological Uprising (Ekološki Ustanak) (Todorović 2021). The idea was to frame environmental conflicts as a political project: “We branded this as a value-based demonstration, with democracy, equality at the heart” (Interview 03 – 04.04.2022). Afterwards, local initiatives multiplied— “people were encouraged and knew they were not alone. In Belgrade, it is easy to be a badass, but in small places, they are really endangered by the ruling party. They fear for their jobs and households and children” (ibid.). It was a specific momentum where leftist activists and ‘common people’ organised together around a “clear antagonism: an investor puts water into plastic pipes and destroys all life around these rivers” (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022). The protests achieved some concrete outcomes. In Dadince, they were able to defend the river Rupska, as the Ministry revoked its permits for the SHPP in April 2023 (Krstić 2023). But this first Ecological Uprising also set the stage for successive organising around other issues and the framing of ecological destruction as a consequence of systematic patronage and the malfunctioning of democratic institutions.

4. Rio Tinto’s mining project: ecological uprising II

“At some point you feel that nothing will ever change, but the magic of living society is that this kind of acceleration of history can happen and it happened with the mobilization against mini-hydro and Rio Tinto” (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022)

The quote expresses a link between the movements in the Eastern Serbian mountains against SHPP and against a mining project in Western Serbia by multinational Rio Tinto, which made headlines in the end of 2021 (Rajković 2022). Both are connected as forms of resistance against the

patronage-based extraction of rents from natural resource exploitation that the government pursues in cooperation with international companies and the local elites. Rio Tinto's mining is also the concrete manifestation of a EU green growth paradigm based on electric mobility, which depends on the often harmful extraction of specific resources.

The automobile industry is at the core of sustainability debates where the hegemonic approach favours electrified individual mobility (Brown et al. 2021: 25ff.). The necessary batteries require a range of raw materials, among them lithium. Up until now, lithium is mostly sourced in Chile, Australia and China. In 2004, it was discovered that Serbia held the third largest lithium deposit in Europe after Germany and the Czech Republic (Momčilović 2023). In order to become less dependent on global imports, the European Commission set “the goal that, by 2030, European mines [...] should produce 10 per cent [...] of the raw materials needed by the EU's green industries” (ibid.). In Serbia, Rio Tinto had started to explore for lithium several years ago, supported by the government. The company expects to produce 2.3 million tons of lithium carbonate over 40 years, which would make it a leading producer (Reuters 2022). Since the land concerned is usually in private ownership, the SNS-led coalition in 2021 tried to reform the expropriation legislation, lowering the criteria so that projects “in the public interest” could be expropriated in a few days (Kojanić 2022).

Such instrumentalisation of the law and news about corruption in the Rio Tinto-government deal sparked anger among the local population (Dragojlo/Mladenović 2022). Comparing the damage caused by lithium mining – polluted ground water, spoiled agricultural land, threatened forests – with the benefits local decision makers extracted from such deals, citizens felt betrayed, says an NGO-employee who works with the local initiatives (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022). For years, Rio Tinto made efforts to convince people in the villages about their ‘green mining’ and the prosperity it would guarantee. “They infiltrated the local community”, offered jobs and visited family gatherings (ibid.). In a poor country such as Serbia, especially in rural areas, people find themselves in “social blackmail” (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022), where they have little choice regarding

the source of their income. Encouraged by the first Ecological Uprising, they however chose to oppose the government's invitation to Rio Tinto.

The initial protests grew dramatically when in September 2021 a second Ecological Uprising united different initiatives fighting destruction in the context of (green) development projects. The "Uprising for Survival" was intended as a protest against Rio Tinto, but environmental activists also sought to integrate questions of democracy, "dignity, equality, progressive values, gender...not just the environment" (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022). They wanted to contest not only an individual company but "the people who offer Rio Tinto the land", i.e. the government (Interview 03 – 04.04.2022). A study on how the protests were framed in (social) media indeed showed that, besides environmental impacts, "rule of law and political stability were the most common issues" (Dimoski 2022).

In November 2021, the movement blocked highways and small roads, generating images of massive collective disobedience. When masked men attacked the demonstrations, they were fought back and the movement received further support from different public figures (European Western Balkans 2021). While ignoring and insulting the protests at first (Interview 03 – 04.04.2022), the government, eyeing the elections in April 2022, did eventually respond by revoking the licenses for Rio Tinto's lithium exploration (Kojanić 2022). However, this concession was fragile, since trucks were still operating in the mining zones and new land was bought by the company. In February 2022, a protest camp in front of Serbia's presidential building demanded the cessation of lithium exploration in the country (Reuters 2022). Symbolically, this shows that the politicisation of the ecological movement had gradually and partially increased – a shift that implies pitfalls and conflicts in the context of Serbia's patronage-state.

5. Politicising the environment and confronting the state

Even though the political elites barely reacted to the massive concerns articulated on the streets (Interview 05 – 05.04.2022), the Ecological Uprisings stand out in Serbia's history of oppositional contestation. Ecological

destruction turned out to be the most tangible and unifying manifestation of years of a less visible erosion of political rights and democratic freedom.

The protests challenged a ‘sustainable’ transition paradigm, in which costs and consequences are shifted territorially and socially, since it is the elites and decision makers in the peripheral countries who benefit, while the majority of the population has to deal with the damage. The movements “managed to raise questions relevant to the general public” (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022) and overcame the deep polarisation that typically characterises Serbian society. The struggles were framed as a confrontation of public vs. private interests: “And this is the central line in capitalism, it is not dividing us on the basis of any other identity” (ibid.). For a while, ecology bridged the national divide. But it did not solve the question regarding the movement’s relation to political parties and the state: “for some of the protestors, the movement needed to be perceived to be apolitical” (Vasiljević 2022), since “for 25 years, politics are understood to be bad and politicizing the environment is also really bad” (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022). Politicising environmental struggles would mean demanding more than technical solutions for environmental protection. It means addressing fundamental societal structures and facing up to the political actors who represent and reproduce these structures (Fagan/Ejdus 2022: 1303; Klepp/Hein 2024: 18). In the Serbian case it means formulating a critique of the SNS’ patronage-based system and its extraction of rents from natural resource exploitation, such as that of rivers or lithium. The conflicting perception that politics are inherently ‘bad’ is rooted in decades of experiences, where the governing party has ‘captured’ the state, which is thus not representing the common good. In such a context, movements have to expect an understandable mistrust when entering the formal political arena or presenting a broader political programme.

Among the initiatives, this caused strategic uncertainty, as some argued that “it’s better to say that this is not about politics but ‘only’ about water, land and, future generations, as if these issues are not political as well” (Vasiljević 2022). Whereas parts of the groups decided to stay on the sidelines and continue with local organising, others dropped out, as they were not satisfied with a more political outlook of the movement (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022). Some discussed whether the protests should adopt a more radical ecosocialist vision (Kojanić 2022), while another fraction decided not only to confront the governing coalition on the streets, but

also in parliament. In spring 2021, talks began between various actors about forming an electoral platform. By the end of the year, the Ecological Uprising became a formal entity and merged with other groups into Moramo (ibid.). It was the strategic framing of the protests as broader struggles for dignity, democracy and equality that partially shifted the self-understanding of the local activists: “before, people were publicly saying: this is not political. We don’t want any politicians, this is anti-politics. We pushed for it to be recognized as a political struggle” (Interview 03 – 04.04.2022). Without the ecological protests and their character of being *more than* ecological protests, the confluence and transformation into a political actor would have been impossible (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022). “Moramo was born on the streets” (Interview 03 – 04.04.2022), but getting the different elements together “was a hard process” and the bond was fragile from the beginning (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022). Nevertheless, in April 2022, Moramo competed as a left-green political force on three levels – national parliament, Belgrade city council and presidential. The alliance won 13 seats (out of 110) in the Belgrade City Assembly and 12 seats (out of 250) in the Serbian Parliament, making them the second-largest opposition force and challenging the dominance of the SNS and its associates. Environmental NGOs perceive Moramo to be their “voice in the institutions which will make a big difference” (Interview 04 – 04.04.2022), since this is the first time in modern Serbia that a movement-based, progressive option entered the captured terrain of the state (cf. Petrović 2022). Together with continuing contestation on the streets, they represent a potential democratic rupture in a closed political system.

6. Conclusion

In recent years, Serbia has witnessed a cycle of environmental protests that went beyond the demand for protecting nature. The struggle against the exploitation of natural resources became “a fight for economic and social justice” (Interview 06 – 05.04.2022). The Ecological Uprisings in the European Periphery articulated a broad democratic imaginary and politicised the ecological question by explicitly confronting the current government and its authoritarian rule, a rule that benefits only a few. The plurality of initiatives, demonstrations and campaigns touched the ques-

tion of the meaning of a dignified life and the rule of law in the Post-Yugoslav context. Both are threatened by capitalist exploitation, a pervasive party-patronage system, and the green growth agenda of the West with its search for resources.

In the case of Serbia, the streets are typically the only channel to voice dissatisfaction with the tight grip of power the ruling SNS is exerting over the institutional sphere. Counter-hegemonic actors face a state apparatus that is criss-crossed by a widespread web of personal dependencies, a restricted media landscape, and the frequent oppression of oppositional actors, as became visible in the depiction of the cases of small hydropower plants and lithium. How to navigate this terrain causes uncertainty about strategies and identities within the ecological movements since they encompass positions from a strictly apolitical to a green-leftist political self-understanding. For a long time, ecological movements avoided a direct engagement with institutional politics (Fagan/Eijodus 2022), since, in a context of party-patronage, politics are perceived as necessarily corrupt, and serving exclusively particularistic interests. This has changed to a certain extent with the massive disobedience of the recent Ecological Uprisings and led some involved groups and actors to challenge the authoritarian extractivist model, not just on the streets, but also in the parliament. It is expected that Moramo and their constitutive parts will continue the struggles of the movements within the institutions and disrupt the erosion of democracy.

The parts of the movement that have stepped onto the terrain of the state contest and challenge authoritarian closure; they responded to the abundant political and economic turmoil in Serbia, and could be a space to formulate progressive political answers to the social, political and economic crises. However, Serbia's position as a peripheral economy, heavily dependent on foreign capital and credits, as well as the sedimented and solidified structures of party-patronage constituting the state, will not be fundamentally changed by a new actor in the formalised political sphere. Moramo can be seen as an "institutional add-on" (Interview 07 – 05.04.2022) and an emergency brake to further authoritarian tendencies, a brake that can help the movements to open up the black box of the state and better understand the mechanisms they aim to change. And, despite all obstacles, this is not to be underestimated.

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List of Interviews

Interview 01 – 12.04.2018, NGO employee, part of Moramo

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Interview 03 – 04.04.2022, NGO employee

Interview 04 – 04.04.2022, NGO employee

Interview 05 – 05.04.2022, NGO employee

Interview 06 – 05.04.2022, NGO employee, part of Moramo

Interview 07 – 05.04.2022, part of Moramo

*ABSTRACT In der postjugoslawischen Region sind ökologische Bewegungen zur radikalsten Opposition im Kontext zunehmend autoritärer Regime der postsozialistischen Transition geworden. In Serbien, wo die Serbische Fortschrittspartei seit 2012 ihre Macht an der Regierung und im Staat monopolisiert, entfaltet sich seit einiger Zeit ein Protestzyklus rund um verschiedene Formen der Umweltzerstörung. Der Artikel schildert, wie diese Konflikte und Akteur*innen im Widerstand gegen ein extraktivistisches Regime entstanden, das sowohl von lokalen politischen wie ökonomischen Eliten als auch Teilen des internationalen Kapitals sowie transnationalen Institutionen getragen wird. Analysiert wird, wie sich die ökologischen Bewegungen in einem gesellschaftlichen Kontext bewegen, in dem Politik als zutiefst diskreditiertes Konzept gilt. Der Artikel zeigt zugleich, wie sich ein Teil der ökologischen Bewegungen vor diesem Hintergrund von einem streng apolitischen Selbstverständnis gelöst und eine grün-linke Identität angenommen hat, die sogar in die Gründung eines Wahlbündnisses mündete.*

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