

# CONTEMPORARY CROATIAN LIBERALISM

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*Research shows a high level of commitment to liberal-democratic values among leading Croatian politicians, without regard to whether they are from the party in power or the opposition. As a rule most show greater democratic disposition than one would assume based on parliamentary debates or government policies. There are numerous reasons, but one of the key reasons is that democratic values are always harder to bring to reality in countries at war. Although the war continues, there are signs of a strengthening liberal alternative to the nationalist party in power. In this paper, I identify a cleavage between elites whose primary orientation is toward the ethnonational revolution and those committed to a liberal-democratic, pluralist civil-society model for Croatia. I describe the convergent values of Croatian liberalism, and discuss possible alliances creating a viable liberal opposition in the next elections.*

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Serbian media headline atrocities committed by Croatian soldiers in the Yugoslav war. Foreign diplomats chide the Croatian government for restricting press freedom and ignoring minority rights. The ex-president of Croatia's parliament declares that "one totalitarian dictatorship has replaced the other." Taking "liberalism" in its broader philosophical sense referred to when we speak of "liberal democracy", this resume of the new Croatian state suggests the search for contemporary Croatian liberalism may be very brief. Such a conclusion, however, results first of all from analytical impatience. Analyses of public opinion and of historical trends refute the charge that Croatian political culture is fundamentally anti-liberal. To the contrary, liberalization and democratic reform were trademarks of Yugoslavia's "third way" under Communism, finding many advocates in Croatia. The analytical challenge is to find where Croatian liberalism is hiding today. This paper takes a crack at that task by looking at Croatia's new political parties and political attitudes of leading politicians. It highlights the form liberalism takes in contemporary Croatian politics, and discusses its prospects.

"Liberalism" as used in this paper is simply a general orientation toward political and social questions emphasizing human moral equality and liberty. Liberals, in this sense, focus on the rights of individuals and sometimes groups of individuals, and often are concerned with protecting against state tyranny. The modern political ideal of liberals is the liberal-democratic state, in which citizens are treated as equal in their rights although quite various in their values and interests. Liberalism prescribes that societal conflicts be settled through regularized political and legal institutions. This broad meaning of liberalism allows us to look at liberal-oriented forces in Croatia regardless of party affiliation. Characteristically,

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these will be individuals and organizations which prefer to err on the side of ensuring individual liberty even possibly at the expense of public order.

The conclusions about contemporary Croatian liberalism in this paper come from a four-year study of new parties and elite attitudes and behavior. Much of the data presented below is from interviews with party elites that gathered biographical data as well as data on basic beliefs and values, party organization, and policy issues. I interviewed 71 leaders of Croatia's parliamentary parties between April and October 1993. Because of the goals of my project, I selected interviewees from the top of party candidate lists, parliamentary caucuses, and executive bodies<sup>1</sup>. I also selected among the parties roughly according to their level of electoral support, so that the ruling party and the leading opposition party are most heavily selected. Interviews followed a standardized list of close-ended questions, though additional comments when volunteered were noted by the interviewer. The interviewer read each question (in Croatian) and indicated the form of response desired. Many questions used a 4-point scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree;" more complicated response sets were presented to the interviewee on a card. Response was very good: 82 individuals were initially selected, and the final dataset consists of 71 completed interviews. The average length of an interview was just over one hour. Other data on Croatia's parties were gathered from party programs and statutes, campaign material, and research results published by Croatian scholars.

### The New Political Environment

In the 1990 elections in Yugoslavia (esp. in Serbia and Croatia), new and old political elites organized their parties' campaigns around ethnonational appeals. Nearly all defined their new political arena in homogeneous "nation-state" terms, and promised the people prosperity through national liberation. The more extreme among them portrayed the

multiparty elections and subsequent political developments as tests of their people's will to survive. It was in this vein that the victorious Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), for example, followed up its electoral victory with claims to a popular mandate for Croatian state independence, even though only 11% of Croatian citizens favored this option<sup>2</sup>. Such a move was rational as a means of consolidating power in a republic of 78% ethnic Croats. But it increased tensions with the 12% Serb population, strengthened the hand of radical Serb nationalists who called up memories of World War II, and consequently contributed to the violent demise of Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup>.

Since coming to power in 1990, the HDZ has retained control of the presidency, government, and parliament through two subsequent rounds of elections<sup>4</sup>. The HDZ had captured a 60% parliamentary majority in the first elections in April 1990 with 42% of the vote

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<sup>1</sup> The resulting data, therefore, do not necessarily characterize the party membership at all levels. On the other hand, one developmental problem in the Croatian party system is that virtually all of the parties distinctly lack organizational complexity. These are top-heavy structures, operating mainly as cadre parties at the national level (Duverger, 1954; Eldersveld, 1964; Huntington, 1968).

Another limitation of the data gathered from these interviews is that elites may attempt to sound as liberal as possible in order to impress me, an American political scientist, with the answers they think I want. This should not, however, affect the findings in this paper because there is no reason to expect variation in this practice by party affiliation.

<sup>2</sup> For a breakout of public opinion by party on this question, see Grdešić, et al. (1991), Tabela 17, p. 175. This book is the best compilation of data on Croatian public opinion at the time of the 1990 elections, and the basis of ongoing research by this group of political scientists.

<sup>3</sup> It should be kept in mind that this line of argument does not assign primary responsibility for the war to Croatia's leaders or people.

<sup>4</sup> Croatia's current system then would be characterized as a predominant-party system, though it may be too soon after the introduction of multiparty democracy to be sure how stable this HDZ dominance is (see Sartori, 1976:199).

(under a two-round absolute-majority system)<sup>5</sup>. The second and third elections (August 1992 and February 1993) saw the HDZ vote share rise to 43-45%, resulting in 62% and 59% share of mandates respectively in the newly constituted upper and lower houses. The leading opposition party in Croatia's first multiparty elections in 1990 was the reform-communist party, SDP (League of Communists of Croatia - Party of Democratic Changes). It captured 28% of the parliamentary seats on 35% of the popular vote. In the summer after these April elections, however, this party quickly lost public support and a number of parliamentary seats as nationalism grew and when some of SDP's ethnic-Serb members left for the radical Serb party SDS (Zakosek, 1993:12)<sup>6</sup>.

The now-leading opposition party, HSLs (Croatian Social-Liberal Party), emerged out of a left-center coalition which failed miserably in the first elections. HSLs holds 14% of the parliamentary mandates; its leader, Dražen Budiša, received 22% of the popular vote for president in 1992 (vs. President Franjo Tuđman's 57%). This party seems in the best position to consolidate a competitive alternative to HDZ, perhaps in coalition with growing regional parties, elements of the social-democratic and peasant parties, and the breakaway HND. Thus far, however, it has been unable to establish a lasting coalition<sup>7</sup>.

The biggest challenge to HDZ dominance since 1990 has come from internal fractions. Tuđman and his associates founded HDZ in 1989-90 as an anti-Communist, nationalist movement<sup>8</sup>. This movement originally included individuals who later broke off to head the other major parties entering the 1990 elections. A former Communist general and Tito confidant, purged from the Party for his nationalist writings in 1972 and jailed twice, Tuđman forged a coalition of disenchanted former Communists, liberal reformers, and more extreme nationalists. A prominent HDZ moderate suggested in 1993 that Tuđman's greatest historical act was to finally unite adherents of the conflicting ideologies which split Croatia in World War II (i.e., communists, liberals, and neofascists)<sup>9</sup>. This apparently widely shared view has facilitated HDZ's survival as a party in spite of factionalism, aided as well by clientelism and patronage. Facing attempts by the HDZ right wing to strengthen its position at the party's October 1993 congress, Tuđman masterfully pacified the right and dodged factionalism by personally nominating loyalists to executive posts, and calling for unity "in the interests of the Croatian nation." In April 1994, nonetheless, a group of 15 left-moderate parliamentary members split off to form the Croatian Independent Democrats (HND). According to one of this group's leaders: "Others would jump over with us too, but they have come under incredible pressure. Many have built homes and received other perks, and are threatened that they would lose it all"<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The HDZ share in the Social-Political Council - i.e., the only of the three houses of the old parliament for which elections were based on universal, equal voting rights - on the other hand was 69% (Kasapović, 1993:36-57).

<sup>6</sup> After the 1992 and 1993 elections, SDP holds only seven seats in both houses of Parliament, with five other former-SDP members selected to the upper house as Serb-minority independents. This loss of seats misleads one to rule out the SDP. However, its party organization remains intact, it does well in local elections, and its leadership has taken a prominent place in coordinating opposition coalitions, especially in the 1993 elections and against HDZ initiatives in parliament.

<sup>7</sup> One problem is a reluctance to associate with reform-communists (especially in SDP) and the former members of HDZ now in HND. Though willing to work with these individuals in a parliamentary opposition bloc on certain issues, the HSLs leadership expresses concern that in an electoral coalition they would be a liability due to their being part of the past regime and/or HDZ.

<sup>8</sup> The best account of the early stages of organization is Hudelist (1991). HDZ's orientation was essentially revolutionary in the sense that its founders shared the view that the regime would not be responsive to their demands (DeNardo, 1985:113).

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication with Slavko Degoricija, October 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Stipe Mesić, personal communication, June 1994.

In spite of its organizational and programmatic problems, HDZ remains dominant. With Croatia still at war - to assert authority over all its territory, and on behalf of ethnic Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina - the HDZ still can neutralize all challenges by calling for solidarity with its Croatian state-building project. The opposition parties face a difficult requirement of posing an alternative which does not compromise this overarching goal.

### From Socialism to Liberal Democracy

Much has been written on Yugoslavia's socialism with a human face. Against the urge to discount all of this given recent events, anybody taking political culture and socialization seriously must acknowledge that Yugoslavia's experiment with open borders, market socialism, and decentralization likely left a legacy of liberal values compared to other

Communist countries. Although the Yugoslav self-management system failed to work efficiently, commitment to the ideology of self-management meant that at least one generation of Yugoslav citizens was socialized to think in terms of interests-driven policymaking (Jacobs, 1971; Barton, Denitch & Kadushin, 1973). Large numbers of Yugoslavs spending years as guest workers in Western Europe since the 1960s, and then returning home, also heightened expectations and increased the pervasiveness of capitalist and democratic attitudes in Yugoslav society (Zimmerman 1987a). On the other hand, political participation was limited by institutional affiliation and socioeconomic factors, meaning that some citizens were very active while most lacked both interest and knowledge to participate meaningfully (Verba, Nie & Kim, 1978; Zimmerman, 1987b)<sup>11</sup>. Consumerism financed largely by foreign debt relieved any mass pressure for liberalization in the late-1970s, although arguably setting the stage for 1980s reformist demands. The legacy of the Yugoslav experiment, then, is a population *receptive to liberal reform but unaccustomed to demanding it*. System reform depended on elite initiative, and often was impeded by personal, ideological, or political clashes within the Party. In 1989-90, liberalism still had to be "discovered," or perhaps it is better to say it had to "find its place" (Gligorov, 1991; Kasapović, 1991; Pusić, 1994).

My research on Croatia's new political leadership confirms a high level of elite commitment to certain liberal-democratic values. Regardless of party affiliation, contemporary Croatian elites are nearly unanimous in support of political equality and the right to dissent. Two biographical factors could help explain this: education and political history. Ninety-two percent of those interviewed completed university; and whereas 45% are former communists, 31% were one-time political prisoners. The leading occupations among my sample were teacher/academic (31%), lawyer/judge (13%), politician (11%), and businessperson (11%). The experience and training of political prisoners, dissidents, and intellectuals, of course, tends to focus attention on individual liberty and dissent<sup>12</sup>.

The down side is that many of those who hold forth an ideal of liberal democracy for Croatia are prepared to support *illiberal* solutions to concrete political problems today<sup>13</sup>. Elites' responses vary when asked about particular democratic practices. Publicly, some charge the Croatian press is too free, and seek swifter means of prosecuting journalists and eliminating critical, independent newspapers and magazines. The eviction of citizens (disproportionately ethnic Serb) from former Yugoslav National Army-owned apartments is defended as just desert for potential state enemies. Wealth and privileges are distributed among

<sup>11</sup> For detailed discussion of the alternative channels of participation in the 1980s, see Ramet (1985; 1992a).

<sup>12</sup> See Pusić (1994:391)...

<sup>13</sup> This is evident not only from elite interviews and public debate, but in legislative and executive policy. Individual cases and trends suggesting possible violations of civil and human rights are being monitored closely by the Croatian Helsinki Commission, Amnesty International, journalists, foreign diplomats, and opposition parties.

friends and party loyalists. All this is to say that there is an incoherence between the Croatian elites' general commitment to democratic norms and the actual level of democratic freedom in Croatia. The priorities of war and the chaos of transition serve as partial explanations in terms of policy shortcomings. However, this is not simply a case of exigency. Rather, there are individuals who while endorsing liberal-democratic ideals in the abstract appear as illiberal in specific applications. It should be added that this is a general finding in empirical studies of elite democratic values<sup>14</sup>. In the next section, I will distinguish Croatia's liberals from those whose purported liberalism breaks down on practical questions.

### Croatia's Liberals

One should not expect to find all like-minded politicians in only one party, especially in a society with such a young multiparty system. Four years after Croatia's first post-Communist multiparty elections, the process of organizing the new state and party system still is in its early stages. In the election campaign of 1990, parties were distinguished mainly by their acceptance or rejection of socialism. This line of polarization was largely associated with ethnicity and the question of the constitutional status of Serbs in Croatia and of Croatia's standing vis-a-vis Yugoslavia (Grdešić et al., 1991). By Summer 1991, the dominant question had been phrased as one's approach to the "Croatian state-building project." Other differences among parties and individual politicians were by-and-large white-washed in the struggle against the past. Only in the past two years has a cleavage of liberals vs. populist-nationalists come to clearly shape parties and political alliances. By the next elections in 1996, the populist-nationalist ruling party (HDZ) likely will face a liberal coalition led by HSLs.

HSLs, the Croatian Social-Liberal Party, has become since 1990 the leading opposition party in electoral support, and the core for a still developing liberal alternative to the ruling HDZ. The Zagreb weekly "Gloбус" conducts regular opinion polls on party support, which during the past several months consistently find HSLs near the ruling party in basic voter support (each with about 30-35%). HSLs officials and representatives to parliament have become more outspoken about HDZ and government policies (particularly toward Bosnia-Herzegovina), but also on constitutional matters and protection of civil liberties. This is partly a reflection of the programmatic commitment to liberalism, and partly due to consolidation and positioning of opposition forces.

The programmatic orientation of HSLs is a typically European (as opposed to American) form of liberalism, something more appropriately called social-liberalism - combining liberalism's emphasis on individual liberty with a presumption of a welfare-state safety net. The party program states the following founding principle: "the only free community is one in which every individual is free and socially secure; the individual is valued above all"<sup>15</sup>. It lists eleven general liberal principles for which it stands:

- 1) all people possess equal and inalienable rights;
- 2) one's liberty is limited only by the equal liberty of others;
- 3) the basic civil right is freedom from arbitrary government;
- 4) the state must ensure the right to basic health care and social security, schooling, free choice of work;
- 5) economic freedoms are freedoms of enterprise, contract, ownership, and property;

<sup>14</sup> The same holds for Western European political elites (Eldersveld, 1979).

<sup>15</sup> Hrvatsko Socijalno Liberalna Stranka, Programska Usmjerenja/Statut, p. 5.

- 6) all individual, collective, regional, cultural, and other particularities should be protected and encouraged to develop in society;
- 7) for demilitarization and state disarmament to the minimum level needed to maintain peace and avoid violence;
- 8) for tolerance and a culture of political dialogue;
- 9) for a multiparty parliamentary democracy with strict separation of powers and an independent judiciary, including institutional protection of minority or individual views;
- 10) the individual has autonomy in business, cultural, and spiritual matters; and
- 11) the prosperity of society is based on commerce, education, science, environmental protection, moral responsibility, and work<sup>16</sup>.

Political programs of other Croatian parties mention some of these principles as well, but none so completely and clearly. The contrast between HSLS's liberal orientation and the populist-nationalist program of the ruling HDZ is evident in the HDZ's primary goal of "securing the right of the Croatian nation to self-determination and a realization of statehood, independence and sovereignty for the Republic of Croatia"<sup>17</sup>. During the war in Croatia, HDZ president Franjo Tuđman and other party leaders repeatedly have criticized opposition politicians because they call for greater individual rights at a time when "we are fighting for the rights of the Croatian nation." None of the liberal opposition publicly disagrees with this statement, but they appear to have a different vision of Croatia after the war. The difference is between elites whose primary orientation is toward presumed collective interests of the Croatian people/nation (continuing the ethnonational revolution) and those committed to a liberal-democratic, pluralist civil-society model for Croatia. This difference, I believe, is the type of cleavage upon which the still-young party system in Croatia is being shaped. It conveys important differences among members of HDZ in 1990-94 (before the liberal wing broke away to form HND), and between today's HDZ and the Croatian right on one hand and the other relevant parties in Croatia on the other. The following tables demonstrate the difference in terms of individual elites' attitudes, indicating possible future alliances.

Table 1: National/State Interests Over Individual Rights by Party (N=71)\* (nearest row percentage for each response)

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
HSP	25	25	25	25	
HKDU					100
HDZ	29	33	21	13	4
HSS	20		40	40	
HNS			20	80	
HSLS	8		33	42	17
Rgnl		50		50	
Soc			17	83	
Indep. Serb/SDP				50	50
SNS				100	
Other			100		
ALL PARTIES	14	17	23	41	4

\* Names of parties and the breakdown of my sample appear in Table 3, at the end of the paper.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Statut HDZ, Članak 10 (1991), p. 4.

Table 2: Minority Rights Limit Majority Rule by Party (N=71) (nearest row percentage for each response)

	Strongly Agree	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
HSP				100	
HKDU		50			50
HDZ	8	17	21	54	
HSS	20	40	20		20
HNS	33	33	17	17	
HSLs	25	50	25		
Rgnl	17	33	17	33	
Soc	17	50		33	
Indep. Serb/SDP		50		50	
SNS	33	33		33	
Other			100		
ALL PARTIES	16	31	17	32	4

I have ordered the parties (top-to-bottom) roughly from most to least nationalistic - consolidating some into blocs - and separated out the SNS and party under "other" because they are special cases. This ordering, derived from an analysis of party programs and campaigns, interestingly corresponds with right-to-left rankings based on both elite self-positioning and party electorate (Jovic, 1993; Siber, 1993)<sup>18</sup>.

Table 1 registers elite responses, by party, to the statement: "limits on individual rights are justifiable in the name of national and/or state interests." Sixty-eight percent of all those interviewed disagreed or were undecided, indicating an overall liberal tendency. The most significant contrast to note from this table is that between HDZ and HSLs. Sixty-two percent of HDZ leaders were willing to endorse this statement, whereas only 8% of HSLs's leaders agreed. The HSLs response distribution is consistent with the party's professed commitment to individual rights as spelled out in its program. The HDZ distribution deserves several comments. First, the high level of endorsement shows the collectivist bias in this nationalist party whose stated priority is a Croatian nation-state. Second, the split within HDZ on this question corresponds to the party's competing factions<sup>19</sup>. Again, many of the HDZ moderates (i.e., in terms of nationalism, but who tend to be more liberal overall) defected to form HND in April 1994. This defection sharpens the contrast already seen between HDZ and HSLs; it is not clear whether the defectors will stay independent, be enticed back, or be incorporated into HSLs or some other party. The extreme nationalist HSP and the main party included under "Rgnl" (regional parties) also have split apart in the past year. In the latter case, one of the more liberally inclined individuals has joined HSLs. It still is likely that the remaining regionalists will enter the next elections in coalition with HSLs, possibly also attracting individuals from HSS (the peasant party) and HNS (a party run by intellectuals and liberal ex-Communists)<sup>20</sup>. The new-look HDZ, despite still having some powerful mo-

<sup>18</sup> Šiber (1993) discusses the meaning of the left-right scale in contemporary Croatia. In my interviews, some HDZ members specified they were far right on the Croatian state-building issue (i.e., nationalistic) while left-wing on socioeconomic policy (i.e., for distributive policies). However, the war dominates so there is little movement toward economic reform, and most discourses on "left" and "right" currently refer to the first of these cleavage lines.

<sup>19</sup> The data reflect party affiliation in Summer 1993.

<sup>20</sup> HKDU (a Christian-democratic coalition) is represented here by two leaders with divergent programmatic options for that party. These two are influential as individuals, but the HKDU remains disorganized and politically marginal. The Socialists, Independent Serbs, and SNS (Serbian National Party) are unlikely coalition partners because of association with the past regime and because of the ethnic element in the war. The sympathies of most of these elites, however, are with a liberal bloc.

derate voices in its leadership, is moved to the right in the Croatian political space, meaning it will stick with its populist-nationalist program.

Besides its individualism, the HSLs program emphasized the need for protection of political and cultural minorities. Table 2 reports how elites responded to the statement "the rights of minorities are so important that the majority should be limited in what it can do." With the overall body of elites split about 50:50 on this question, there again is a stark contrast between HDZ and HSLs. Seventy-five percent of HDZ's leadership disagreed, fifty-four percent strongly. On the other hand, seventy-five percent of HSLs's elite agreed with the statement, thus expressing concern about a tyranny of the majority.

As before, the natural allies for HSLs appear to be in HSS and HNS. The patterns seen here carry over to other key issues, such as center-periphery relations, perceived constituency, role and status of the media, and the functionality of interest-group conflict.

### Conclusion: Liberalism and Nationalism

What I have attempted to show in this paper is that liberalism is a force in contemporary Croatian politics. I have argued that individual elite members across the party spectrum can be characterized as liberals, and that a liberal bloc offers the most likely future challenge to the ruling party. Perhaps I have overstated the liberals' electoral chances, even two years hence. HSLs remains poorly funded, understaffed, and disorganized. This, I expect, will change fairly quickly. However, a more serious problem is that any alternative program a liberal bloc might put forth still can be defeated by HDZ's machine with its populist-nationalist appeal.

It is an open question as to whether the liberal leadership is prepared to offer a comprehensive alternative under current conditions anyway. Gligorov (1991:15) writes: "the problem of Yugoslav liberals is that they have still to understand that individual freedom is more basic to a liberal than /sic/ any collective interest." Despite their endorsement of liberal principles, both in party programs and in one-on-one interviews, Croatia's liberals have yet

Table 3: Distribution of Interviews by Party, 1993 (N=71)

	Elites interviewed	N	%
HSP	Croatian Party of Rights	4	5.6
HKDU	Croatian Christian Democratic Union	2	2.8
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union	24	33.8
HSS	Croatian Peasant Party	5	7.0
HNS	Croatian National Party	6	8.5
HSLs	Croatian Social-Liberal Party	12	15.9
Rgnl	Regional parties (IDS - Istrian Democratic Assembly, DA - Dalmatian Action, RIDS - Rijeka Democratic Alliance)	6	8.5
Soc	Socialist parties (SDP - Party of Democratic Changes, SDSH - Social-Democratic Party of Croatia, SSH - Socialist Party of Croatia)	6	8.5
Indep. Serb/SDP	(Independent Serb representatives, formerly in SDP)	2	2.8
SNS	(Serbian National Party)	3	4.2
Other		1	1.4
		71	100

\* All legislative elites, per Cohen (1993 - Table 6.1, p. 166, see also pp. 164-176; 1989 - Table 7.2, p. 303, compare with Table 9.6, p. 419, Table 9.5, p. 417, see also Table 2.3, p. 109, and Table 3.2, p. 164.)



to challenge the collectivist premise of the HDZ-led campaign for a Croatian national state. Until they do, they are playing HDZ in its own court. Thanks to the marriage of liberalism and nationalism in Croatian politics since the mid-1950s - on language and cultural issues, economic decentralization, Party decentralization, federalization, etc. - today's liberals are captive to ethnopolitics. Seventy-two percent of the elites I interviewed entered politics after 1963, so were socialized during this period of nationalist-liberalism. The liberals and nationalists who were purged in 1971 were seen as one and the same, and mythologized in 1990 (Ramet, 1992a:42; 1992b:83-84). Their status since 1990 is thanks to their association with nationalism rather than liberalism. In electoral politics, only a fool risks public support on principle. To form a clear alternative to HDZ's populist-nationalist program, Croatia's liberal opposition could organize around the kind of cleavage discussed above. However, until the war (throughout the region) ends and relations with neighboring states are normalized, any serious effort to extract Croatian liberalism from its marriage to nationalism seems unlikely.

One possible explanation, as mentioned before, is that politicians try to sound as liberal as possible for public consumption. This, if so, does not weaken the point made here: that liberal democracy is easy to endorse in the abstract but its practical applications create real policy dilemmas. The party differences discussed below, I suggest, point to different ranges of policy priorities for various parties.

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## SUVREMENI HRVATSKI LIBERALIZAM

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*Istraživanje ukazuje na visoku razinu prihvaćanja liberalno-demokratskih vrijednosti među vodećima hrvatskim političarima, bez obzira pripadaju li stranci na vlasti ili oporbi. U pravilu, većina ih iskazuje veće demokratske dispozicije no što bi se očekivalo na temelju parlamentarnih debata ili političkih poteza. Postoje brojni razlozi za to, no jedan od ključnih jest da je demokratske vrijednosti uvijek teže ostvariti u zemljama u ratu. Premda se rat nastavlja, postoje znakovi jačanja liberalne alternative nacionalističkoj stranci na vlasti. Autor identificira rascjep između političkih elita sklonih etnonacionalističkoj transformaciji te onih sklonih liberalno-demokratskom, pluralističkom i civilnom modelu. Rad opisuje konvergentne vrijednosti hrvatskog liberalizma i razmatra pitanje mogućih koalicija koje bi stvorile liberalni blok na sljedećim izborima.*