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## Editors' Note

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Dear Reader,

It is a great pleasure to close the first year on a high note. The number in front of you is the most voluminous and the most comprehensive so far. We have a thematic block on political attitudes and voting preferences, edited by Daniela Širinić from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science. The idea was for this issue to be published in the context of Croatia's "super-election year", with the aim of clarifying and analyzing voters' political behavior and decision-making as well as political and social processes related to Croatian society in a longer comparative period – since the independence. Initially, we intended to put together a special issue, but time constraints, rigorous peer review procedure, as well as sudden and most welcome interest in our journal formed this combination of a thematic-oriented block followed by regular publishing dynamics and various topics which this journal usually offers. The three articles selected for the opening block draw on data from the Croatian National Electoral Studies (CroNES), a survey research program that has consistently tracked political attitudes and voting behavior since 1990. Based at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb, CroNES provides rare longitudinal evidence on how Croatian democracy has developed over more than three decades.

The topical section starts with Kosta Bovan asking why both social and institutional trust remain so low in Croatia. Previous research could not explain much of the variation between individuals by focusing only on socio-economic factors. Bovan draws on political psychology concepts like social dominance orientation, authoritarianism, populism, and norm perception. Results show that socio-psychological attitudes matter substantially: populist attitudes reduce trust in representative institutions while increasing trust in security institutions, and higher SDO and authoritarianism predict greater institutional trust but lower social trust. Still, even with these additions,

three quarters of the variance in institutional trust remain unexplained. Trust in low-trust societies operates through mechanisms we don't yet fully understand.

Using an age-cohort-period framework, Bartul Vuksan-Ćusa asks whether 1990s nationalism and authoritarian politics, the retraditionalization period, left a permanent imprint on young people who came of age during that time. He finds gradual modernization in church attendance and gender-role attitudes, and striking stability in identity-anchored attitudes like ethnic exclusivity. Contrary to expectations, the 1990s left an imprint of less, not more, traditionalism. He concludes that the retraditionalization narrative should be treated as an open empirical question and not a settled explanation for generational differences.

In the third and final thematic article, Višeslav Raos and Daniela Širinić show that subjective class identification predicts vote choice in Croatia even after controlling for income, wealth, education, ideology, and values. However, working-class identifiers do not disproportionately support the center-left SDP but are instead drawn to The Bridge when they hold conservative or anti-conformist values, while the New Left party We Can! attracts upper-middle-class identifiers. These patterns reflect a party system where class has never been politically articulated and voters are left to combine class identity with value orientations in idiosyncratic ways.

These papers ask why institutions cannot generate trust even when they function predictably, whether historical changes create lasting political identities, and how class operates when parties do not mobilize it. The findings are often counter-intuitive: populism increases trust in some institutions while destroying it in others; generational experiences matter less than we assume; and class identification persists even when no party speaks to it.

Apart from the three thematically connected articles in this special section, the issue includes five additional papers that address diverse topics and areas within political science. Domagoj Vujeva (University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science) is reflecting on the provisionality of property in the Kantian state of nature. He claims that, in Kant's view, property is not fully secure in the state of nature. People can claim and use objects, but their rights are not yet complete legal rights. Still, this possession has moral importance – it is not meaningless. This moral importance does not come from a future political state or from special legal rules. It comes from the idea that, even in the state of nature, all people are connected through a shared, original will. We therefore need to distinguish between two kinds of general will: one in the state of nature and one in the civil (political) state. In the state of nature, this shared will does not give full property rights. It only makes individual claims to objects morally acceptable. Only the state can create full legal ownership. However, even when the state is formed, its authority is still partly shaped by the original shared will that existed before.

Emil Vargović (Institute of Public Finance, Zagreb) focuses his research on welfare states under pressure. Public services are becoming more expensive, funding is limited, populations are ageing, and inequality is increasing. Although reforms are clearly needed, there is no strong agreement on what changes would be both effective and realistic. This paper looks at one possible solution: giving people assets from childhood so that everyone begins adult life with some basic level of ownership. Having too few assets affects people's well-being, independence, and their chances in life, and it also increases inequality in society. The paper studies the British Child Trust Fund (CTF), a program that no longer exists but is still widely discussed. The analysis shows that the program was too limited to make a strong long-term difference. Based on this experience, the paper argues for a broader and better-designed asset policy. Because such a policy would be costly, it should function as a society-wide system that connects and coordinates existing savings, investment, and social enterprise programs.

Marin Jašić (PhD candidate at the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science) gives his historical overview of Finland's diplomatic relations with the Independent State of Croatia. The paper studies Finland's formal recognition and the creation of diplomatic relations in 1941–1942. It explores how international legal rules and practical wartime interests influenced this decision. Using archival documents and other sources, the research shows that although Finland officially followed the legal criteria for recognizing a state, its main goal was to support the anti-Soviet alliance led by Germany. For the NDH, recognition had a great symbolic importance, as it helped strengthen its international position. However, real cooperation between the two countries was limited, mainly because of logistical problems and lack of personnel in the Croatian diplomatic mission.

The paper on EU leadership in Climate Diplomacy, written by Oleksandr Rudyk and Tetiana Sydoruk (both from National University of Ostroh Academy, Ukraine), critically engages with climate diplomacy within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is a unique negotiation space because climate action has wide practical consequences, includes almost all countries, and operates over an unusually long timeframe. To understand climate leadership today, negotiations must be viewed as a process of gradual progress, especially in technically complex areas that require expert coordination. The article examines the evolution and characteristics of EU climate leadership using established leadership typologies. It analyzes the EU's role in key COP meetings (1997, 2009, 2011, 2015) as well as recent conferences (2021–2025) to assess current trends and prospects.

Finally, the paper "Three Decades of Feminist Resistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Perspectives of Activists from Local NGOs" by Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović (University of East Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy) gives an insight

on how the professionalization of NGOs has shaped feminist activism, pointing to both achievements and tensions. Based on in-depth interviews, the research identifies the main features of women's NGOs in BiH and the specific challenges faced by those working with marginalized groups. Despite operating in a complex post-war and ethnically divided political system, these organizations continue to play a key role in advancing gender equality. Their resilience, cooperation, and expertise have brought them a certain level of institutional recognition. However, problems remain, including limited cross-identity cooperation, weak institutional support, and low engagement of women outside NGO structures, especially younger women. The lack of stronger intersectional approaches and the growing influence of anti-gender movements indicate the need for further research.

We also present fresh views and new publications in the book review section. The next issue is already partly prepared and will offer scholarly perspectives on current and lively debates in Croatian society. We hope the journal will continue to receive your much appreciated support.

Daniela Širinić, Associate Professor, Guest Editor

Marta Zorko, Full Professor, Editor-in-Chief

Zagreb, 10 February 2026