

Class in Contemporary Croatian Society: A Post-Bourdieuian Analysis¹

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ABSTRACT In this article, based on primary quantitative and qualitative data, we analyse the multiple mechanisms generating inequalities in contemporary Croatian society and the multidimensional class structure resulting from them. Our approach has been inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's conception, which we significantly revised and adapted for studying post-socialist societies in South-East Europe. We present four analytical steps that have led us to the

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conception of general social inequality as inequality in social powers. These steps include: (1) construction of social space in Croatia; (2) identification of key generators of social inequality (exploitative market mechanisms and mechanisms of social closure); (3) analysis of lifestyles and the drawing of social boundaries; and (4) analysis of differential association and establishment of social boundaries.

The results indicate that by taking general social inequality into account, one can distinguish between four classes and seven class fractions in contemporary Croatian society: (1) Capital rich class, with two fractions: economic and political; (2) Class with average capitals, with a cultural and social fraction; (3) Intermediary class, which shares some objective characteristics with the Class with average capitals as well as the Capital poor class, but has a distinctive lifestyle and patterns of differential association; and (4) Capital poor class, in which three fractions can be distinguished: agrarian, rural, and manual-service. In the concluding section, we present a synthetic depiction of class structure in contemporary Croatian society, discuss the new notion of existential class (a conceptualization based on our empirical and theoretical analyses), and explain the most important characteristics of our post-Bourdieuian approach.

Key words: class, general social inequality, multidimensional model of class analysis, post-Bourdieuian approach, Croatia.

1. Introduction

In this article we analyse the multiple mechanisms generating inequalities in contemporary Croatian society² and the multidimensional class structure resulting from them. Our approach has been inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's conception, which we significantly revised and adapted for studying post-socialist societies in South-East Europe (SEE).³

The focus of our research has been the genesis of class structure in SEE societies. In our research within the projects "Life-Strategies and Survival Strategies of Households and Individuals in South-East European Societies in the Times of Crisis" (SNSF, 2014–2016), "Closing the Gap Between Formal and Informal Institutions in the Balkans" (Horizon 2020, 2016–2019) and "Relational Gender Identities in Croatia:

² For an overview of research on class in Croatia in the socialist period see Tomić-Koludrović and Petrić (2014a). Relevant theoretical and empirical research on the subject of class in Croatia in the postsocialist period includes Katunarić (1996), Tomić-Koludrović and Petrić (2014b), Čengić (2016), Cepić (2019), Cepić and Tonković (2020), Doolan and Tonković (2021).

³ Our model of class analysis in hybrid societies has been developed through a comparative analysis of data from Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Bosna and Herzegovina. An article based on the analysis of data from Serbia has been published (Cvetičanin et al., 2021). The analysis of data from Croatia is presented in this text. A comparative analysis and interpretation of data from all of the above-mentioned societies will be presented in a monograph under preparation.

Modernization and Development Perspectives” (CSF, 2017–2021), we identified several mechanisms generating inequalities in these societies.

As a result of an intensive neoliberal transformation, the role of *exploitative market mechanisms* in generating inequalities in SEE societies has significantly increased. These mechanisms are the focus of Marxist class analysis. However, *social closure mechanisms*, which were the key generators of social inequalities in the socialist period, are still at work in South-East European societies. They have been neglected in Marxist analysis but represent one of the foundations of the Weberian approach to class. In SEE today, these mechanisms of social closure (i.e., the monopolization of resources and exclusion of potential competitors) are based on: (1) political party membership; (2) social networks built around informal interest groups (cliques), family and symbolic kinship ties, as well as common geographic origin; (3) ethnicity, religion, and gender; and (4) credentials and membership in professional associations. It is important to note that the influences of exploitative market mechanisms and social closure mechanisms on the generation of social inequalities are intertwined and – as we have already argued elsewhere – cannot be analytically isolated or reduced to a common foundation.⁴ For this reason, we define South-East European societies as hybrid.

Since inequality generating mechanisms in SEE societies are inextricably intertwined, it was necessary to find a new conceptual foundation for class analysis. Specifically, the customary type of empirical class analysis postulates that class structure is based on employment structure. However, this is insufficient as this ignores influences from other social fields (especially the political one).⁵

⁴ More information on the mechanisms of social closure and their typology is available in Cvetičanin et al. (2015) and Cvetičanin et al. (2021). In brief, these mechanisms – whether formally or informally instituted – are nothing but practices which agents use in field struggles, trying to achieve their goals at the expense of others. In class analysis in SEE societies, it is necessary to consider these mechanisms, since social agents who do not know how to use them (or have a moral problem with their use) can lose out in field struggles, despite all the capitals they have at their disposal.

⁵ The mentioned customary type of empirical class analysis, which Crompton (2008) refers to as the “employment aggregate approach”, has several other shortcomings. According to Crompton, they are reflected primarily in paid employment not being the only source of social inequalities: there are also other factors generating them, particularly differences associated with gender, race, and age. Secondly, even if it holds true that occupational titles imply different levels of income, they do not give any indication of wealth holdings (i.e., savings, shares, real estate and land ownership, etc.). Thirdly, in contemporary societies, there are many members who are economically inactive (i.e., do not have an occupation): the question here is how to ascribe class status to them. Finally, Crompton points out that occupations refer to a technical rather than social division of labour, while only the latter is relevant for class analysis. With the global domination of the neoliberal paradigm in the 21st century, the mentioned shortcomings have become even more acute. Long-term employment is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. Instead, the labour market is dominated by different forms of “flexible employment” (in fact, precarious work, with frequent changes of workplace and project-based engagements). In such circumstances, an occupational system obviously ceases to be a stable foundation for class analysis.

We have therefore found a starting point for our own analyses in: (1) Bourdieu's multidimensional conception of social space; (2) his understanding that class membership is determined by a multitude of factors; and (3) his distinction between two aspects of class analysis, designated as "class condition" (*condition de classe*) and "class position" (*position de classe*).

In Bourdieu's theory, social space – which he sometimes refers to as "the field of social classes" (Bourdieu 1984: 345) – represents a model of the spatial conception of social structure. Bourdieu describes it as a "quasi reality" that exists independently of those who occupy positions in it.⁶ This structure of positions and the objective relations between them is based on the distribution of the most important powers and resources – capitals.⁷ According to Bourdieu, agents are positioned in social space in relation to three parameters: total volume of capital, composition of capital, and social trajectory (i.e. changes of the first two parameters over time).

Along the first and most important axis – which he positions vertically in maps of social space – social agents are grouped into classes based on the *total volume* of different capitals they possess and can use in field struggles. The second axis, which refers to the *composition of capital*, and is positioned horizontally in maps of social space, defines the difference between class fractions. Specifically, according to Bourdieu (1984), classes are internally divided into class fractions depending on the dominance of economic or cultural capital in the total volume of capital they have at their disposal. Social agents are also differentiated along the third axis – a social trajectory which introduces the temporal dimension into an otherwise synchronic analysis.

The fundamental characteristic of Bourdieu's notion of social class – its *multidimensionality*, i.e., the fact that in his conception class membership is conditioned by a multitude of factors – was of decisive importance in the development of our model of class analysis. Specifically, according to Bourdieu (1984: 106): "Social class is not defined by a property (not even the most determinant one, such as the volume and composition of capital) nor by a collection of properties (of sex, age, social origin, ethnic origin—proportion of blacks and whites, for example, or natives and immigrants – income, educational level, etc.), nor even by a chain of properties strung out from a fundamental property (position in the relations of production) in a relation of cause and effect, conditioner and conditioned; but by the structure of relations between all the pertinent properties which gives its specific value to each of them and to the effects they exert on practices."

⁶ See Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 127), also Weininger (2005: 89).

⁷ As is well known, Bourdieu (1986) differentiated between three generic forms of capital: *economic*, *cultural*, and *social*. In other works, he also mentioned a fourth generic form of capital: *symbolic capital*. The latter is closest to the notion of prestige and its function is to legitimate other forms of capital. As different from its generic forms, in Bourdieu's conception there are also field-specific forms of capital (religious, political, bureaucratic, academic, media...).

Finally, in the development of our model we distinguished between the mentioned two aspects of class analysis, under which Bourdieu (1966) understood: (1) material conditions of existence and the type of work that members of the class perform (“class condition”); and (2) the place that classes have in the historically defined social structure and the relations they establish with other constitutive parts of that structure (“class position”).⁸

Relying on the postulates mentioned above, we have developed a new model of class analysis, initially presented in Cvetičanin et al. (2021). In this article we present the four steps of our analysis in greater detail: the first two steps support the definition of “class condition” and “class position”, while the third and the fourth step support the identification of boundaries between classes and class fractions.

In the first step, we revised and complemented Bourdieu’s model of class analysis in a way that enables the analysis of class structure in Croatia at the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century. Following that, we constructed social space in Croatia, based on primary data and using the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). Subsequently, we identified “theoretical” or “objective” classes in the obtained social space, using hierarchical and fuzzy cluster analysis.⁹

In the second step, we analysed the mechanisms generating inequalities in contemporary Croatia. In addition to the analysis of exploitative market mechanisms – which is the usual approach – we also devoted attention to often neglected mechanisms of social closure, the significance of which was noted by Weber (1978 [1922]) and emphasized by Parkin (1979) and Murphy (1988).

⁸ Bourdieu reiterated the need to analyse two different aspects of “objective” classes in more recent articles (Bourdieu, 1985: 725, 1987: 6). In these articles, he pointed out that social agents are affected by both these determinants: “intrinsically” (by material conditions of existence), and “relationally” (that is, in relation to other positions).

⁹ Bourdieu (1985, 1987) uses the designation “theoretical” or “objective” classes (which he also calls “logical classes” or “classes-on paper”) for the aggregates of social agents positioned similarly in social space, due to a similar total volume and composition of capital. Their existential conditions are therefore similar, due to being influenced by the same conditioning factors. Because of this they develop similar dispositions, resulting in similar practices. In Bourdieu’s conception, classification of social agents into “theoretical” or “objective” classes is at the same time explicative and predictive (like those in zoology or botany), since it is based on the determining characteristics. Based on the knowledge about the possession of a particular volume and composition of capital, it is possible to anticipate other characteristics of the classified social agents: their practices, political orientations, taste, affinities, as well as odds of their meeting, entering friendships and partner relations.

The analyses from the first and second step led us to the conception of *general social inequality* as *inequality in social powers*.¹⁰ As different from *partial* inequalities generated within the occupation system, our conception relates to *generalized social advantage/disadvantage*, originating not only from the economic but also from all other social fields.

A result of our analyses here has also been *a conception of class structure* as relatively *stable, objective* and *conflict relations* between large aggregates of social agents, whose *class positions* are defined by their *different roles in exploitative market mechanisms and social closure mechanisms*.

In the third and fourth step we then analysed how *boundaries between classes* are established, by using Michèle Lamont's notion of symbolic boundaries (Lamont, 1992, 2010; Lamont, Pendergrass and Pachucki, 2001; Lamont and Molnár, 2002), as well as the notion of differential association, which the representatives of the Cambridge Stratification Group developed in their analyses (Stewart, Prandy and Blackburn, 1980; Prandy and Jones, 2001; Bottero and Prandy, 2003; Bottero, 2005).

In this way – adding layer after layer of what makes class an active force in social life – we arrived at the model of class structure in contemporary Croatian society.

In the concluding section, we present a synthetic depiction of the obtained class structure, discuss the new notion of existential class (resulting from our analyses), and explain the most important characteristics of our post-Bourdieuian approach.

2. Data and methods

Our paper is based on primary data from two large scale projects. The first project, “Life-Strategies and Survival Strategies of Households and Individuals in South-East European Societies in the Times of Crisis”, was realized between 2014 and 2016. Within this project, a survey was carried out by IPSOS ADRIA in Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia between January and March 2015 using CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) on a multistage probability sample of 3,906 respondents in total (1,000 respondents in Croatia). All quantitative analyses

¹⁰ It should be noted that in our model we do not speak about “power” as a cumulative outcome (in the singular) but rather about different “social powers” (in the plural). This conceptualization of ours has been inspired by Bourdieu's (1990: 300) claims that capitals are forms of power, which – just like energy in nature – can appear in different forms and be transformed one into another. Here, Bourdieu follows Bertrand Russell (1938: 12-14). He also quotes Russell's statement, according to which “The attempt to treat one form of power, say wealth, in isolation, can only be partially successful, just as the study of one form of energy will be defective at certain points, unless other forms are taken into account”.

presented in the article are based on this data set. In the qualitative part of the project, 213 semi-structured interviews were conducted, out of which 53 were in Croatia.

The second project, “Relational Gender Identities in Croatia: Modernization and Development Perspectives”, was realized between 2017 and 2021. A survey for this project was conducted between December 2017 and January 2018 by IPSOS PULS, also using CAPI, on a stratified three stage random representative sample of 1,210 respondents. In line with our practice of using mixed method designs,¹¹ we also conducted a total of 115 semi-structured interviews. In addition to the interviews based on the project’s interview guide, we carried out 35 interviews focusing on the topics of exploitation and social closure mechanisms, as well as on symbolic boundaries.

To capture the multidimensional nature of social inequality in Croatia, we used several different methods and analytical techniques. For quantitative data, we used multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), hierarchical cluster analysis (HCA), fuzzy cluster analysis, and odds ratio analysis (OR). Qualitative interview transcripts were coded and analysed using QDA miner.

Two key limitations in relation to our data should be noted. The first relates to non-inclusion of young adults (18-24 years) in the survey sample within the project “Life-Strategies and Survival Strategies of Households and Individuals in South-East European Societies in the Times of Crisis”.¹² The second limitation relates to the fact that, in the survey questionnaire for the project “Relational Gender Identities in Croatia: Modernization and Development Perspectives”, there was not enough space for a larger number of questions on capitals and cultural practices. Due to these limitations, some comparative analyses could not be conducted.

3. The first step: Constructing social space in Croatia

To empirically research general social inequality and construct social space in Croatia, it was necessary to revise and complement Bourdieu’s model of class analysis at several different levels. To begin with, although Bourdieu theorized the notion of social capital, he only used indicators of economic and cultural capital in the construction of social space. Encouraged by his remarks referring to social inequalities in former

¹¹ In this respect, we follow Bourdieu’s approach to social research, which presupposes a constant reflexive movement between quantitative and qualitative data (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

¹² The reason for this non-inclusion of young adults was related to the topic of the survey. This dealt with household strategies in SEE societies, in which young adults usually live in the same household with their parents and depend on their income. They share their parents’ “class condition” and “class position”, and have no significant influence on shaping household strategies.

East Germany¹³, as well as by our own empirical and theoretical analyses of classes in post-socialist SEE societies¹⁴, we found it necessary to also include indicators of political and social capital in the construction of social space. This is due to their strong influence in the processes of generating inequalities in SEE societies.

As already stated elsewhere (Cvetičanin et al., 2021: 249), we define political capital as the ability to use (and misuse) state and public resources and institutions for private or group benefit. In contrast to Bourdieu, who understands political capital as a subtype of political capital effective in the political field, we consider this type of capital to be generic, i.e., effective in all social fields in SEE societies. Furthermore, we differentiate between two subtypes of social capital: “social capital of informal connections” and “social capital of solidarity”. In our conception, the former represents one of the most important mechanisms of social closure, while the latter is one of the foundations of “survival strategies” of precarious groups. Finally, again in contrast to Bourdieu, who approached cultural capital as unitary, we distinguish between two subtypes of cultural capital (“local” and “global”), whose bearers struggle for the status of legitimate culture in SEE societies.¹⁵

Once variables of political and social capital are added to those of economic and cultural capital, social space changes drastically in relation to that constructed by Bourdieu for France in the 1960s and 1970s. In our model, social space consists of regions defined by various combinations of capitals, with one of the capitals dominating as a key resource. The total volume of capital remains the dominant axis of differentiation, but there is a modification of Bourdieu’s principle of composition of capitals, which was solely based on a different ratio between economic and cultural capital in his model.

We constructed social space in Croatia using the multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), a method developed by a group of French mathematicians and statisticians gathered around Jean-Paul Benzécri and celebrated by Bourdieu’s (1984) influential study *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984).

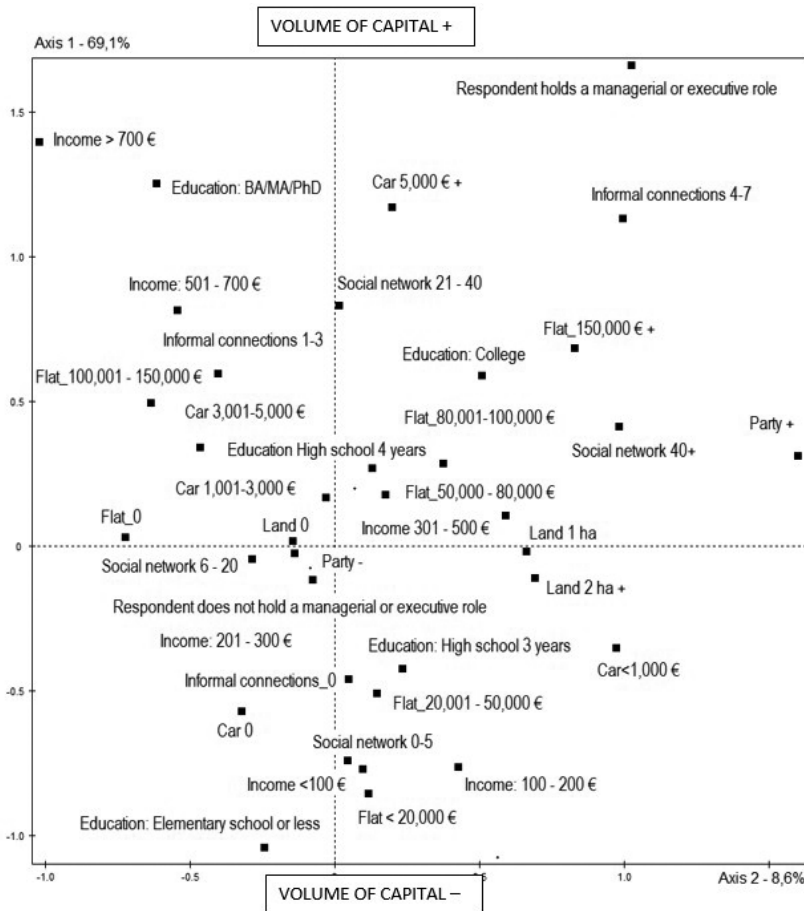
¹³ According to Bourdieu (1998a: 16), a key role was played by the “political type of social capital” (enabling “private appropriation of goods and public services”) while cultural capital played the key oppositional role in socialist societies. This was due to limitations imposed in these societies on economic capital as a principle of differentiation. In a larger context, this means that different principles of differentiation can exist (i.e., that economic and cultural capital need not be the only foundations of such principles) in different types of societies. Bourdieu (1998b: 32) even explicitly states: “Nothing permits one to assume that the principle of difference is the same at all times and in all places (...).”

¹⁴ See Cvetičanin and Popescu (2011); Cvetičanin (2012); Tomić-Koludrović i Petrić (2014b); Cvetičanin et al. (2021).

¹⁵ For a more detailed explanation see Cvetičanin and Popescu (2011: 445, 448-449) and Cvetičanin et al. (2021: 971).

As indicators of *economic capital*, we used (1) average monthly household income (per household member); (2) value of flat/house which members of the household own; (3) value of car(s) households possess (if any); and (4) the size of arable land (if they possess any). As an indicator of *political capital*, we used a synthetic variable indicating whether the respondents hold an executive position in a political party or/and in public administration (at the local, regional, or national level), or a managerial role in companies or public institutions. As indicators of *social capital*, we used responses to questions (1) how many people and which people (cousins, neighbours, work colleagues, political party members or religious community members) respondents can rely on when they need help (i.e., how large and diverse their social network is); and (2) whether they have any “informal connections” in public institutions (the court, police, health institutions, educational institutions, local self-governance offices) that could help them to sidestep formal procedures. As indicators of *cultural capital*, we used data on the highest level of respondents’ education.

Figure 1
Social space in Croatia



As can be seen in Figure 1, social space in Croatia is structured by two axes, explaining 77.7% of the variance. Axis 1 relates to the total volume of capital and explains 69.1% of the variance, while Axis 2 relates to the composition of capital and explains 8.6% of the variance.¹⁶

To explain the axes (i.e., to identify the dimensions that they measure), we singled out the variables with higher than average contribution ($1/Q$, where Q denotes the total number of variables), i.e., all the variables whose contribution is higher than 11.11%. In the case of Axis 1, this includes respondents' education (22.8%), two variables of economic capital (income per household member 16.2%, value of car 14.8%), and two variables of social capital (number of informal connections in public institutions 15.2%, size of respondents' social networks 13%). Variables contributing the most to explaining Axis 2 are evident in the oppositions of economic and social capital (income per household member 16%, political party membership 15.7%, value of flat 14.8%, and value of car 14.1%).

In the map of social space in Croatia (Figure 1), similar to the results of Bourdieu's analyses in France, the fundamental difference (on the vertical axis) is evident in the concentration of modalities of high total volume of capital in the upper regions of the map (Income > €700¹⁷, Car €5,000 +, Flat €150,000 +, Education: BA/MA/PhD, Managerial or Executive Role +, Party +, Informal connections 4-7, Social network 40 +, Social network 21-40), and modalities of low total volume of capital in the lower regions of the map (Income < €100, Flat < €20.000, Education: Elementary school -, Social network 0-5, informal connections 0, Managerial or Executive Role -).

However, in contrast to Bourdieu's model, in which the composition of capital is expressed solely as different ratios of economic and cultural capital, our model – applied to social space in contemporary Croatia – manages to capture a radical multidimensionality. Relevantly, in our empirical results, a key opposition in the upper regions of social space is one between indicators of cultural capital in the upper left quadrant (Education: BA/MA/PhD) and indicators of political and social capital in the upper right quadrant (Managerial or Executive Role +, Party +, Informal connections 4-7, Social network 40+, Social network 21-40). The other opposition in the upper regions of social space relates to a bifurcation of economic capital: in the upper left quadrant, one finds indicators of highest levels of income (Income > €700), while in the upper right quadrant there are indicators of highest wealth (Flat €150,000+, Car €5,000+), and – seemingly paradoxically – modalities of lower income per household member (€301-500). The third opposition emerges in the lower regions of social space, where it is easy to notice a contrast between the higher modalities of social capital and income in the lower left quadrant (Social network 6-20, Income €201-300), and

¹⁶ This indicates the existence of pronounced differences between the objective classes, while there are no large differences between the class fractions.

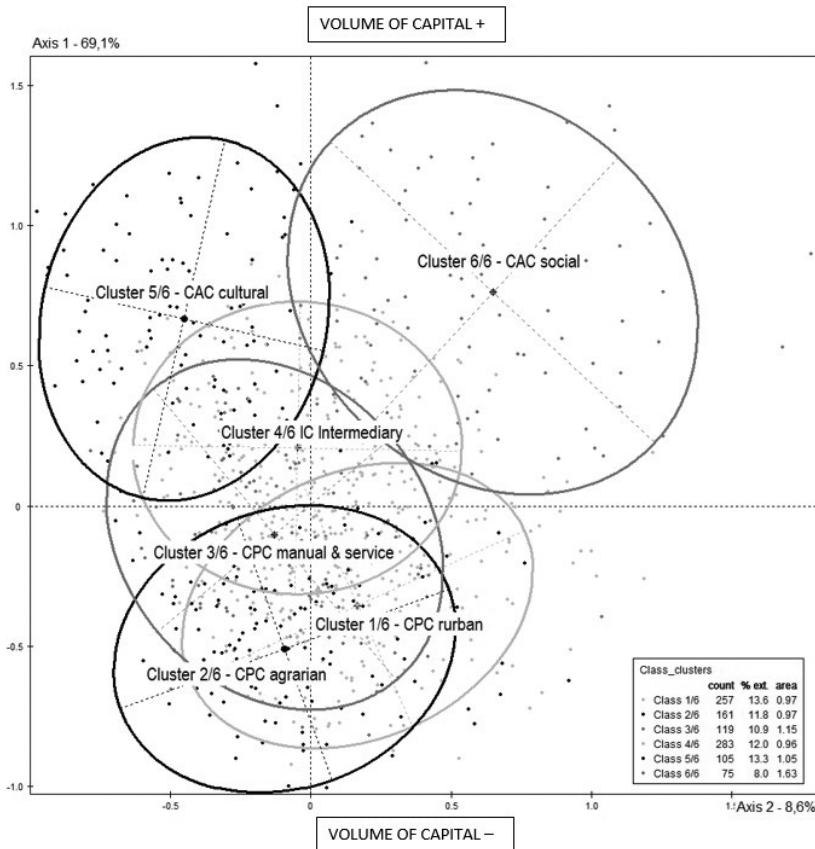
¹⁷ Modalities of income indicators show average monthly household income (from all sources) per member.

a higher level of wealth, as indicated by the size of arable land (Land 2ha+) and flat/house value (€20,001-50,000) in the lower right quadrant.

Our next task was to identify clusters (i.e., objective classes) in the social space shown above. In other words, we now needed to identify the aggregates of respondents whose conditions of existence are similar (in terms of capital volume and composition), no matter which of the mentioned multiple inequality generating mechanisms led them there. To locate the regions of social space whose ‘inhabitants’ possess a similar overall volume of capital and similar combinations of economic, political, social and cultural capital, we used a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis (HCA) based on Ward’s method. The first five factor coordinates extracted from MCA were used as variables in this cluster analysis. It was found that a six-cluster solution indicates an optimal combination of homogeneity within clusters and heterogeneity between clusters (see Table 4 in Appendix).

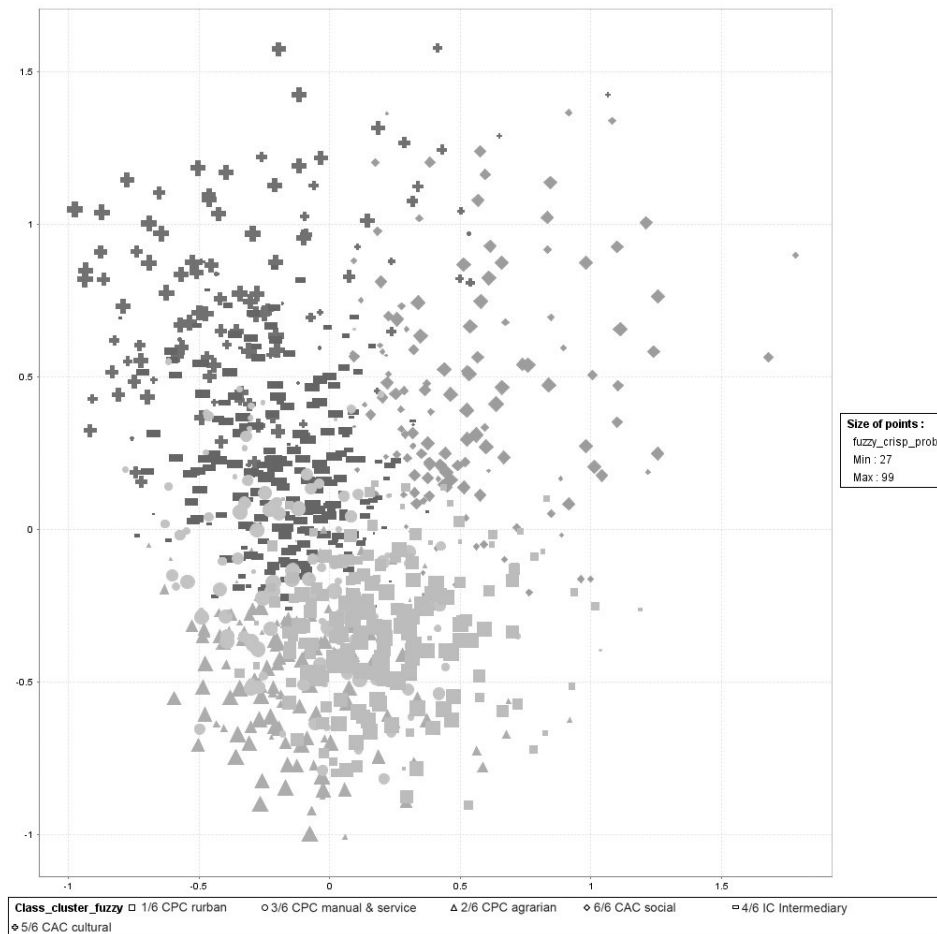
The obtained results (clusters) based on the total volume of capitals, their composition, and the key resources are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Clusters in social space in Croatia (HCA)



To validate the obtained HCA solution, we additionally conducted a fuzzy cluster analysis, which offers a more accurate operationalization of the Bourdieusian understanding of class boundaries. Specifically, in this soft clustering procedure each individual has a set of membership coefficients (probabilities) corresponding to how likely it is that s/he belongs to a given cluster – points closer to the centroid of the cluster have higher probability of belonging than points at the edges. Fuzzy clustering also produced a six-cluster solution. To assess the quality of the solution and the ‘hardness’ of class boundaries, we then compared the consistency of fuzzy and HCA solutions, with highly satisfying results.¹⁸

Figure 3
Clusters in social space in Croatia (Fuzzy cluster analysis)



¹⁸ We obtained a very high consistency between HCA and fuzzy cluster solutions. Specifically, the results of these different types of cluster analysis overlap to a high degree (between 76.3% and 96.6%). (See Table 8 in Appendix.)

We identified six clusters (objective classes): (1/6) *Capital poor class (CPC) – rurban*; (2/6) *Capital poor class (CPC) – agrarian*; (3/6) *Capital poor class (CPC) – manual & service*; (4/6) *Intermediary class (IC)*; (5/6) *Class with average capitals (CAC) – cultural*; and (6/6) *Class with average capitals (CAC) – social*.

Since they resulted from a relational approach, the obtained clusters cannot be analysed as “social groups” with some “intrinsic” properties (as in substantialist approach). What can and needs to be done is to analyse the structural differences between the obtained clusters and their mutual relationships.

The most notable differences relate to the overall volume of capital. These differences are found between respondents from the upper regions of social space (where one finds clusters belonging to the Class with average capitals - CAC) and respondents from the lower regions of social space (belonging to the Capital poor class - CPC). However, clear differences can also be noted between clusters with roughly the same overall volume of capital. These finer differences relate to key resources, capital composition, and socio-demographic characteristics. (See Tables 9 and 10 in Appendix.)

First, we analysed differences between the three Capital poor class (CPC) clusters. We paid attention to differences related to the key resources of respondents, as well as to their occupation, gender, age and the settlement type (i.e., the urban-rural divide). Following that, we summarized the results of this analysis (related to the composition of key resources), and then repeated it for respondents belonging to the two clusters of the Class with average capitals (CAC), as well as for Intermediary class (IC).

Regarding Capital poor class (CPC) clusters, the analysis shows that the key resource of respondents from CPC–agrarian (2/6) is arable land. Nearly 80% live in rural areas, which makes it understandable why farmers are almost four times more represented in this cluster (compared to their representation in the sample). They are the oldest group, with many participants aged over 70 (and with the highest percentage of women). In contrast, CPC–manual & service (3/6) is mostly composed of an urban population: two-thirds of respondents from this cluster live in cities, and they are particularly well represented in small towns (between 10,000 and 50,000 inhabitants). They are among the youngest in the sample. Their key resource are skills, both manual and in terms of providing services. Most of them work in one of the following three occupations: factory workers, small shop owners, and technicians. In sum, it is evident that respondents belonging to the two analysed CPC clusters differ both in their key resources and in all other analysed dimensions (urban/rural, age, gender, and occupation).

Respondents from CPC-rurban (1/6) mostly live in villages or outlying suburbs and work in cities. They rely on both key resources mentioned above (the possession of

arable land, as well as manual and service skills). That is why we have designated this cluster as “rurban”.¹⁹ With respect to occupation, respondents located in this part of social space in Croatia are rather heterogeneous. They mostly come from the following five groups: farmers, unskilled workers, factory workers, service sector workers, and artisans. Regarding gender and age, there is gender balance in this cluster and respondents belonging to it are evenly distributed in all age groups.

Summing up the analysis related to different compositions of capital of respondents from Capital poor class (CPC) clusters, it is evident that in all three cases one capital proves to be dominant, while there is at the same time an obvious lack of some of the other capitals. Respondents from CPC–manual & service (3/6) have a higher level of cultural capital compared to respondents from the other two CPC clusters. However, in relation to them, they have less economic capital. In contrast, respondents from CPC–rurban (1/6) have more economic capital than those from the other two CPC clusters but less social capital. Finally, for respondents from CPC–agrarian (2/6), besides arable land, social capital (of solidarity) proves to be an important resource, but – in relation to respondents belonging to the other two CPC clusters (in relation to respondents belonging to the other two CPC clusters) – they notably lack cultural capital (in the form of education). (See Tables 9 and 10 in Appendix.)

In the upper regions of social space, one can distinguish clearly between respondents whose key resource is expert knowledge (CAC–cultural 5/6) and those whose key resource are political alliances and informal connections (CAC–social 6/6).

Three-quarters of respondents from CAC–cultural (5/6) hold a university degree or higher. Most are engaged in expert professions, although managers and company owners are also represented. Their social networks are quite extensive, but they are less often members of political parties than respondents from any other cluster in the sample (98% of participants from this cluster are not members of political parties). They also have a rather small number of informal connections in public institutions.

On the other hand, more than a half of respondents from CAC–social (6/6) hold managerial and executive positions²⁰. Moreover, it is only in this cluster that over a third of respondents are political party members, whereas this percentage is below 10% in all the other clusters. Likewise, over half of respondents from CAC–social (6/6) have a multitude of informal connections in public institutions and over 40 people in their highly diverse social networks. When it comes to cultural capital, about one third of respondents from this cluster hold an undergraduate

¹⁹ It is important to note that the designation “rurban” relates more to the dual type of work respondents perform than to their place of residence. In sociological literature from the 1970s, this group (combining industrial and agricultural work) was labelled as “*polutani*” (or “peasant urbanities”) (Simić, 1973).

²⁰ The percentage of managers is less than 3% in all other clusters, except CAC–cultural (5/6), where it stands at 16.2%.

ate degree or higher, and another 10% have graduated from college, but most (44%) have a four-year high-school education. (See Table 9 in Appendix.)

Concerning economic capital, respondents from CAC – cultural (5/6) have the highest income. Over 80% of them live in households with income higher than €500 per member, and more than half with over €700 per member. In contrast, when it comes to property, there is a stark internal division within this fraction. One group of respondents own real estate (houses and flats) of considerable value and expensive cars, while others rent rather than own houses and flats, and do not own cars.

On the other hand, the income of respondents from CAC–social (6/6) is somewhat lower. Most are in the household income category of €301–€500 per member (although nearly 30% have higher income). However, it should be emphasized that their property (houses, flats, cars, and especially arable land) is at a higher level than that of respondents from CAC–cultural (5/6). Notably, respondents from CAC-social (6/6) tend to own large tracts of land – even larger than those owned by respondents from CPC-agrarian (2/6) (despite this being the key resource of the latter). This can be connected to the fact that a part of respondents from CAC-social (6/6) live in rural areas. (See Tables 9 and 10 in Appendix.)

Differences between the two CAC clusters are also evident when it comes to socio-demographic characteristics. CAC–social (6/6) is the only cluster with relatively more men than women (in relation to their representation in the sample), and with relative predominance of middle-aged respondents (aged 41-50). In contrast, respondents from CAC-cultural (5/6) are a distinctly urban population, with a larger representation of those aged under 40. (See Table 10 in Appendix.)

Finally, differences between the IC-Intermediary class cluster (4/6) and all other clusters should be explained. As shown in the map of social space in Croatia, the IC cluster (4/6) emerges at those points where other clusters intersect, without a space of its own. This explains the absence of a key resource in this cluster. Instead, respondents from IC (4/6) employ different resources – which they possess to a greater extent than the Capital poor class (CPC) clusters, yet to a lesser extent than clusters from the upper regions of social space (i.e., Class with average capitals clusters - CAC). Moreover, respondents from IC (4/6) are somewhat more equally represented in different sociodemographic categories (regarding age group, place of residence, education, income, property). (See Table 10 in Appendix.)

One of the shortcomings of our survey is that members of the most powerful class (Capital rich class – CRC) are not represented in the sample. Importantly, not only are they small in number, but they customarily refuse to participate in this type of research. However, since they are social agents with the highest levels of social powers, without them the picture of the analysed class structure would be incomplete. We

have therefore included them in our research using other available methods (desk research analysis, semi-structured interviews and social network analysis). Based on our insights so far, the Capital rich class (CRC) in Croatia is composed of two fractions (political and economic), struggling among themselves to establish “the dominant principle of domination” (Bourdieu: 1984: 232), i.e., whose basic resource will dominate the society (in this case, political or economic capital).²¹

Social agents with highest levels of political capital in Croatia include the *leadership of major political parties* (especially when they are in power and occupy key government positions), the *very top of the (Catholic) church hierarchy*, as well as the *top echelons of state security apparatus* (past and present), and the *judiciary*. On the other hand, there are several groups of social agents with very high levels of economic capital. These comprise *post-socialist grand entrepreneurs* (who mostly obtained their wealth privatising previously state-owned companies and resources), *branch managers of international banks and companies* (some of them foreigners), *the owners of top legal firms*, so-called “*controversial entrepreneurs and managers*” (i.e., those engaging in different grey area activities), as well as *star entertainers* and other *celebrities* (especially sports stars playing abroad).

In Croatia, just like in other SEE societies that we have studied, even social agents with the highest level of cultural capital do not belong to the Capital rich class (CRC), unless they are actively engaged in politics.

Lastly, it is important to point out again that members of both fractions of the Capital rich class (CRC) are very few in number at the national level.²² However, more numerous sections of the same class operate at local and regional levels.²³ The volume of their

²¹ What is at issue here is, in Bourdieu’s (1984: 310) words, “the imposition of the dominant principle of domination within the dominant class—or to put it in another way, the securing of the best conversion rate for the type of capital with which each group is best provided.”

²² According to our estimates, based on various data sources, the top layer of the Capital rich class (CRC) is counted in hundreds. According to the Forbes list, in 2015 there were three local currency billionaires and 101 so-called “super-millionaires” in Croatia. Knight Frank Consultancy estimated that there were 120 “super-millionaires” (i.e., persons whose total wealth is estimated at over 30 million dollars) in Croatia in 2017. Concerning salaries, according to data provided by the Croatian Tax Administration, in 2021 there were 343 persons in Croatia with monthly net salaries exceeding 100,000 Croatian kuna. (See Table 28 in Appendix.)

²³ Based on economic indicators (possessions and income), and taking household members into account, the total number of members of the Capital rich class (CRC) in Croatia could be estimated to be approximately 1 per cent of the population. We reached this estimate by comparing data from numerous sources. For example, according to data from The Credit Suisse Research Institute, there were 11,400 dollar millionaires in Croatia in 2015, and Knight Frank Consultancy estimated that there were 11,900 dollar millionaires in Croatia in 2017. Concerning salaries, according to data provided by the Croatian Tax Administration, there were 6,943 persons in Croatia with monthly net salaries exceeding 30,000 Croatian kuna in 2021. (See Table 28 in Appendix.)

political and economic capital is lower than that of the national-level section of CRC but is still clearly distinguishable from both fractions of Class with average capitals (CAC). Despite differences in the volume of capital, members of higher and lower sections of CRC are interlinked by numerous common business interests and membership in dominant political parties. However, their defence of the current status quo is what unites them more than anything else. Thus, they are the ones who apply and benefit the most from the mechanisms of market exploitation and/or mechanisms of social closure.

4. The second step: Mechanisms creating inequalities

Simply identifying the end-result of the state of social inequality – as we have done above – is not sufficient for a complete class analysis. It was necessary to analyse the causal mechanisms that produce classes and class fractions. As already mentioned, we identified two main types of mechanisms generating social inequalities in SEE societies. Since the exploitative market mechanisms are well covered in literature, our focus was on different types of social closure mechanisms. We developed our approach in dialogue with theories outlined by Max Weber (1978 [1922]) and elaborated by Frank Parkin (1979) and Raymond Murphy (1988).

Weber's scattered comments in *Economy and Society* were the foundation upon which social closure theories were built. The most important for our analysis is a comment in which he describes mechanisms of market closure: 'When the number of competitors increases in relation to the profit span, the participants become interested in curbing competition. Usually one group of competitors takes some externally [...] identifiable characteristic of another group of (actual or potential) competitors – *race, language, religion, local or social origin, descent, residence*, etc. – as a pretext for attempting their exclusion. [...] This monopolization is directed against competitors who share some positive or negative characteristics; its purpose is always the closure of social and economic opportunities to outsiders.' (Weber 1978 [1922]: 341-42)²⁴.

Based on Weber's fragments, Parkin (1979) conceived a general theory of social closure, further developed by Murphy (1988). Parkin differentiates between two modes of closure: exclusion, which involves the exercise of power in a downward direction (subordination) and usurpation, which is an attempt from below to appropriate the advantages of the upper groups. In addition to this, he coined the concept of 'dual

²⁴ Our emphasis. As is obvious from the quoted excerpt, Weber does not consider the functioning of the market in itself as social closure but holds that it takes place only when non-economic factors (such as those emphasised in the quote) intervene in the work of the market. Wendy Bottero (2005: 60) also points this out when stating that for Weber social closure represents 'the intrusion of status elements into economic principles.'

closure', in which actors are simultaneously excluded and exclude others. He also distinguished between individual and collective forms of exclusion, as well as between formal and informal practices of exclusion.

The weakest part of Parkin's theory is his conception of class, in which structural aspects of class are completely neglected. Specifically, Parkin argued that classes can be determined solely by the nature of strategic action (exclusion or usurpation). In contrast to this, we agree with Murphy (1988: 114), who claims that the notion of "social class" productively brings together both property classes (which are the product of market mechanisms) and status groups (which use social closure mechanisms). This approach is much closer to the underlying principles of our model of class analysis.

The point of our disagreement with Parkin and Murphy is their general claim that *all* social divisions can be explained by mechanisms of social closure. In their conceptions, processes of exploitation are in fact just a specific case of exclusionary closure. In contrast, we argue that exploitative market mechanisms and social closures mechanisms are essentially different types of causal mechanisms producing social inequalities.

We agree with Eric Olin Wright when he states that – in the case of exploitation – exploiters and the exploited are interdependent: "the exploiters actively need the exploited: exploiters depend upon the effort of the exploited for their own welfare" (Wright, 2005: 24). In contrast to this, those who perform social closure do not depend on the excluded but aim to eliminate them from the competition. We therefore argue that exploitative market mechanisms and social closure mechanisms produce social inequalities in a different way.

Our conception of exploitative market mechanisms in post-socialist societies could be described as relational and historical. It compares the present worker's rights and power over productive resources in SEE societies under study (here in Croatia) with those achieved in the socialist period. Under exploitative market mechanisms we understand legal and especially de facto mechanisms through which a reduction of workers' rights and benefits takes place, enabling fast enrichment of the exploiters.

In Croatia today, the modes of exploitation are reflected primarily in widespread occasional and temporary employment,²⁵ as well as seasonal work (especially in tourism).

²⁵ According to Eurostat data quoted in Ostojić (2018), Croatia had the largest percentage of precariously employed workers (on contracts up to three months) (8.4%) in the European Union and was ranked fourth in the European Union with the percentage of temporarily employed workers (22.2%). According to OECD data quoted in the same article, a high increase in temporary employment is evident in Croatia (from 10.86% in 2002 to 22.27 in 2016). Research has shown that temporary employment mostly relates to low-skilled and low-paid jobs (Matković, 2013) and that specific groups (females, youths, foreigners, low-skilled workers and singles from rural areas) have a higher probability of temporary contract employ-

These exploitation practices include avoiding legal obligations related to workers' benefits (most frequently health and pension insurance, compensation for overtime work), capitalizing on employment insecurity of temporary employees, unfair dismissals (particularly before they become legally entitled to permanent employment), and taking advantage of all other insecurities brought about by temporary employment and occasional work.

The way in which these exploitative mechanisms work is evident from the statements of our interviewees:

It was normal to us, for example, that in [the name of the retail chain] instead of 8 hour shifts, one works 10 or 11 hours. And, of course, the contract is extended for two or three months. And if you complain, and say "you know I had 20 hours of overtime in the past month which has not been paid", you will get [compensation], but with it also your employment documents; because they look for people who are very obedient. Since so many people are out of work, they simply accept ever worsening conditions. (Male, 47, lower tertiary education)

In principle I worked for four years in [the name of the company] through an agency. And then, since I used that up, the limits of duration of employment through an agency, I was dismissed. And after three weeks they called me back [to work], as that three month period was over and they can re-employ you. They called me back [to work] through the agency, [moved me] into a completely different department, and so I have now been... what... almost six months with them again. (Female, 34, secondary education)

ment (Tomić, 2020). Likewise, there are indications that – instead of an increase in overall employment – reforms of legal legislation have led to the creation of a dual labour market (i.e., for permanent and for temporary employment) (Tomić, 2020), in which young people in particular do not fare well (according to Ostojić, 2018, every second employed person below the age of 29 in Croatia in 2016 was on a temporary contract). However, generally speaking, Croatia does not belong to the group of countries with an especially high level of social inequality measured by income (according to World Bank data, the Gini coefficient which was 31.6 in 2010 fell to 28.3 in 2020). The same goes for the income quintile share ratio (S80/S20), which shows the relative disparity in the distribution of total income (between the first and the fifth quintile). According to Croatian Bureau of Statistics data, it was 4.8 in 2019. The unemployment rate is also not especially high in Croatia: according to Eurostat data, it was 7.2% in 2020. This represents a large decrease from 2014, when – according to the same source – it was 17.25%. However, such a drop in unemployment should be attributed primarily to the emigration of the working age population (following EU accession in 2013). For a detailed analysis of wage inequality in Croatia between 2003 and 2016 see Bićanić et al. (2018). For wage inequality in Croatia from the 1960s to the mid-2010s see Novokmet (2017.: 271-360). According to Novokmet (2017: 271), the growth in income inequality in Croatia in the post-socialist period should be attributed primarily to the rising shares of top income groups.

So, [I did] this bookkeeping for seven years, it was OK. (...) And then our government introduced the measure "from college or from high school to work" for one thousand six hundred [kuna].²⁶ And then the four of us, older ones, working as support staff, were dismissed... and then these young people came [to work] for one thousand and six hundred. (...) They were used, and they had to leave too, but so did I, and it is much harder to find work when you are thirty five. (Female, 40, tertiary education)

He said, I have to tell you something (...) that will be hard to manage (...). You are redundant and will be laid off. You have from Wednesday to Friday to think whether you will sign, with redundancy payment or without. It was like blackmail. I mean, I experienced a shock first, I almost fainted. (...) And that blackmail was there. They knew exactly what bank loans I had. (...) They offered me redundancy payment in that amount. Which I got to pay the loans off. (...) Then they wrote that I was ill (...) and that I am not able to come to work. I had to sign that and that was the worst part for me. (...) I signed in order to get that redundancy payment... and was then registered at the unemployment bureau for three years (...) until I met the requirements for early retirement. (Female, 59, secondary education)

Several important recent studies (Ivanković, 2017; Švarc and Lažnjak, 2017; Šimić Banović, 2019; Hoffmann et al., 2017.) indicate that crony capitalism²⁷ and the capture of public institutions and resources have become a serious problem in Croatia. The insights from our empirical research suggest that the key to understanding crony capitalism in SEE societies is the intertwining of exploitative mechanisms and mechanisms of social closure.

Like in other SEE societies, the fundamental power of the mechanisms of social closure in Croatia is that they represent *the main channel of access to the labour market, as well as gaining a privileged position in business development*. Our previous research shows that political parties exert a decisive influence on employment in SEE societies, or even straightforwardly control it (especially in the public sector). The same goes for career advancement, distribution of public procurement contracts, expensive medical services, scholarships, and the like (Cvetičanin et al., 2021: 950).

²⁶ The interviewee is referring to an "active labor market policy" measure known as "vocational training for work without commencing employment", introduced by the Croatian government in 2012 "to ease the first labor market entry [...], enabling a young person without relevant work experience to get a one-year contract and a net monthly remuneration of 210 euro" (Tomić and Zilic, 2018: 3). The offered remuneration amounted to "29% of the average net wage at the time" and was "well below the minimum wage which was around 300 euro in net terms" (Tomić and Zilic, 2018: 6). According to the quoted authors (Tomić and Zilic, 2018: 7), in 2016 as many as 33,366 persons aged up to 29 participated in the programme, which had "at best neutral effects on employment and unemployment" but did exert "an adverse effect on wages [...] both at the mean and higher percentiles of the wage distribution" (Tomić and Zilic, 2018: 1).

²⁷ Crony or "clientelist" capitalism is also referred to in Croatia as "*rodijački*" (cousinly) or "*ortački*" (partner) capitalism. For a detailed overview of literature on the topic see Švarc (2017).

Our recent qualitative research also indicates the same:

Whoever is in power decides who will be employed. (...) Well, you can get everything you want before others, not wait forever for your turn to come... get a job at school, enrol your child in school, what else... one always has to look for a connection for doctor's appointment, wherever you have to wait for your turn, except at the beauty parlour or the hairdresser's [laughter], and that's about it, I think this is where you do not need a connection, everywhere else you need one. (Female, 60, lower tertiary education)

Asked about how much party membership can help someone in life in Croatia today, one interviewee stated:

Oh, but that's everything! If you are a party member, if you have a connection of that kind, I think you are secure for the rest of your life. Especially if the party is currently in power, if (...) it reigns supreme. (...) I even know a couple of people, my colleagues, who became party members exactly for this reason, to get a position, that is a better status, and it worked. (...) There is no doubt that one like that will get a better gig, a better position, a better flat, anything they need. I think that in all fields one can... and career advancement, anything (...), I think that one can get absolutely everything. (Female, 42, secondary education)

An interviewee who approves of such practices has described her personal experience of getting a position through party channels:

My younger daughter has been out of work for two years now (...) now those from [the name of the ruling party] helped, they secured a position for her. And you know why [they did this], so that she gives them her vote, that's what it is about. (...) And it can also be based on my older daughter's complaining all the time. Here we have a member of parliament, he lives just around the corner (...). And she asks them all the time if there is a possibility that she gets something after all, some protection, right, when she was in the Croatian Army and in all actions. If her sister could get a job somewhere. Now, it is positive that she got it, but still... it's not like it is a permanent position. This will be only for a year, right. (Female, 36, vocational secondary education)

According to an interviewee who is an active party member, not only are political parties channels of employment and career advancement, but they also play a key role in business development:

... as a rule, companies that get contracts are necessarily close to [the name of the ruling party] politically or are ready to pitch in whenever needed. This is how it works – the director [of the municipal services], who is [a ruling party member] will make a payment of 200,000 kuna to some [local news] portal. Why would [municipal services] need to be advertised on some portal? What, if there was no advertisement, we would not pay for water supply or use sewerage services? (...) I mean, this is a well-known model ... (Male, 32, tertiary education)

However, mechanisms of social closure are not based only on party membership:

(...) the Church was also very important for getting employment in Croatia. In that one should not only be [religiously] affiliated but an active member of the Church. That helps a lot. To know the parish priest, the bishop, and so on. And to be seen, go to masses. (...) But [this is] not so [important] for doctors as it is for nurses. (...) It is known exactly who goes to which church, which prayer group, who wears a cross around their neck, who does not eat meat on Fridays (...), who crosses oneself before eating anything, who crosses oneself before going into the operating theatre, and so on. There are many ways to see it and know about it. As it is, the Church has an influence on the appointment of the director and the senior nursing officer, and consequently also on the appointment of other employees. (...) In the last 30 years, it has not happened that we had one person who would not really be to the liking of the Church, except when this [person from a left political party] was director for four years – then it was different. (Female, 56, PhD)

Mechanisms of social closure are active even when there is no organisational structure behind them, e.g., based on someone's ethnicity (in the example that follows erroneously supposed based on the interviewee's first name and surname).

In elementary [school] I was “look at that Ustasha”, because of my surname [the same as that of a politician who was considered a Croatian nationalist in the socialist period]... and then in 1991 [at the beginning of the war in Croatia], well, well, this could be a Serbian name... he is not one of us... (Male, 58, tertiary education)

The same goes for the closure of opportunities based on gender:

I went to many interviews (...) where the question was (...) how many children do you have? No, sorry, the first question (...) asked of me was whether I was married or not (...), when did I intend to get married, was I planning to have children. I experienced this myself. And then when I got married, then [the questions were] – when I would give birth, and how many [children] (...). And now that I have children (...) “oh they are really small, is there anyone to take care of them?” (...) And men, no. Nobody asks them that. (...) So far as I know, nobody asked my husband anything. In his concrete case it was like that. I don't know about others. (Female, 41, secondary education)

The EU accession of Croatia has somewhat changed the rules of the game. In the first place, the changes relate to public service procurement procedures:

Maybe earlier one could do it on many levels (...). What is left now is only (...) concentration (...) on big projects. They cannot deal with [tender] fixing at all levels, (...) they will rather take care that some tender worth a couple of million kuna goes

in the needed direction. (...) Because earlier it was all rather simple really, the procedures were simpler, the control mechanisms were less developed... All cities and local authorities are [now] obliged to have public procurement plans and (...) when things are public, people become (...) careful of what they do... So that, automatically, there are less attempts [to fix tenders]. (Female, 46, tertiary education)

Furthermore, EU accession has increased the possibilities of avoiding local social closure mechanisms, either by finding employment with foreign companies operating in Croatia or in other EU countries. However, although this helps avoid local social closure mechanisms, it frequently means exposing oneself to mechanisms of global (neoliberal) market exploitation.

5. The third step: Lifestyles and symbolic boundaries

The next question in the construction of our model related to the establishment of class boundaries. As is well-known, in Bourdieu's conception, all three dimensions of social space (the total volume of capital, the composition of capital, and trajectory) are continuous. Consequently, *there are no inherent boundaries between classes and class fractions* – rather, they are *established through the social agents' practices*. According to Bourdieu (1984, 1985, 1987), the process of establishing boundaries between social collectivities begins with self-classification and classification of others' lifestyle practices. Michelle Lamont (1992) expanded this conception to include evaluation of others based on moral and business success criteria. Our research evidences a multiplicity of foundations (aesthetic, moral, ideological, territorial...) upon which symbolic boundaries are drawn.²⁸

One should also bear in mind that showing how culture and cultural consumption contribute to the reproduction of the class system in contemporary societies is an important aspect of Bourdieu's conception and the central topic of his *Distinction* (1984). As is well known, in contrast to Weber (according to whom class and status groups represent two different forms of social group formation), Bourdieu tried to show that these are actually two modes of existence of any social group – the material and the symbolic. In other words, in Bourdieu's approach, classes always appear as status groups, whose culturally stratified tastes and goods legitimate the system of class domination, representing it in an unrecognizable form.

²⁸ According to Lamont and Molnar (2002: 168), "Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space. They are tools by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality." Quoting Epstein (1992: 232), the authors further state that symbolic boundaries "separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership" and conclude that they represent "an essential medium through which people acquire status and monopolize resources". Since they "include some people, groups, while excluding others" (Epstein, 1992: 232), symbolic boundaries play an important role in the creation of inequality and the exercise of power.

In the construction of the field of lifestyles – seen as the symbolic aspect of social divisions²⁹ – we used indicators of cultural and material consumption. However, in contrast to the Bourdieusian tradition, we also added indicators of value orientations, which – in our conception – represent one of the two foundations on which consumption is based (the other one being financial).

Indicators of cultural consumption in our analysis included the level and frequency of cultural participation, favourite musical taste, respondents' attitudes towards well-known local artists, the amount of money spent monthly on cultural goods and activities, social media activities, as well as attending sports events. As indicators of life interests, we also used interest in arts and interest in sports. Indicators of material consumption included information on where respondents buy their clothes, how often they go on summer holidays, how often they dine out with friends and what their favourite dish is. Finally, indicators of value orientations included respondents' attitude towards abortion, how often they participate in religious services, their attitudes towards female employment, as well as whether respondents see their life goals in terms of serving national interests and following traditional customs.

Like in the case of social space, we constructed the space of lifestyles in Croatia using multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). The two axes structuring the field of lifestyles in Croatia explain 78.7% of the variance. The first (vertical) axis explains 68.8% of the variance and relates to the volume and types of material and cultural consumption. The second (horizontal) axis explains 9.9% of the variance and relates primarily to the differences in value orientations.

To interpret the modalities that contribute the most to explaining the axes structuring the field of lifestyles in Croatia we retained the variables whose contribution is higher than average contribution ($1/Q$, where Q denotes the total number of variables), i.e., all the variables with values higher than 4.7%.

In the case of the first axis this includes one variable of elite culture (going to the theatre 9.7%), two variables of popular culture (preference for Psihomodo Pop³⁰ 8.1%, intensive use of Facebook 9%), and one variable from the domain of everyday culture (attending sports events 7.5%). Three variables from the domain of material consumption were included (the amount of money spent on cultural goods and activities 11.1%, going on summer holidays 10.1%, going to restaurants 10%). Here we also find the variable related to importance of art in life (5.2%), but also of sports (5.1%).

²⁹ Differences in lifestyles are very important in Croatia. Notably, in the socialist period they served as a substitute for class identification and self-identification (which was politically suppressed) (Tomić-Koludrović and Petrić, 2014b), and nowadays they are an expression of a polarized society.

³⁰ A Croatian rock (pop-punk) band that formed in 1983 and is still active and popular.

In the case of the second axis the most important contributions are those related to value orientations (life goals related to realisation of national goals 17.8%, following traditional customs 16.3% and going to mass 11.9%). Higher than average on the second axis are also some indicators of taste (preference for Mišo Kovač³¹ 9.4%, Ranko Marinković³² 5.2%) and everyday cultural practices (going to country fairs 7.9%).

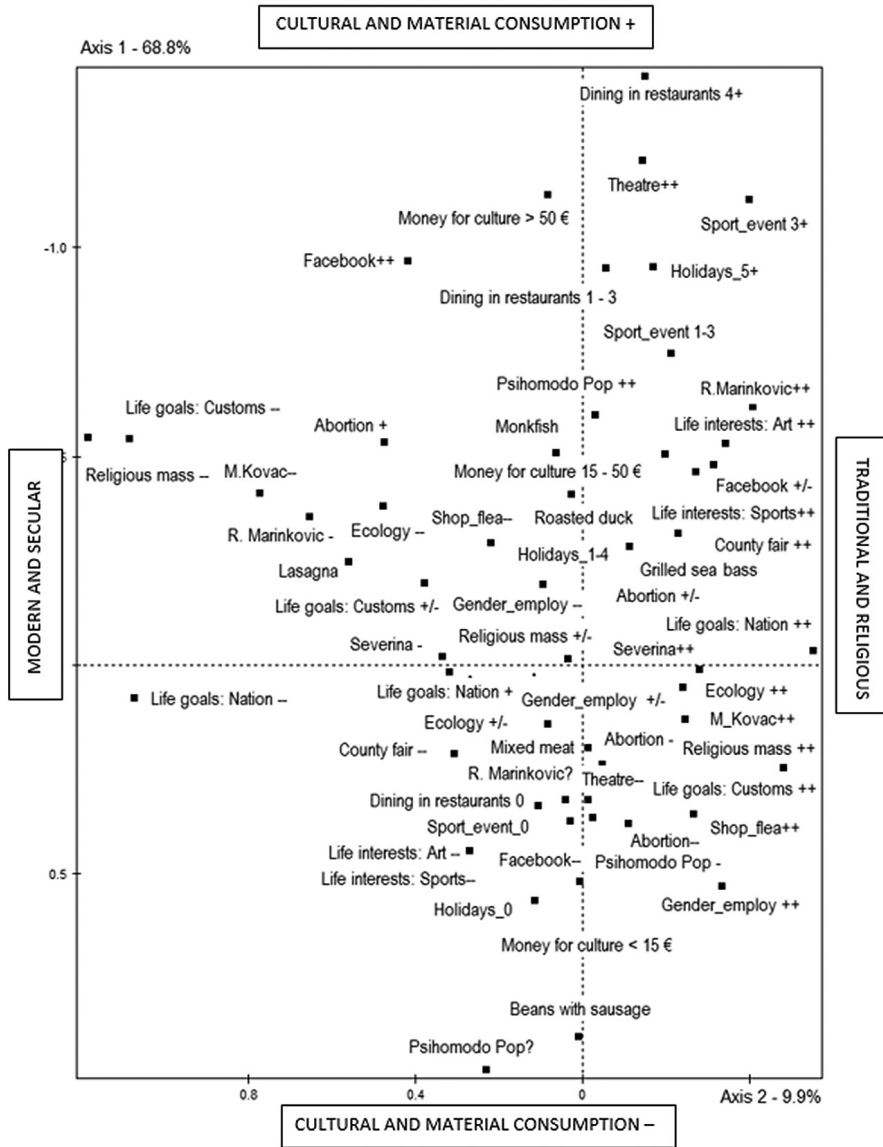
As can be seen in Figure 3, in the upper part of the field of lifestyles, indicators show intensive cultural participation (Theatre ++, Money for culture > €50), elite cultural taste (Marinković ++, Life interests Art ++). In contrast to this, in the lower part of the map, we find indicators of lowest spending on culture (Money for culture < €15), as well as absence of cultural participation in the public sphere (Theatre --, Country fair -, Sport event 0). Here we also find indicators of low material consumption, as well as absence of going for summer holidays and dining out with friends (Holidays 0, Dining in restaurants 0).

The second axis shows the largest differences with regard to value orientations. On the right side of the map there are indicators of patriarchal attitudes, such as that men should be preferentially employed in times of crisis (Gender employ ++). Here we also find indicators of a high level of commitment to national goals (Life goals Nation ++), frequent attendance of religious rituals (Religious Mass ++) and pronounced opposition to abortion (Abortion --). In contrast to that, on the left side of the field of lifestyles, we find indicators showing that national goals (Life goals Nation --), traditional customs (Life goals Customs --) and religiosity (Religious mass --) are not considered important. On the same left side, indicators show that abortion is supported (Abortion +).

³¹ A Croatian pop singer who rose to fame in the 1970s and 1980s but continues to be popular to this day.

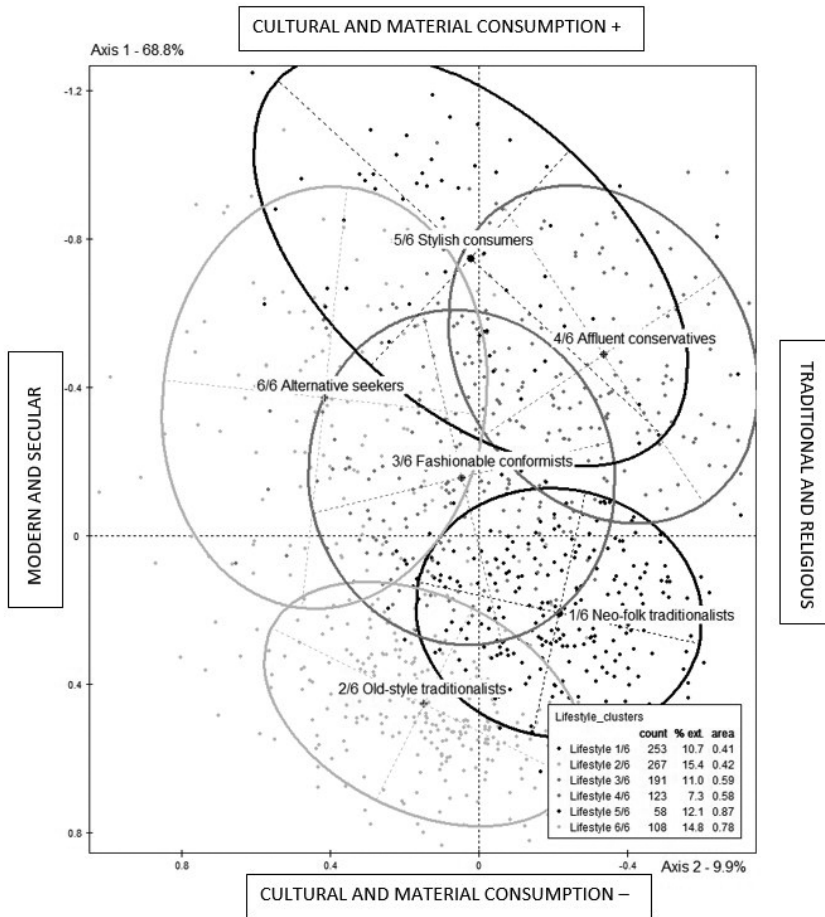
³² A Croatian modernist author and playwright, whose works are required reading for secondary school students.

Figure 4
The field of lifestyles in Croatia



Using hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis based on Ward's method, we identified six lifestyle clusters in Croatia. Based on the volume and type of consumption (cultural and material), as well as of value orientations, we labelled them as: (1/6) *Neofolk traditionalists*; (2/6) *Old-style traditionalists*; (3/6) *Fashionable conformists*; (4/6) *Affluent conservatives*; (5/6) *Stylish consumers*; and (6/6) *Alternative seekers*.

Figure 5
Clusters in the field of lifestyles in Croatia



Like in the case of objective class clusters, when discussing lifestyle clusters, we also focused on identifying structural differences between them. As could be expected, the strongest divide between the lifestyle clusters relates to the extent of participation in elite cultural events. However, it should be noted that similar patterns are also repeated in the domains of popular and everyday culture.

Neo-folk traditionalists (1/6) and Old-style traditionalists (2/6) are inactive in almost all aspects of cultural participation in the public sphere. In contrast, Stylish consumers (5/6) are not only omnivores – taking part in elite as well as in popular and everyday cultural activities – but also voracious consumers (Sullivan and Katz-Gerro, 2007), who participate in all these activities to a greater extent than all other respondents. In this, they are followed closely by Affluent conservatives (4/6), particularly regarding elite culture activities. The activities of Alternative seekers (6/6) are mostly related to

popular culture: they often do not attend elite cultural events and are generally uninterested in everyday culture activities (sports events, county fairs, restaurants with live music). Respondents from the cluster of Fashionable conformists (3/6) are also omnivores, but with a much lower intensity of cultural participation than either Stylish consumers (5/6) or Affluent conservatives (4/6). (See Table 16 in Appendix.)

When it comes to material consumption, three groups of clusters can be clearly distinguished. In the first group, we find Neo-folk traditionalists (1/6) and Old-style traditionalists (2/6): their limited financial means (especially in the case of Old-style traditionalists) are evident from their very modest consumption in all analysed domains.

The second group comprises the clusters of Fashionable conformists (3/6) and Alternative seekers (6/6), who are divided regarding material consumption: one third of respondents from this group is characterized by low levels of material consumption, while two-thirds regularly take holidays away from their place of residence and have lunches or dinners with friends at restaurants. Regarding clothing purchases, one third of respondents from these clusters buy clothes at flea markets, while others never do that (with around 30% of the latter shopping for clothes abroad).

The third group consists of Affluent conservatives (4/6) and Stylish consumers (5/6). More than half of Affluent conservatives, and over three quarters of Stylish consumers went on holidays five or more times in the five years before the survey. Concerning dining out with friends, over half of Affluent conservatives and over 90% of Stylish consumers do so, with over 70% of the latter being regular restaurant-goers. Finally, over four fifths of respondents from these clusters never buy their clothes at flea markets. On the other hand, over half of Affluent conservatives and nearly three quarters of Stylish consumers buy clothes abroad. (See Table 16 in Appendix.)

We also examined preferences (taste) regarding different types of food. Respondents were asked which one of the nine offered dishes they would choose if they were in a restaurant with everything paid for in advance.³³ Respondents' choices clearly reflected the influence of their class habitus. Neo-folk traditionalists (1/6) and Old-style traditionalists (2/6) overwhelmingly opted for familiar, filling dishes (grilled meat platter or beans and sausage). Fashionable conformists (3/6) chose fast foods menus – especially lasagne with minced meat, while Affluent conservatives (4/6), Stylish consumers (5/6) and Alternative seekers (6/6) mostly chose fish or exotic dishes (sea bass baked in foil with vegetables, monkfish with truffle sauce, or duck à l'orange).

Another group of structural differences in the field of lifestyles (along Axis 2) concerns respondents' value orientations – patriarchal/egalitarian, national/cosmopolitan, reli-

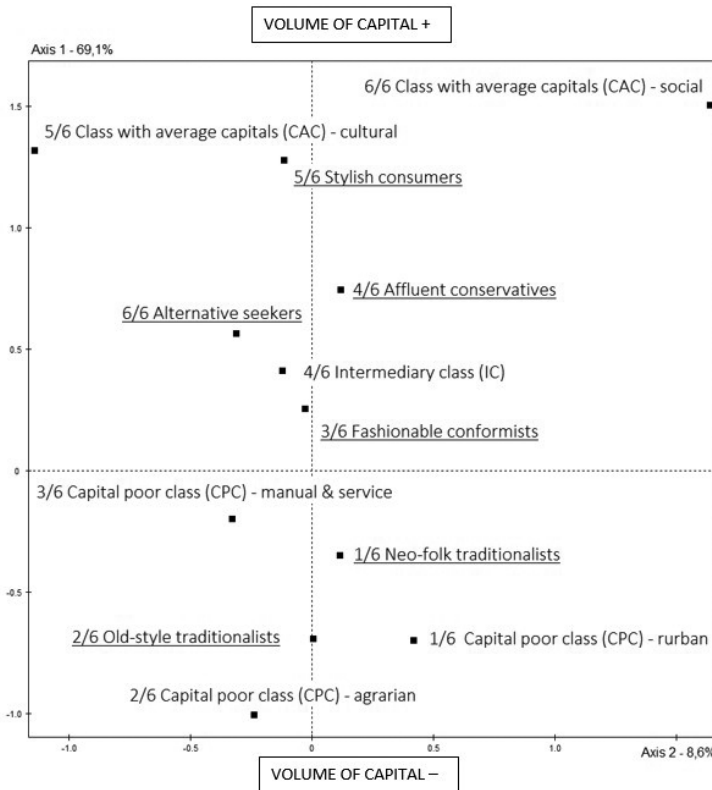
³³ The question was formulated in this way to eliminate the influence of differences in financial resources.

gious/secular, and traditional/modern. The analysis showed that Neo-folk traditionalists (1/6), Old-style traditionalists (2/6) and Affluent conservatives (4/6) manifest a patriarchal, traditional, national, and religious orientation, while Alternative seekers (6/6) are clearly positioned on the egalitarian, modern, cosmopolitan, and secular pole. Along these continuums, Stylish consumers (5/6) and Fashionable conformists (3/6) are positioned closer to Alternative seekers (6/6) than to the other three clusters. However, respondents from clusters (5/6) and (3/6) are not primarily defined in terms of values, but rather in terms of scope and type of consumption. (See Table 16 in Appendix.)

The relation between clusters of objective classes and clusters of lifestyles can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6

The relation between clusters of objective classes and clusters of lifestyles



In addition to practical classifications (favoured by Bourdieu), in our analysis we also relied on discursive classification of social agents (on which Lamont based her analysis). In the examples that follow, one can differentiate between several types of symbolic boundary drawing in contemporary Croatian society.

One type of symbolic boundary drawing relates to the perceived vulgarity of folk pop and turbo-folk³⁴ popular culture.

All right then, I cannot [stomach] those folk pop [singers], that turbo-folk [music], which is (...) an attack on taste and ears, I really cannot [stomach] that. [Those who like turbo-folk] are fortunately not (...) in my surroundings, so that I do not communicate with those who prefer such kind of music. (...) I perceive them as unemancipated persons who are at the level of (...) pure entertainment (...). I take the view that turbo-folk (...) does not ennoble people but makes them stupid in a way. I don't know, it caters for the lowest instincts. I mean, when I see them climbing the tables, breaking things. Lately, they usually play it at weddings here (...), where everybody lets loose, where (...) there is no refinement in pleasure, (...) no fine sensibility, what the French would call raffinement (...) but only noise, shouting, and their need to fit into... [pause] that narrow community of theirs. (Female, 64, tertiary education)

Some symbolic boundaries relate to negative associations towards “the Balkans”:

*[Music that bothers him] *Cajke*³⁵ (...) Once, a long time ago, I would listen to a song or two, but now they really bother me (...) [music] production heavy on accordion, actually everything about that eastern Balkans style. (Male, 29, lower tertiary education)*

However, elite culture can also be negatively evaluated and symbolic boundaries are drawn towards those participating in this type of culture:

Elite culture... snobbery. For me it is snobbery, for me it is always connected with snobbery. (...) I'd say, a sort of social privilege, living in a bubble, and for you everything is fantastic, splendid, magnificent. (Female, 28, tertiary education)

Oh my God... jazz! [laughter] Jesus Christ, once I and my boyfriend went to Zagreb, and returned [home] by car (...) a family friend of my father's took us [in his car]. He and his son were sitting in the front, and I and my boyfriend in the back, and there was that... jazz of some sort. I mean, we freaked out, that was the worst... how

³⁴ The music genre which presented the elements of traditional Serbian and Bosnian music idioms in a quasi-pop style was known in the 1960s-1980s socialist Yugoslavia as “newly composed folk music”. Turbo-folk, on the other hand, is a music fusion genre which took its current form in the early 1990s. It is based on blending the elements of Serbian folk music with other genres such as pop, rock, electronic, and hip-hop. Although popular with teenagers and young adults in different post-Yugoslav countries, including Croatia, it also carries the stigma of “uncultured” music, as well as an association with Serbian nationalism.

³⁵ The term “*cajke*” refers to the Serbian turbo-folk music whose name was derived from an original association with neo-folk female singers in rural or pseudo-rural cheap joints.

long was that drive... four hours... I just can't stand it... (...) Oh my God, I don't know, I really can't describe it to you, there is no beginning and no end (...) Like, if there was a melody of sorts, but just that... and all the time... And somehow, it wasn't even amplified, but the sound was kept down, and then... oh my, horrible, horrible, I always remember that when someone asks me... (...) I really don't know how someone can find that... I mean, maybe it is that I just don't understand it... Maybe they sort of understand it. But I don't know what there is to understand if it sounds the way it sounds. (Female, 26, secondary education)

Some narratives are examples of symbolic boundary drawing towards lifestyles in their entirety:

Listen, those behind the mountains... when they get drunk, what else would they sing but ganga and rera³⁶, and that does not really sit well with us, city dwellers. When I [played music abroad], those foreigners would get drunk and then sing the Beatles [songs] and Frank Sinatra, and these ones over here [people from behind the mountains], when they are drunk, they make faces and you can't understand what it is that they are singing, that is hee-haw, not singing. (...) No, it is not clear to me why they listen to that, but when you see where they were born, then it seems normal that they listen to that. Because that is what it's like, over there in [the name of a place in the hinterland] they don't listen to Mozart. (...) But stab each other with knives and it is well-known what kind of songs are in demand there and what is expected. (...) Those tattooed ones, shaven-headed, muscular, that go to [football] matches every day, and those with unleashed dogs, no one can do anything to them, and they just give you a look of askance, like this... I try to avoid such people in the street. There, that is the only thing that bothers me. It is not at all about their character... he can be the best in the world as a person, but when I see him looking like that, that's it. Also, when I see the women that go with them, pumped up mouths, brand name clothes, it is immediately clear what that is all about. (...) [They listen to] folk pop, yes, that's what it is. What else would they listen to? I have never seen such people in the theatre. (Male, 75, lower tertiary education)

There are also examples of symbolic boundary drawing for ideological reasons:

It is inconceivable to me that... for example, [the name of the singer], [he is] in a category of his own. Such music and someone in my surroundings who would listen to that... [they] could actually not be in my surroundings. [The name of the singer] is unacceptable to me; what is unacceptable there are the messages, not the music itself, the instrumental part, I do not know how to put it exactly into words... that is not problematic... but the messages are. [The name of the singer], I'm prejudiced against

³⁶ Styles of folk singing typical of the Dalmatian hinterland.

him (...) that nationalist guard in the world of music and singing. What kind of prejudices? Well, the prejudices are that these are mostly very traditional people, who are favourably disposed to the fascist regime that was active in these parts. And backward. These people are backward compared to me. (Male, 32, tertiary education).

Although symbolic boundaries are usually drawn by educated elites, some of our examples show that they can be drawn in both directions:

Look, if you are asking me if this is an elitist attitude and if I have such elitist attitudes, perhaps I do to a degree, but not completely. I let "the thousand flowers flower", but very often it seems to me that with that music (...) some value attitudes go hand in hand. Some sort of aggression and political attitudes and intolerance. (...) I do not like to exclude and to be intolerant. (...) And most of such people ... those that I am acquainted with... are less tolerant towards us, towards others. (...) Well, to begin with, that includes some nationalist attitudes. (...) It can also include intolerance towards those who are educated and different, who listen to other kinds of music, and a disparaging view of that, and talking about that in a disparaging way. And then there are also some other attitudes, the religious ones, where they have no tolerance towards those who are not as religious as they are. (Female, 56, PhD)

7. The fourth step: Differential association and social boundaries³⁷

Our next and final step builds on the tradition of the Cambridge Stratification Group (CSG). In this step, we tested whether respondents belonging to identified clusters in social space show 'differential association'. This term refers to the insight that people sharing similar social positions are more likely to connect socially as acquaintances, friends and sexual/marital partners with members of the same group – it represents an expression of the homophily principle according to which "similarity breeds connection" (McPherson et al. 2001). It should also be mentioned that – in addition to social similarity – differential association is brought about by socially sorted settings where people can meet each other (workplaces, places for leisure).

The Cambridge Stratification Group approach investigates relationships of social closeness through patterns of friendship and partnership. The goal is to identify social distance and social similarity between groups. In this approach, the respondents' occu-

³⁷ According to Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168), "Social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and non-material) and social opportunities. They are also revealed in stable behavioral patterns of association, as manifested in connubiality and commensality." Regarding the relationship between the two, Lamont and Molnár (2002: 168), claim that "At the causal level, symbolic boundaries can be thought of as a necessary but insufficient condition for the existence of social boundaries."

pations are the starting point of the analysis aiming to identify their places in the social hierarchy. Through an analysis of marriage and friendship patterns between members of the occupational groups, a hierarchical ordering of the occupations is provided. Following that, the resulting hierarchy is used to investigate other aspects of stratification. In other words, the Cambridge Stratification Group reverses conventional approaches to stratification. Instead of first defining classes and statuses and then investigating interactions between them, they inductively seek the patterns of social interaction determining the nature of the stratification order (Bottero, 2005).

In our view, the described approach to investigating relationships of social closeness is indispensable as a crucial test of any class scheme, since it shows whether the obtained results are merely statistical constructs or indeed represent establishment of social boundaries and distance between social collectivities. The problem, however, is that this approach lacks an account of mechanisms that generate social inequalities. Crucially, the principle of homophily, on which CSG bases its explanations of social distance and similarity, is essentially a psychological mechanism. From a sociological point of view, the key question should be: what brings about social similarity? In other words, in contrast to what the members of the Cambridge Stratification Group claim, differential association is a significant effect of mechanisms generating social inequalities, but not the cause of these inequalities.

Furthermore, it should be said that CSG does not differentiate between interactions and objective social relations, which – in Bourdieu's view – shape interactions to a large degree. Finally, in our analysis of SEE societies, it becomes clear that using occupations as the key indicator of social position does not lead towards a multidimensional class model, since it neglects political, gender, ethnic, religious, and regional dimensions.

In our analysis, we studied the relationships of respondents belonging to six objective class clusters (based on economic, political, social, and cultural capital) with their spouses and three best friends, according to their education and occupation, using Odds ratio analysis.

The results of these analyses are shown in Tables 1–4.

When it comes to education (Table 1 and Table 2), three rather different patterns of association can be noted.³⁸ Respondents from Capital poor class (CPC) clusters mostly marry and establish close friendships with those whose education is elementary, while

³⁸ We performed differential association analyses for spouses and cohabiting partners, as well as for respondents' three best friends. All these analyses revealed similar patterns. Due to space limitations, we only present analyses for one friend (first mentioned by respondents).

such stable relationships with those whose education is higher are relatively rare. This is especially true of respondents from CPC-agrarian (2/6). In contrast, respondents from Class with average capitals (CAC) clusters very rarely establish close friendships or marital/cohabitating relations with those whose education is elementary. As a rule, their spouses/partners have university educations. As could be expected, respondents from CAC-cultural (5/6) are most exclusive in this regard. Intermediary class (IC) shows a distinctive association pattern – respondents from this class rarely establish close relationships with those whose education is elementary but mostly marry and befriend those whose education is secondary.

Table 1

Odds ratio between respondents' class clusters and their spouse's education

Class clusters	Spouse's education		
	Elementary	High school	College
Capital poor class (CPC)—rurban	2.132	1.210	0.285
Capital poor class (CPC)—agrarian	4.127	0.642	0.286
Capital poor class (CPC)—manual & service	1.328	1.421	0.385
Intermediary class (IC)	0.266	1.563	1.324
Class with average capitals (CAC)—cultural	0.169	0.316	7.317
Class with average capitals (CAC)—social	a	0.860	3.080

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

a: no respondents and/or spouses have this educational level

Table 2

Odds ratio between respondents' class clusters and their best friend's education

Class clusters	Friend's education		
	Elementary	High school	College
Capital poor class (CPC)—rurban	1.471	1.731	0.318
Capital poor class (CPC)—agrarian	11.600	0.487	0.127
Capital poor class (CPC)—manual & service	0.509	1.595	0.798
Intermediary class (IC)	0.130	1.766	1.128
Class with average capitals (CAC)—cultural	0.119	0.229	8.722
Class with average capitals (CAC)—social	0.180	0.866	2.031

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

Similar patterns can be noted in the case of occupations (Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3
Odds ratio between respondents' class clusters and their spouse's occupation

Class clusters	Spouse's occupation				
	Farmers and unskilled workers	Industrial workers	Workers in the service sector	Clerks & technicians	Experts & managers
Capital poor class (CPC)—rurban	2.415	1.781	0.722	0.703	0.382
Capital poor class (CPC)—agrarian	3.033	1.594	0.731	0.733	0.254
Capital poor class (CPC)—manual & service	1.017	1.358	1.593	0.832	0.367
Intermediary class (IC)	0.307	0.756	1.376	1.694	0.979
Class with average capitals (CAC)—cultural	a	0.285	0.222	1.154	7.778
Class with average capitals (CAC)—social	0.418	0.528	1.510	0.784	2.521

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

a: no respondents and/or spouse have this type of occupation

Table 4
Odds ratio between respondents' class clusters and their best friend's occupation

Class clusters	Friend's occupation				
	Farmers and unskilled workers	Industrial workers	Workers in service sector	Clerks & technicians	Experts & managers
	0.886	2.003	1.448	0.684	0.369
Capital poor class (CPC)—rurban	7.131	1.121	1.280	0.728	0.084
Capital poor class (CPC)—agrarian	0.726	1.149	1.570	0.968	0.598
Capital poor class (CPC)—manual & service	0.640	0.978	0.635	1.498	1.052
Intermediary class (IC)	0.278	0.207	0.574	0.923	6.080
Class with average capitals (CAC)—cultural	a	0.716	0.878	1.226	1.854

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%,

a: no respondents and/or friend have this type of occupation

Concerning occupations, respondents from CPC-agrarian (2/6) marry and establish close relationships almost exclusively with those who are farmers or unskilled workers. The best friends of respondents from CPC-rurban (1/6) are mostly industrial workers, while their marital partners also include farmers and unskilled workers. In the case of respondents from CPC manual & service (3/6) it is only statistically significant that

they very rarely marry experts and those with managerial or executive roles. Their marital partners and close friends are mostly industrial and service sector workers (however, these relations are not statistically significant). When it comes to respondents from CAC-cultural (5/6) and CAC-social (6/6), they either never or very rarely marry or establish close friendships with farmers and industrial workers. In the case of respondents from CAC-cultural (5/6), there is a severalfold higher probability that their best friends or marital/cohabitating partners will be experts or have managerial or executive roles.

These different patterns of social association indicate that it is possible to group respondents into three classes. Thus, it is evident that Capital poor clusters (CPC) are not only similar in objective classifications based on the volume and composition of social powers (capitals) but also in terms of practical classifications of respondents belonging to them – expressed through evaluations of lifestyles and patterns of differential association. The same can be said for respondents from both Class with average capitals (CAC) clusters. Not only are most of them characterized by lifestyles from clusters of Affluent conservatives (4/6), Stylish consumers (5/6) and Alternative seekers (6/6), but have similar patterns of differential association, i.e., very exclusive close relationships, mostly with university-educated and those with managerial or executive roles. As has already been mentioned, we also identified the existence of an independent and relatively numerous Intermediary class (IC). As we have already concluded, this class has no key resource but uses multiple resources in social struggles (each of which is often a key resource in the class fractions of other classes). Likewise, lifestyles and patterns of differential association of respondents from this class (IC) are different from those of the other two classes (CPC and CAC).

This was confirmed by supplementary analyses of differential association of respondents grouped into the mentioned three classes (CPC, CAC, and IC), regarding spouses and best friends.

The results of these analyses are shown in Tables 5–8.

Table 5
Odds ratio between respondents' classes and their spouse's education

	Spouse's education		
	Elementary	High school	College
Capital poor class (CPC)	7.578	1.061	0.187
Intermediary class (IC)	0.266	1.563	1.324
Class with average capitals (CAC)	0.071	0.492	6.098

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

Table 6

Odds ratio within respondents' classes and their best friend's education

	Friend's education		
	Elementary	High school	College
Capital poor class (CPC)	11.589	1.215	0.223
Intermediary class (IC)	0.130	1.766	1.128
Class with average capitals (CAC)	0.129	0.365	6.001

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

Table 7

Odds ratio within respondents' classes and their spouse's occupation

	Spouse's occupation				
	Farmers and unskilled workers	Industrial workers	Workers in the service sector	Clerks & technicians	Experts & managers
Capital poor class (CPC)	5.253	2.204	0.862	0.636	0.233
Intermediary class (IC)	0.307	0.756	1.376	1.694	0.979
Class with average capitals (CAC)	0.192	0.369	0.781	0.946	5.819

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

Table 8

Odds ratio within respondents' classes and their best friend's occupation

	Friend's occupation				
	Farmers and unskilled workers	Industrial workers	Workers in service sector	Clerks & technicians	Experts & managers
Capital poor class (CPC)	3.184	1.885	1.866	0.676	0.238
Intermediary class (IC)	0.640	0.978	0.635	1.498	1.052
Class with average capitals (CAC)	0.150	0.343	0.662	1.045	4.883

Bold: odds ratio significant at 95%

In sum, our analyses suggest that – taking total social inequality into account – one can distinguish between four classes and seven class fractions³⁹ in contemporary Croatian society: (1) *Capital rich class*, with two fractions – *economic* and *political*; (2) *Class with average capitals*, with *cultural* and *social* fractions; (3) *Intermediary class*, which shares some objective characteristics with Class with average capitals and others with the Capital poor class, but has a distinctive lifestyle and patterns of differential association; and (4) *Capital poor class*, in which one can distinguish between three fractions: *agrarian*, *rurban*, and *manual & service*.⁴⁰

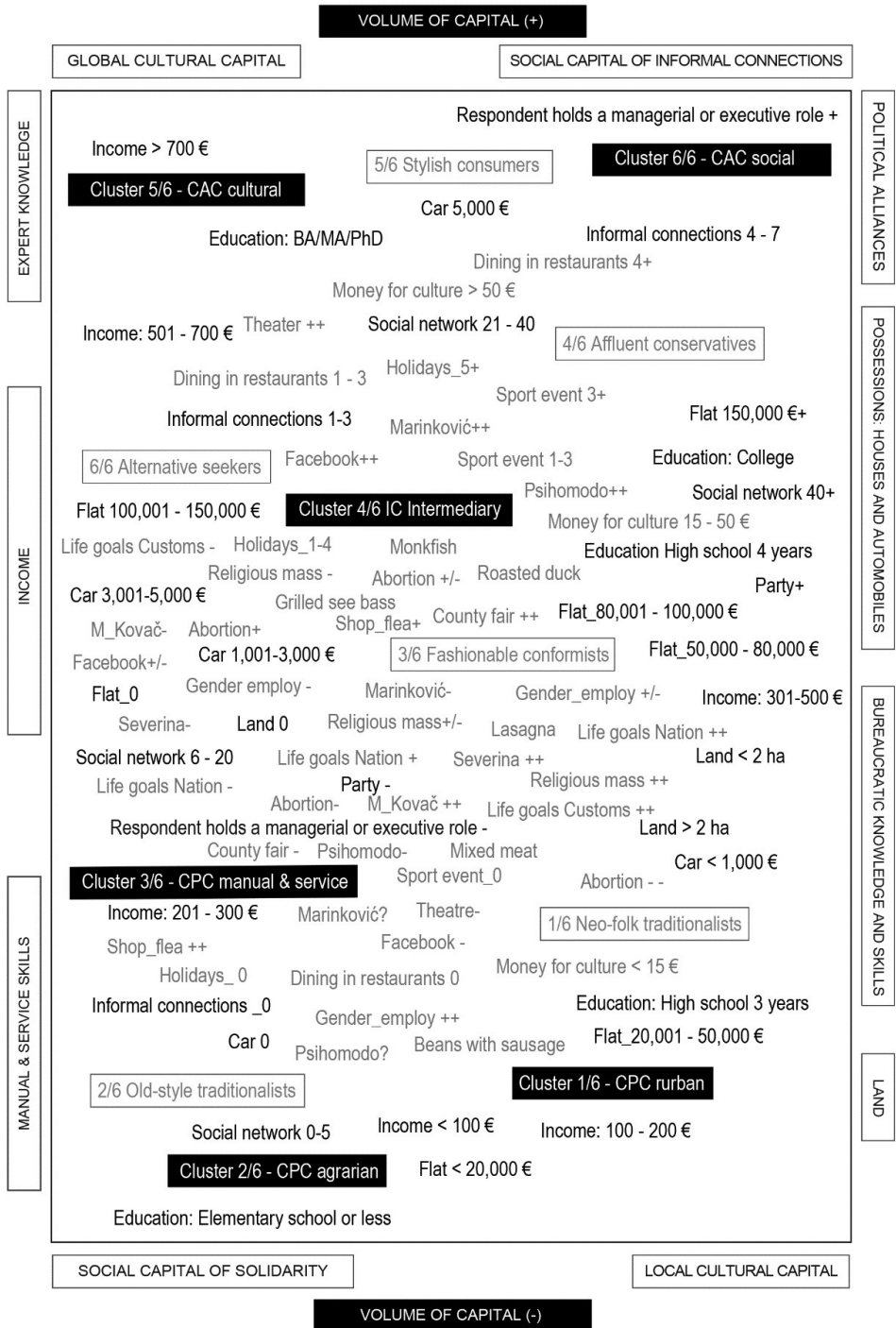
8. The class structure of contemporary Croatian society

Inspired by the synthetic depiction of the class structure in France in Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1984: 128–129), we have tried to present the final results of our analyses in a similar fashion. Consequently, it should be made clear that – although based on MCA results – Figure 7 is not an MCA map. Rather, it is a graphical summary of all the analyses carried out in the four steps presented above – a geometrical depiction of the class structure of contemporary Croatian society. What this synthetic map represents is the interrelation of the material and symbolic aspects of class. Taking the influence of value orientations on the shaping of lifestyles into account, we can say that material and symbolic aspects of class are linked in predictable ways in our model. However, the symbolic aspects are not fully determined by the material ones.

³⁹ In our conception, we speak about “class” when there is an *overlap* between a total volume of capital of social agents (in *objective* classifications, expressed through statistical analyses) and the symbolic and social boundaries that they themselves draw (in their *subjective* classifications). In other words, we speak about classes when agents with a similar total volume of capital have lifestyles and differential association patterns different from those found in other classes. On the other hand, we speak about class fractions in cases where social agents have a similar total volume of capital, but a different composition of capital, and when they draw symbolic but do not draw social boundaries between themselves. In other words, we speak about class fractions when there is a difference in key resources and (at least partially) in lifestyles of agents with a similar total volume of capital but when they nevertheless enter friendships and marriages between themselves. For example, although members of the two fractions (cultural and social) of the Class with average capitals (CAC) differ in composition of capital (cultural capital being more pronounced in one fraction and social in the other), as well as in their lifestyles, friendships and marriages between them nevertheless occur and are much more probable than with members of other classes. The same goes for members of the three fractions (agrarian, rurban and manual & service) of the Capital poor class (CPC).

⁴⁰ The designations “Capital rich class”, “Class with average capitals” and “Capital poor class” relate to class conditions of existence (*condition de classe*). On the other hand, class position (*position de classe*), which indicates the relations between classes, is defined by the social agents’ different places and roles in inequality generating mechanisms (i.e., in exploitative market mechanisms and mechanisms of social closure).

Graph 1
Synthetic depiction of social space and field of lifestyles in Croatia



In Graph 1, in addition to the indicators of active variables of capitals (black labels), we also show supplementary or passive variables, i.e., indicators of respondents' cultural and material consumption, as well as of value orientations (grey labels). The central points of the clusters of objective classes (black rectangles) and lifestyle clusters (white rectangles) are also shown.

In the white rectangles next to the edges of Graph 1, we show key resources used in their practices by the social agents located in different regions of social space. In the case of the cultural fraction of the Class with average capitals (CAC 5/6), the key resources are global cultural capital, expert knowledge, and high income. On the other hand, in the case of the social fraction of the same class (CAC 6/6), the key resources are: social capital of informal connections, political alliances, bureaucratic knowledge and skills, as well as significant possessions of real estate, arable land, and cars. When it comes to the agrarian fraction of the Capital poor class (CPC 2/6), the key resources are arable land and local cultural capital, while in the manual & service fraction of the same class (CPC 3/6) they are manual and service skills, and the social capital of solidarity. Finally, the rurban fraction (CPC 1/6) is characterized by a combination of the resources of the other two CPC fractions. Intermediary class (IC 4/6) uses a combination of resources of all classes, but has less resources than Capital average class (CAC) and more than Capital poor class (CPC).

In reading this synthetic map of the class structure of contemporary Croatian society, one should primarily bear in mind that, according to Bourdieu (1986), the structure and distribution of different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represent the immanent structure of the social world, inscribed in the very reality of that world, conditioning the chances of success of social practices.⁴¹

Consequently, what our synthetic map primarily shows is not an arrangement of social agents and their practices but an arrangement of forces (social powers, i.e., capitals) active in social space, thus also indicating social mechanisms that have brought social agents to their current positions. Accordingly, *class structure* is not an arrangement of individuals or groups,⁴² but *a set of objective and relatively stable relations* between populous aggregates, differing in the volume and composition of capital, as well as in key resources used in struggles in social fields.⁴³ It is also very important to note

⁴¹ It is of utmost importance to understand that structures condition practices but do not determine them in Bourdieu's model. In numerous illustrations provided by Bourdieu, it is evident that it is equally important what cards you are dealt and how you use them.

⁴² Bearing this in mind, it becomes clear that approaches which include neither an analysis of class generating mechanisms nor of objective (conflict) relations between classes prove to be a caricature of class analysis.

⁴³ Based on insights about these forces active in social space, it is relatively easy to reconstruct the distribution and hierarchy of occupations in contemporary Croatian society, but the reverse is simply not possible.

that these are objective *conflict* relations – between those who use inequality generating mechanisms and those who are exploited or excluded, because their interests are directly opposed. In light of this, it becomes clear that a map of the class structure of contemporary Croatian society also shows (and must show) the potential lines of conflict and cooperation within social space.

9. Concluding remarks: on existential class and a post-Bourdieuian approach

The analysis of social inequalities presented in this article has resulted in a new conceptualization of class, based on *general social inequality*, manifested in the differences in the conditions of existence. This is why we have designated the identified aggregates of social agents “existential classes”. It is important to emphasize here that the mentioned differences in the conditions of existence result from *the inequalities in social powers* that social agents have at their disposal. In other words, these differences in existential conditions – i.e., in social powers – result from the agents’ place and role in the mechanisms generating social inequalities.

As emphasized at the outset, the mechanisms generating social inequalities in hybrid societies are intertwined, which makes class analysis in them highly complex. However, the analysis presented in this article has shown that the level of social powers and inequalities can be measured by the indicators of economic, political, social and cultural capital, no matter how social agents were led to the class conditions of existence they find themselves in (i.e., by applying or undergoing exploitation, by some of the mechanisms of social closure, or by any combination of both types of mechanisms).

Classes conceptualized in this way differ among themselves primarily in whether their members can keep the practical necessities of everyday life at distance (and to which degree). As we have already stated elsewhere (Cvetičanin et al., 2021: 966), such “existential classes” are still far from classes in the Marxist sense of the word (i.e., combatant, real groups of individuals moved by the consciousness of the same conditions of existence and interests), as well as from Bourdieu’s understanding of social class.⁴⁴ However, it is beyond doubt that “existential classes” are much more than pure statistical constructs.

⁴⁴ According to Bourdieu (1987), in the process of their objectification, classes must pass through four phases. The first one refers to the formation of collectivities through “antagonistic” consumption practices which lifestyles are based on. In Bourdieu’s conception, these practices take the form of “primitive classification”. In the second phase, collectivities are named (i.e., codified), and thereby ascended to the level of discourse. What follows in the third phase is the establishment of objective social classification (e.g., through educational credentials). At the fourth (and highest) level of objectivization, social collectivities become a part of official classifications. They are inscribed in laws, i.e., at this level the state imposes the obligatory principles of classification. One should also bear in mind that this entire process of transition “from theoretical group to practical group” needs to be accompanied by the activities of political mobilization. In Bourdieu’s (1987: 8) words, “political work [is] required to impose a principle of vision and division of the social world”.

As can be seen from the results of the analyses presented in this article and in Cvetičanin et al. (2021), belonging to existential classes indeed shapes the practices of social agents, including the most intimate ones (such as the choice of close friends or sexual partners). This is what makes them an active force in their lives. However, to become social and political collective agents, existential classes would need to be exposed to new methods of mobilization. In the current social circumstances (at the global level), the attempts at political mobilization invoking the “working class” against the “bourgeoisie” – as in the first half of the 20th century – simply do not function anymore.

Since they are based primarily on the similarity in the volume and type of social powers, existential classes are more heterogeneous than occupation-based classes. They also lack institutional foundation. Rather, they are classes-in-the-making, and it is therefore not surprising that their members mostly lack class self-identification. However, as the results of our analyses have shown, what is not missing is “class recognition”, i.e., the identification of others as similar or not similar. That goes for both the evaluation of their lifestyles (i.e., for the drawing of symbolic boundaries) and the establishment of permanent ties such as friendship and marriage/partnership (i.e., for the drawing of social boundaries).

We consider the mentioned “class recognition”, which is an expression of the social agents’ practical classifications, to be highly important for the establishment of classes as collective agents. Moreover, we argue that “class self-identification” (usually taken to be the essential indicator of the existence of classes in class analysis) is in fact unreliable⁴⁵, and should be replaced by “class recognition of others”.

Where social agents’ lifestyles differ significantly, even if they are in the same existential position, the likelihood of collective action is small, which indicates a strong influence of the symbolic on practices. Consequently, a reductionist, purely economic class analysis, which neglects the symbolic aspects of class, can neither recognize nor understand new class realities in post-socialist societies in South-East Europe.

Relying on what has been said, we are now in position to delineate the essential characteristics of the analysis based on our notion of existential class.⁴⁶ This type of analy-

⁴⁵ As shown in Beverly Skeggs’s (1997) work, (female) members of the working class invest great efforts into not being recognized as such. The stigma of working-class membership, analysed by Sennet and Cobb (1993), is also widespread today in post-socialist societies (in contrast to the socialist period). For this and similar reasons, “class recognition of others” proves to be a more reliable way of “class self-identification”.

⁴⁶ It should be said that the preconditions for transcending the limitations of occupation-based class analysis are already present in Bourdieu’s conceptualization of class (Bourdieu, 1966, 1984, 1985, 1987). This is already evident in the well-known definition of social class in his *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984: 106), in which he takes numerous social factors and relations between them into account. Nevertheless, Bourdieu continued to use occupation as the main indicator of class, which resulted in numerous analytical problems, as pointed out by Brubaker (1985: 766–767).

sis: (1) takes into account influences on social inequalities from all social fields (and not only from the economic one); (2) enables studying *class formation* through a detailed analysis of inequality generating mechanisms, as well as the analysis of the *class structure* resulting from this process; (3) represents a conflict and relational type of analysis (as different from descriptive and gradational occupation-based class analysis); (4) insists that class can be employed as an analytical instrument only when there is an overlap between objective scientific classifications obtained by statistical methods and practical classifications of social agents; (5) instead of class self-identification, an emphasis is on class recognition of others; and (6) includes the neglected dimensions of ethnic and religious affiliation into class analysis, as well as regional and gender differences, without trying to take their place.⁴⁷

One of the important advantages of our analysis, based on existential classes, is that it enables the study of all types of modern societies (including socialist and post-socialist ones). Bearing in mind the differences in the conditions of existence (*condition de classe*), as well as in unequal and conflict relations in the mechanisms of social differentiation (*position de classe*), socialist societies can also be characterized as class-divided societies. What was different in them, in relation to capitalist societies, was the key role of the mechanisms of social closure (along the party line) and a different order of capitals. Namely, the dominant principle of differentiation in them was political rather than economic capital (as in capitalist societies). For the place of the secondary principle of differentiation in socialist societies, the struggles took place between the bearers of political and social capital (i.e., old party cadres) and those who relied on education and cultural capital (so-called “techno-managers”).

Speaking about our post-Bourdieuian approach, it should be emphasized that the realities of societies in South-East Europe in the 2020s are essentially different from those analysed by Bourdieu in France almost half a century ago. To be able to analyse class in radically different circumstances, a fundamental revision of his conception of class analysis was in order. Specifically, neoliberal capitalism has today become a norm at the global level and globalization has made inadequate the analyses taking place solely within “national containers”. Furthermore, as evident from our analyses⁴⁸, the principles of social differentiation in post-socialist societies in South-East Europe differ significantly from those analysed by Bourdieu.

For the following reasons, we define our approach as post-Bourdieuian:

⁴⁷ It should be emphasized that it was not our intention to put class analysis above the analysis of race, ethnic and gender relations, nor to negate the need for such types of analysis. Quite the opposite, we wanted to point out the intersectionality and inseparability of different structural mechanisms in generating social inequalities.

⁴⁸ See footnote 14.

(1) first of all – although this might seem paradoxical – because we consistently operationalized Bourdieu’s definition of social classes, according to which they are shaped by the influences of multiple social factors (which his continued reliance on occupation as the key indicator of class cannot capture); (2) because we specify the key mechanisms generating inequalities in all social fields and consequently in social space (exploitative market mechanisms, mechanisms of social closure, and their intertwining), something which is insufficiently theorized in Bourdieu’s conception; (3) because in the analysis of class divisions and in the construction of social space in South-East European societies – in addition to economic and cultural capital – we also include political and social capital, which play an exceptionally important role in these societies as principles of social differentiation; (4) because we conceptualize the principle of composition of capital in a different way, approaching it in our model as a combination of different types and subtypes of capital, with the dominance of one of them as a key resource; (5) because we introduce into analysis the subtypes of social capital (“social capital of informal connections” and “social capital of solidarity”), as well as of cultural capital (“global” and “local”), which our analyses have shown to be active in social space in SEE societies; (6) because we have included into the study of establishment of class boundaries the analysis of “differential association” (through marriage and friendship patterns) as crucial for strengthening symbolic and establishing social boundaries; (7) because, in our analyses, we took into account the global “openness” of social fields due to which social agents and institutions from other countries also take part in field struggles on an equal or superior footing; (8) because we also took into consideration the diminished level of autonomy of social fields and their being “colonized” by economic principles of hierarchization (everywhere in the world) and on top of that by political principles of hierarchization (in SEE societies); (9) because we included value orientations into lifestyle analysis, since they are shown to be not only the underpinnings of cultural and material consumption but also a source of symbolic struggles taking place in SEE societies; and finally (10) because we have shown that Bourdieu’s conception of symbolic violence does not function in the same way in post-socialist SEE societies.⁴⁹

In sum, it is easy to conclude that our post-Bourdiesian approach differs from other types of analysis that are designated as such (by scholars such as Boltanski, Thévenot, Chiapello, Lamont, Lahire). Specifically, the differences between them notwithstanding, all the mentioned authors implicitly point to the diminished influence of class, by emphasizing individual choices and trajectories, and/or moral judgements which are not determined by social class.

⁴⁹ Precisely, our research results indicate that the members of the Capital poor class in SEE societies do not consider elite culture to be better than theirs. Quite the opposite, as shown in the examples from our qualitative research, the interviewees often expressed their abhorrence of elite cultural forms, as well as a belief in superiority of their own culture.

In contrast, our post-Bourdieuian approach puts an emphasis exactly on researching new class determined social realities, which – under the influences of megatrends of globalization, digitalization and neoliberal capitalism – differ significantly not only from class divisions of the 19th and early 20th centuries but also from those that characterized social realities analysed by Bourdieu in the second half of the 20th century.

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Klasa u suvremenom hrvatskom društvu: postbourdieovska analiza

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Sažetak

U ovom članku, na temelju primarnih kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih podataka, analiziramo mnogostruke mehanizme koji proizvode nejednakosti u suvremenom hrvatskom društvu i višedimenzionalnu klasnu strukturu koja iz njih proizlazi. Naš je pristup potaknut koncepcijom Pierrea Bourdieua, koju smo znatno revidirali i prilagodili proučavanju postsocijalističkih društava u jugoistočnoj Europi. U tekstu prikazujemo četiri analitička koraka koja su nas vodila do koncepcije sveukupne društvene nejednakosti kao nejednakosti u društvenim moćima. Ti koraci uključuju: (1) konstrukciju društvenog prostora u Hrvatskoj, (2) identifikaciju ključnih generatora društvenih nejednakosti (eksploatacijskih tržišnih mehanizama i mehanizama društvenog zatvaranja), (3) analizu životnih stilova i povlačenja simboličkih granica te (4) analizu diferencijalnog povezivanja i uspostavljanja društvenih granica.

Rezultati pokazuju da se, uzimajući u obzir sveukupnu društvenu nejednakost, u suvremenom hrvatskom društvu mogu uočiti četiri klase i sedam klasnih frakcija: (1) Klasa bogata kapitalima, s dvije frakcije – ekonomskom i političkom; (2) Klasa srednje razine kapitala, s kulturnom i socijalnom frakcijom; (3) Međuklasa, koja dijeli neke objektivne karakteristike s Klasom srednje razine kapitala, a druge s Klasom siromašnom kapitalima, ali ima distinktivni stil života i obrasce diferencijalnog povezivanja te (4) Klasa siromašna kapitalima, u kojoj je moguće razlučiti tri frakcije: agrarnu, rurbanu i manualno-uslužnu. U završnim razmatranjima donosimo sintetski prikaz klasne strukture suvremenog hrvatskog društva, raspravljamo o novom pojmu egzistencijalne klase (konceptualiziranom na temelju naših teorijskih i empirijskih analiza) te objašnjavamo najvažnije značajke vlastitog postbourdieovskog pristupa.

Ključne riječi: klasa, sveukupna društvena nejednakost, višedimenzionalni model klasne analize, postbourdieovski pristup, Hrvatska.