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Mulaj, Isa and Matoshi, Ruzhdi

International University of Struga

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# When the Left gets it Right: landslide victories in the U.S. presidential and Kosovo parliamentary elections

Isa Mulaj<sup>1)</sup>, Ruzhdi Matoshi<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1)</sup> Institute for Economic Policy Research and Analyses, Pristina, Republic of Kosovo

<sup>2)</sup> Faculty of Political Sciences, UBT College, Pristina, Republic of Kosovo

e-mail: [isa.mulaj@gmail.com](mailto:isa.mulaj@gmail.com)

[ruzhdi.matoshi@ubt-uni.net](mailto:ruzhdi.matoshi@ubt-uni.net)

## Abstract

*In politics and political economy, the question of supporting the right or the left ideology has come to the judgment of what actually should be done to get rid of something and push for better needed changes rather than being a kind of shaped or consistent ideologist. The November, 2020 U.S. presidential and the February, 2021 Kosovo general parliamentary elections provide an interconnected experience. With his unpredictable foreign policy juxtaposed to the slogan “America First” and “Make America Great Again”, the U.S. 45<sup>th</sup> President, the right-wing Donald Trump, pursued an isolationist, non-interventionist, and protectionist agenda. On October 4, 2019, he appointed the U.S. ambassador to Germany, Richard Grenell, as a special envoy to broker the talks between Kosovo and Serbia. Grenell saw his efforts not compatible with the left-wing Prime Minister (PM) of Kosovo, Albin Kurti who was toppled out of power on March 25, 2020, by a no-confidence vote motion of over 2/3 members of the Kosovo Assembly. The Kurti caretaker government continued until June 03 when it was replaced by Avdullah Hoti as PM. On September 4, 2021, the U.S. President brokered the talks between Kosovo and Serbia at the White House in signing the agreement for their economic normalization. Many sought it as an attempt by the Trump administration to make an achievement in foreign policy before the U.S. presidential elections. Donald Trump lost to the left-wing Joe Biden. The wind of the left for a massive change followed in Kosovo on February 14, 2021, when Albin Kurti’s party won over 50% of parliamentary votes. This paper demonstrates how the left is now left not to turn right but to get the right things to do, in the U.S. as well as in Kosovo, and did the Covid-19 played a role in the outcome?*

**Keywords:** politics, left-right, foreign policy, migration, elections, economics.

**JEL classification:** F53, N42, P16.

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## **Introduction**

Political ideology matters in shaping human organization and activity in the social hierarchy. Since the grouping into left-right was recognized and accepted, the political spectrum has evolved in the course of historical developments. The prominence of one versus another has come into play within a country and abroad, by also generating a middle alternative as *the center* with its subdivisions of center-left and center-right. This political spectrum continues to dominate the 21st century at a national, regional, and global scale but not as single at a given time. The wave of one in a certain country may inspire other political parties abroad to use it as a model for coming into power. It came as a reflection of international relations and globalization. Thus, the political ideology today cannot be limited within a state as it can be imposed beyond the borders either by pressure, inspiration, or support. During the 20th century, for some 70 years respectively until 1990, the world has been polarized into two major blocks, capitalism and communism.

Political divisions, especially in democratic societies, appear to be caused by the circumstances and the challenges the society is facing, or they prevail depending on power and control. That is how the voting behavior among the population is influenced, which takes into consideration its interests on the individual, family, group, and party basis. However, these perceptions are hardly followed by a majority of the voters today. The unprecedented development in information technology and overwhelming news, including fake ones, are having a profound impact. If by definition and perception the political right is identified, among others, with nationalism, the Covid-19 pandemic associated with lockdowns, quarantine, restrictions on travel and freedom, certainly led to landslide political wins of the left. The most notable example is the U.S. presidential election, general parliamentary elections in Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Albania, all of which were held during the pandemic. The general public worldwide, apart from being deceived by half-truths that the pandemic is not as dangerous for health as it is being presented or exaggerated as being so, felt as if a hidden or public elite want to reduce the population and restrict migration. As most of them saw their freedom severely restricted by the governments,

they thought that voting for a political party that promotes populism is the way out of the crisis. Given its global outreach, the pandemic might have affected the change in perception about internationalism in a positive way after egocentrism and conservatism consequences were experienced. Nevertheless, the left-wing government of Kosovo was toppled by the no-vote confidence from the right-wing opposition and center-right coalition members of the parliament (MP) in the middle of pandemic and lockdown, on March 25, 2020, out of the fear that Kosovo was jeopardizing the relations with the U.S. for not unconditionally following the orders of the U.S. president special envoy Richard Grenell. Once Donald Trump lost to Joe Biden, the constitutional court of Kosovo toppled the government on December 21, 2020. In the forthcoming parliamentary election of February 14, 2021, the *Vetëvendosje* (Albanian for “self-determination”, abbreviated as VV), secured the needed majority of MPs with a fraction of LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo) who had defected to VV. The question which this article raises and investigates the answer, is why the voters decided to bring into power the one who earlier put them in lockdown, or they thought it is time to be in a similar line and time with the American voters, turning left respectively?

### **Theories of the left-right political spectrum**

In politics, the term, division, and meaning of the left-right originated from the events of the 1789 French Revolution. It all happened from the place or position among those who rallied behind different or opposing orientations inside the national assembly, then their ideologies and attitudes began to emerge as more separate and consolidated. Those who supported the king and the religion were lined up and seated to the right, and those who sided with the revolution to the left (Bobbio, 1996; Hodgson, 2018). Since then, scholars have been exploring and promoting what could be judged as left and right. In broad terms, the political left-wing can be described as an ideology standing for freedom, equality, populism, progress, liberalism, and internationalism. Right-wing is more related to conservatism, hierarchy, authority, tradition, or relying on the rules and identity of a nation that can be associated with nationalism (Heywood, 2015). The political ideology is then reflected to economics for materializing the belief of left or right. In this way, the left generally promotes higher taxes, more economic equality, social programs, state intervention and regulation, and have some industries in public or state ownership. Right-wing economics adheres to lower taxes, less spending on social benefits, higher-income differences, and even

business monopolies. As this gave rise to inequalities in terms of economic welfare during the capitalist development in the 19th century, Karl Marx devoted his life work to the criticism of the capitalist system, first through the pamphlet *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* in 1848, then with his voluminous masterpiece *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* which would become the core source of denouncing the economic right-wing (capitalism) in favor of alternative left-wing (communism).

In practice, the first most known case of communism was the short-lived (March 18 – May 28, 1871) Paris Commune after France was defeated in the Franco-Prussian War. With the French emperor Napoleon III captured by the Prussians, the communists or those who opposed the authority of the government, began, among others, to employ the concepts of Marx against capitalism and anti-religious views by even executing the archbishop of Paris. Both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels praised that first example of communism (Rougerie, 2004). By a similar cause or war with the German Empire during WWI, the imperial Russian government was overthrown as it appeared to lose the war, and the emperor Tsar Nicolas II abdicated on March 15, 1917. Once the communists seized power, the Tsar was executed together with his wife and children on the night of July 16-17, 1918 (Massie, 2012). Communism gained control of Russia and incorporated into it another 14 republics in what would become known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or shortly as the Soviet Union. It became the first wholesale and largest left-wing, and the course it was about to take was more or less known. The Paris Commune served an initial lesson on what to do. First, the toppling of the emperor which in France was captured by the Prussians, while in Russia the Tsar was executed. Second, just like the French communists executed the archbishop of Paris, so did the Russians for the “holy man” and mystic Grigori Rasputin on December 17, 1916, i.e. even before the Tsar himself got executed. The inspiration behind the crackdown by the communists against the emperor and religious leaders came from the Marxist concept that the proletarians should take down the monarchy by force and that religion is opium for the people (Raines, 2002).

To consolidate their power through a one-party political system, the communists adopted the policy of red terror by expropriating and prosecuting the capitalists, establishing state ownership over the means of production, and making the economy run by the state. Apart from the Soviet Union, the communists were committed to export their ideology and practice into other

countries. After WWI, Germany became a ground in which the Soviets supported the so-called “Soviet Republics” such as: Saxony Soviet Republic (November 13 – May 11, 1923), Bavarian Soviet Republic (April 6 – May 3, 1919), Bremen Soviet Republic (January 10 – February 04, 1919) (Llewellyn and Thompson, 2019). The communist leaders or revolutionaries and the heads of these Soviet Republics within Germany were all Jewish (Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches, Erich Mühsam, Ernst Toller, Paul Levi, Gustav Landauer, and Eugen Levine). Given that Bavaria was (and still is) the largest German federal state, it was not a historical accident why it became the birthplace of National Socialism. After losing through nullification by the Allies large territories gained in Russia by the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Germany experienced a national trauma by witnessing how the Jewish revolutionaries were establishing Soviet states on her soil. That is when and why the Nazis and Adolf Hitler in particular, coined the term “Judeo-Bolshevism”, which the mainstream history still neglects to properly explore as a fuel out of humiliation for the Holocaust and crimes against humanity in Eastern Europe committed during WWII by the Nazi Germany.

Before WWII, far-right moves were increasingly gaining popularity in some large countries of Europe. The Spanish Civil War broke in 1936 between the far-right and the left, namely nationalists and communists, over the power and control. The war drew in the great powers in support of the warring factions on both sides; Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy supported the nationalists while the Soviet Union along with three capitalist countries (France, UK, USA, and volunteers from other countries as internationalists) backed the republicans or the communists. The nationalists won and Francisco Franco became a far-right dictator but remained non-belligerent in WWII. Far-right powers in Germany, Italy, and Japan established the Axis Powers for their claims through war not only against communism but also against capitalist countries. Following the defeat of the Axis in WWII, communism spread in Central and Southeastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and even to a country in America (Cuba). The Cold War between capitalism and communism had begun and it will last until 1990 when the communist block fell and the Soviet Union disintegrated. Consequently, former communist countries abandoned the one-party system in favor of political pluralism, private ownership, and market economy, though some of them such as China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam continue to be ruled by the communist or one party.

Regardless of the transition to democracy and market economy, the division between left-right not only remained and was further diversified in profile to the present day. The division can

be found in any country of political pluralism, with a mixture between them as the *center*. Despite subdivisions and the merge as center-wing in the political spectrum, Willy and Russell (2011) showed that the overwhelming majority of the population in most countries still can find themselves on the left-right orientation. There is, however, a difference between the voters who understand the ideology of one wing to fit in, and those who do not but look for the nearest party's position just as the consumers look for certain goods in the closest store to satisfy their needs. The difference between left-right, as practical developments often show, is not so clear cut. Once the parties propagating their ideology and commitments come into power, they are more likely to pursue the objectives that are more practical in responding to the circumstances rather than the cause of what they stand for or are known. That depends a lot on general conditions in society, voters' behavior, programs of political parties, and even international developments. What else can decide the determination of the voters and the outcome of results?

Jansen, *et al.* (2013) used the data of 188 surveys for 15 Western European countries, the U.S., and Australia to investigate how much social class can explain the voting preferences and the choice of a political party to the left or the right, covering a period of 45 years (1960-2005). Social political classes were found to have been gradually weakened in their choice between left and right to the point of convergence, though some differences remained, especially in the U.S. where the gap was larger. Jacobsmeier (2015) found the race in the U.S. not to have a direct but indirect impact on voters' perceptions regarding the ideology of black candidates as well as the black voters. Traditionally, the blacks in the U.S. have voted more for the Democrats (left) than for the Republicans (right). Even the first black or the 44th US President (Barack Obama) who served two mandates (2009-2017) came from the democratic camp. A far more important perception and choice of the voters in the U.S. is the economic conditions and wellbeing through what is known as a *reward-punishment hypothesis*, or the national and individual view of economic performance, than in any other country. The economic factor in the U.S., as Lewis-Beck, *et al.* (2007) maintained, is that the voters are more likely to look after their share in the whole pie or national economic interests. One of the key economic factors to be judged by the voters is what reforms the party or the President will introduce, in particular the fiscal policy and the rate of taxes. In principle, the Republicans being conservative charge smaller tax rates for businesses, while the Democrats as more socially oriented are in favor of higher rates. Although an important determinant, economic affairs alone are not the ones to decide the outcome of

elections. For example, Franks and Scherr (2015) found moral foundations and fairness as a key to having predicted the victory of Barack Obama over Mitt Romney in the 2012 U.S. presidential election.

Like in the U.S., in the Western European countries, economic and social-cultural dimensions play a significant role in ideological differences between left-right politics. Lachat (2017) who analyzed 28 elections in five West European countries (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, UK) since the 1990s found that the ideological relation of far-left usually opposes economic liberalism and is in favor of populist welfare reforms instead. The self-placement of the citizens in the right-wing tend to oppose more immigration and be reserved in their view towards cultural liberalism or multiculturalism. That is why right-wing ideology is associated with nationalism as an opposition to the left. Oeschi and Rennwald (2018) however, went on to distinguish a tripolar division or the third pole by referring to the radical right as a separate ideology that has been on the rise since 2000 until 2015 by securing 12% of the votes in ten countries of Western Europe and twenty national elections. From an economic point of view, the radical right along with the center-right competes for the votes of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Apart from their division, the political spectrum has different approaches and behavior to complain against certain issues. Kostelka and Rovny (2019) analyzed the likelihood of protests in mature and new democracies (post-communist countries). Contrary to expectations of associating the left with more bias to protests, they demonstrate that it is more the cultural domain and historical legacy that acts as a primary driving force of protests. In Eastern Europe or new democracies, the right-wing was found to participate more in the protests, most likely because cultural liberalism was still being preserved by the right for national identity. While communism as an ideology of large or whole left has generally suppressed the religion, in democracy this phenomenon continues to be viewed just as it was in the offspring of the left-right division in the 1789 French assembly; the right-wing today is more religious and the left-wing is less almost anywhere. Van Prooijena and Kuijpera (2020) through an online sample of 424 individuals in the U.S. revealed that religious fundamentalism and political extremism are in line with worldwide beliefs or ideals, and not so much to specific right-wing division within a country.

By definition and what we have understood so far, the left-wing is a populist ideology or the one that can mobilize more the people as it promotes freedom, equality, and liberalism.



However, despite in principle being considered as a classless ideology, populism can also take place in a right-wing form by combining political ideology with populist rhetoric. Right-wing populism promotes and adopts the policy of stronger control on immigration (Akkerman, 2003). It does not come into power accidentally or come out in practice from a philosophical perspective but has a cause behind it. After years of rule in the White House by the Democrats, one of the major rhetoric in the presidential campaign of Donald Trump was anti-immigration and anti-free trade, by which he was characterized as the right-wing populist (Neiwert, 2016). The rhetoric against immigration was also exploited by the right-wing UK Independence Party (UKIP), becoming a cause that led to “Brexit” or the withdrawal of the UK from the EU. And so was the rhetoric of anti-immigration by the Alliance of Hungarian Solidarity (Fidesz–KDNP Party Alliance) that strengthened the position of Viktor Orban as the PM of Hungary after the 2018 parliamentary election. The U.S. was the largest recipient of immigrants for a very long time, thus the right-wing populism of anti-immigration rhetoric might have played a role in Europe, namely in the UK, Hungary, and Germany. In 2014-15, Europe was being flooded by massive waves of refugees from the conflicts in the Middle East, which the UKIP exploited as a cause to blame the EU on immigration policies as the refugees could also enter the UK. Hungary was in a different position as a gateway of the refugees, thus willy-nilly the right wing-populism with anti-immigration rhetoric would make sense. The rest of the right and far-right parties in the EU countries also recorded large gains. For example, Alternative for Germany (AfD) established in April 2013, described as a far-right party, narrowly did not pass the threshold of 5% and enter the Bundestag, but as the crisis of immigration intensified, in the 2017 election the AfD won 94 seats in the Bundestag, becoming the third-largest party in Germany.

Apart from ideology, individual perceptions, causes, and decisions to go for a certain wing in the political spectrum, it should be taken into consideration the role of modern technology, communication, fast news, devices available, and social media to the largest part of the population on individual bases which have become a powerful tool to shape the voters’ perception and decision than ever before. Given that the primary objective of a party is to win or come into power, it does not refrain from doing so with dishonest approaches, deceiving, fake news, and other non-legal means. Donald Trump won in 2016 amid allegations of Russian interference in the U.S. elections by discrediting his democrat opponent Hillary Clinton through Wikileaks and publishing of her e-mails. In a sample of 353 individuals, Calvilo, *et al.* (2021) investigated how fake and true

news influence the course of an individual's political attitudes, to find that the participants were biased to consume more of their time in the headlines about their political ideology. In the digital era of industrial-scale and miscellaneous news, fewer hours of reading was associated with better judgment.

### **November 3, 2020 U.S. presidential election**

Before assuming office in the White House after the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, there were already many issues that Donald Trump has been criticized for, the core of which was the rhetoric against immigration to the U.S. from majority Muslim countries, promoting right-wing populism, nationalism, protectionism, and isolationism. All this was preceded by the election slogan "Make America Great Again." He lost the popular vote to the Democrat candidate Hillary Clinton but won electoral votes. The first allegation against the victory of Trump was the alleged involvement of the Russian government through the project code-named Lakhta, with the primary objective of not directly supporting Mr. Trump but to harm the campaign of his rival Mrs. Clinton through fake news and her e-mail leaks (Schick, 2020). A more based criticism of the Trump administration came in the course of the policies he was pursuing and the reforms implemented. Even within his administration some of his officials were not so proud of the whole mission. Two of the most important U.S. secretaries resigned from their positions during his mandate, namely that of the Defense (James Mattis) and the Secretary of State (Rex Tillerson) respectively. As he came from the world of business and being right-wing shaped, Trump lowered the corporate tax rate to 21% in 2017 at the time when the U.S. economy was experiencing the longest economic expansion. A trade war with China led to the rise of the trade deficit in the U.S. At the national economy level, increased government spending along with tax cuts increased the fiscal deficit by nearly 50% in 2019 (Long and Stein, 2019). The worst was yet to come during the Covid-19 pandemic where the national debt also rose considerably, with the debt-to-GDP ratio reaching the highest ratio since post World War II. The mission "Make America Great Again" appeared to have contributed more for great powers to become greater as it offered them more maneuvering space in global affairs during the U.S. policy of isolationism and protectionism. The only notable attempt to record something in foreign policy came somewhere by the end of his mandate, and that by unilaterally imposing an agreement between Kosovo and Serbia on September 4, 2021. The

failures in foreign policy inspired a different course in the U.S. history of administration, and the alternative was a candidate from the Democratic Party. It was not so important which candidate will be elected as it was more a matter of just removing Donald Trump who had got many things wrong. It was time to get the things right, and that right came from the left-wing.

Most American voters were interested in getting things right by voting for the left candidate Joe Biden. He won 306 out of 538 electoral and became the 46th U.S. President by defeating the incumbent republican Donald Trump. Although the number of voters increases steadily in the U.S. presidential election, Joe Biden broke the record of winning over 81 million popular votes. And it was not a matter of an increased population or more voters, but the highest voter turnout the U.S. has seen for over a century (Park, 2020). The result appears to have influenced the simultaneous election for the 2020 U.S. Senate, where the Democrats won three seats at the expense of three lost by Republicans, but the latter still holds the majority by 50 versus 48 seats. However, in the U.S. House of Representatives election, the result for a total of 435 seats was different. In the last election, the Democrats held the lead 53.4% and now lost 2.6%, dropping to a narrow lead majority of 50.8% or a total of 13 seats. Here, the result has gone righter for the right-wing (Republicans) who won a net of 14 seats or an increase by 2.9% to reach 47.7% of the total. The remaining share of votes went for the Libertarians who lost the only seat they had in the last elections, thus remained without a representation in the House of Representatives.

What these elections, for the U.S. president, in particular, may suggest? The left winning the presidency both through popular and Electoral College votes have mainly come as a reaction to oust Donald Trump rather than of many voters switching sides by betraying their ideology, in this case, many Republicans were opposed to reelecting him as their president. It proves the hypothesis of “reward-punishment.” Most of the public, no matter what their ideology was fond of or supported, realized that Trump was not appropriate to serve the second term when he refused to confess the loss and his supporters attempted to overturn the defeat by attacking the U.S. Capitol building. Another lesson why the left-wing should have won, which was welcomed in many parts of the world, especially in Kosovo. The next section will discuss why.

## **The U.S. wind of left-wing on February 14, 2021 Kosovo parliamentary election**

The people of Kosovo in general welcomed the victory of Joe Biden. As discussed earlier, Trump himself did not know whatsoever about foreign policy and diplomacy. This was one of his key weaknesses and failures. To boost his credentials in this area before running for the second term, he needed a result. Kosovo since 1999 was an unfinished job in which the U.S. was heavily involved, and Trump saw it as the best case to strike a deal with or move to further his cause in foreign policy. The PM Albin Kurti was skeptical in the approach by the U.S. special envoy, ambassador Richard Grenell, to broker the talks between Kosovo and Serbia. Confusion spread in Kosovo's government and MPs on how to behave or what stance to take for unilaterally imposed terms of an agreement. The first demand was that Kosovo's PM removes the tariff against imports from Serbia, which the PM agreed to do that in stages and replace with mutual trade measures with Serbia. This did not please the ambassador who immediately reacted that the tariff must be wholly and unconditionally removed, not partially. Meanwhile, fake news circulated that the U.S. is considering the withdrawal of its troops from Kosovo, published even in prestigious Reuters (Reuters, March 11, 2020). The call for the withdrawal was made on Twitter by the President's son, Donald Trump Junior on March 10, 2020, and supported by senator David Perdue (Balkan Insight, 2020). It generated fear among the Kosovo coalition government, where the center-right LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo) was in favor of doing whatever the U.S. government asks, and the left-wing PM Albin Kurti of VV who was reserved or not in hurry. Consequently, the Kurti I government was toppled by a no-confidence vote of MPs on March 25, 2020, and his former deputy coming from the LDK, Avdullah Hoti, whom Albin Kurti as a caretaker PM had dismissed, was elected as PM on June 03, 2020. Following the celebration in Kosovo for Joe Biden's victory and Donald Trump's defeat, the public calls for a new parliamentary election intensified. The left has defeated the right in the U.S., thus it is time for the left to rule Kosovo, too. On December 21, 2020, the constitutional court of Kosovo ruled that the Cabinet of PM Avdullah Hoti did not have the majority of the votes when it was elected, because, the vote of an MP was invalid due to his court sentence that was in force.

The elections were scheduled for February 14, 2021. A fraction of LDK with a list named "Guxo" (Albanian for "Dare") defected to the VV, competing for the assembly of 120 seats, 10 of which reserved to minorities. The slogan used by the VV was "Krejt dhe Drejt!" (Albanian for "All and Fair/Straight"). "Drejt" from Albanian also means "right", but it does not have the

meaning of the right-wing. VV is a left-wing party that aimed at securing over 50% or 61 MPs. It got 50.28% which transferred into 58 MPs or a double number from the previous elections of October 6, 2019. Another 3-4 MPs from minorities joined to secure the majority of 61. For the first time in the history of Kosovo elections since 2000, one party managed to secure the needed majority and form a government without a coalition. Albin Kurti became the PM for the second time, while the position of the presidency was left to the list “Guxo” with Vjosa Osmani who already was acting president, becoming the 5th President of Kosovo on April 04, 2021. As the left-wing VV doubled its gains, the largest loser was the center-right LDK by nearly doubling its loss from 28 to 15. The number of seats for the right-wing PDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo) decreased from 24 to 19 MPs. What might explain this landslide change in favor of the left at the expense of the right?

The voters’ turnout in Kosovo has been relatively low, below 50%. It increased by 4.19% only to reach 48.78% of eligible voters in the February 14, 2021 parliamentary election. This increase is largely attributed to the voters’ left-wing ideology. They did not understand or care much of what the left-wing means, but voted for, as noted in the theoretical section of this paper, due to practical developments. What were these developments and causes? First, the toppling of the Kurti I government during the pandemic and lockdown generated outrage among the public who feared further worsening of the social and political situation. This boosted the sympathy for him during his 50 days (February 03 – March 25, 2020) as PM and another 70 days as caretaker PM (March 25 – June 03, 2020). Second, Kosovo’s then-president Hashim Thaçi and the leader of his party (PDK) Kadri Veseli were indicted and then on November 05, 2020, transferred to the Kosovo Specialist Chambers in The Hague on charges of war crimes. They were also blamed inside Kosovo for ties to the group interests controlling the state institutions together with the LDK. Someone had to fill their positions, which in the case of Hashim Thaçi, the assembly speaker Vjosa Osmani or the one that would join the VV with her list, came to replace him as acting president. Third, the majority of the voters believed that the same spirit that won against Trump in the U.S. has to win in Kosovo by bringing Albin Kurti back to power who publicly had vowed his support for Joe Biden. Fourth, after the Kurti I government fell, the new PM Avdullah Hoti proved to be more inefficient than expected, thus adding more credits to the rivals or opposition in the forthcoming election. Fifth, allegations against corruption have always been serious and the rule of law weak, therefore, the public expected a new government that would provide a better choice,

greater efficiency in combating corruption, and economic perspective. In the economy, however, as this paper goes on, the fiscal policy and tax rates remain unchanged or the ones introduced by previous governments, which quite of right-wing ideology featured by low tax rates, e.g. the ceiling rate of corporate income tax and personal income tax is 10%. Matoshi and Mulaj (2019) had objected to such a right-wing economic model which is based on the Washington Consensus reforms, because, it is empowering the right-wing politicians at the expense of the population and rising income differences. Instead, the authors recommended that the Western Balkan countries, Kosovo in particular, adopt the Social Market Economy reforms which are part of the left-wing model.

Perhaps the most important factor accumulated for years was the issue of emigration from Kosovo that created the conditions for a landslide left-wing win at last. In the theoretical section, we witnessed how the right-wing and far-right both in theory and practice become more powerful because of immigration concerns. While immigration and its cause for the rise of right-wing and far-right receive an ongoing focus, little attention is paid to how politics behaves in the countries facing emigration. Kosovo, and few countries surrounding her, is an interesting example. The more the people were leaving Kosovo, the more the demands for a left-wing government with social supporting reforms and programs for the population. Not by accident, the overwhelming majority (over 75%) of the votes from Kosovo emigrants went for the VV. But are economic conditions alone the main driver of emigration from Kosovo? Observing large scale emigration from the Balkans, Kosovo in particular during 2014-2015, Matoshi and Mulaj (2021) maintained that, despite being declared as economic asylum seekers, the illegal emigrants did not necessarily leave Kosovo in large number for economic reasons; the overwhelming majority of them used the opportunity to emigrate with the waves of refugees fleeing from civil wars in the Middle East towards the EU western member states. If immigration in Hungary strengthened the position of the right-wing parties, emigration from Kosovo called for the left-wing to come into power. In this way, one country's immigration becomes a cause for the rise of right-wing, and the left-wing in the country where the immigrants are coming from. And this is not an isolated case. As noted in the theory, the political ideology of the left-right has spillover effects on other countries. On July 15, 2020, the left-wing Social Democratic Union of Macedonia came first in the 2020 North Macedonian parliamentary election. On April 25, 2021 parliamentary election in Albania, the Socialist Party of Albania won 74 of the total 140 seats in the parliament.

It is important to note that all elections referred to in this section (U.S., Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania) were held during the pandemic. Does the Covid-19 has a political ideology or affects the voters' behavior which political wing to vote for? Certainly, it does. With its devastating consequences in almost all activities, especially the ban on travel and frequent lockdowns where the people felt like being imprisoned, and a conspiracy that the pandemic is just the seasonal flu but the elites want to exaggerate its consequences to control and lower the number of population, they thought that the left-wing ideology that cares for equality, liberalization, and internationalism is the rescue. The majority of the people could have preferred nationalism and be locked behind the state borders in compliance with their right-wing ideology, but when they faced the ban on travel and lockdowns within their own homes, most of them changed their minds and understood the importance of being liberal and open that the left-wing ideology promotes.

The left-wing now seems to be gaining momentum from the U.S. to the Balkans and drawing closer the parties belonging to its ideology. The 71st U.S. secretary of state, Antony Blinken, declared the former president, PM and leader of the right-wing Democratic Party of Albanian, Sali Berisha and his family members, ineligible or *non-grata* to the U.S. on allegations for corruption and undermining the democracy in Albania. Were other Albanian officials from the left-wing who are in power, corrupt and undermining democracy? Or the U.S. secretary of state is more biased to denounce ideological opponents rather than their actual deeds in terms of global positioning between left and right? If Donald Trump Junior and senator David Perdue were complaining and threatening (through fake news) to influence or punish Kosovo's left-wing government, secretary Antony Blinken also has the right to do the same against the right-wing Sali Berisha. It proves the theory that political ideology and division in one country often takes care of its mission on a global scale.

## Conclusion

The left-right political spectrum in much of its history and current reality does not appear to have the public's and individual's consistent orientation to decide for the voting of ideology but more responding to emerging problems and the challenges faced in society. A migrant crisis emerged in Europe in 2014 from the refugees coming from the Middle East and North Africa, whom many from Kosovo, Albania, and North Macedonia joined. The public reaction in the EU developed countries towards such massive waves of immigrants was manifested through a significant rise of impact in political life by the right-wing and extremist parties which are known for their nationalist rhetoric against immigration. These events of cause and effect phenomenon led to the right-wing populism that got the UK out of the EU (Brexit) and Donald Trump winning for the U.S. president later that year. It marked the major political events dominating the second half of the second decade in the 21st century.

Just as the rise of the right-wing in the U.S. and Europe had a cause behind, so had its defeat and victory of the left-wing. A common feature and the result of the 2020 U.S. presidential and the 2021 Kosovo parliamentary elections is that it proves the reward-punishment hypothesis. Unexpected immigration in massive waves was not the concern of developed countries alone, but also for the developing countries from which the emigration was originating. That is why the left has got it right; it won because the right got it wrong. Donald Trump who came to power with the slogan "Make America Great Again", was on the way to let other states become greater. He implemented lower corporate tax rates intending to give more space to businesses for investment. As the trade war with China went on and Covid-19 struck, the ban on travel and lockdowns followed, investments were not made as planned, thus causing a fiscal deficit and increasing the national debt. With elections taking place during Covid-19 restrictions and occasional lockdowns, it created fear as if an elite is tightening the freedom or exaggerating the threat of pandemic beyond its actual potential consequences. Many saw it as a bad experience and lesson to prefer alternatives that would offer them more freedom of movement and liberalism, which is the cause that the left-wing ideology stands and campaigns for. The left-wing win can also be a better alternative to illegal massive migration. If it delivers on promises and addresses the causes properly, it can be useful on both sides; for the countries facing massive immigration as well as those experiencing a depopulation through emigration (Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia), because, in the host countries that are giving rise to the far-right empowerment, while in the home countries with new



democracy or the origin of immigration, many people complain against corrupted right-wing politicians. Finally, the recent rhetoric by the officials of both camps in the U.S. (left and right) against their ideological opponents in Kosovo and Albania, e.g. of Donald Trump Junior, senator David Perdue, and the U.S. secretary of state Antony Blinken, confirms the claim that despite convergence points, the ideological difference of the left-right remains and gets confronted with each other in practice.

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