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NATIONALIZATION OF THE 2023 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS IN VOJVODINA[2]

Abstract: On a wider level, provincial or regional elections in Europe are usually considered second-order elections: they have lower turnout and often a special political dynamic that includes a loss of votes for national ruling parties, with an increase in the ratings of protest, regional or new actors. However, when second-order elections are held on the same day as national parliamentary elections: in that case, national political dynamics usually take precedence and contaminate the results at the second-order elections. This happened in the case of the elections for the Assembly of Vojvodina, which were last held independently, without voting for the National Assembly or the President of the Republic on the same day, back in 2004. The article will show how factors such as the date of the election and the electoral system influencethe behavior of electoral actors, the nationalization of election results, and their transfer to the provincial level, and that this occurred in the elections held in December 2023.

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1. Introduction

The last elections for the Assembly of AP Vojvodina were held on December 17, 2023, at the same time as the parliamentary elections for members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, but also local elections in 65 cities and municipalities across Serbia (of which, interestingly, none of the local governments were in Vojvodina – the assemblies of 45 Vojvodina cities and municipalities were voted in June 2024). The elections were held according to the proportional electoral system with closed electoral lists in the entire province, as one electoral unit in which a total of 120 deputies are elected. As expected, the elections were won by the coalition around Srpska napredna stranka (Serbian Progressive Party), which won 66 parliamentary mandates. They are followed by the opposition coalition *Srbija protiv nasilja* (Serbia against violence) with 30 mandates, the minority list of the Union of Vojvodina Hungarians with nine, Nacionalno-demokratska alternativa (National Democratic Alternative) with seven, Socijalistička partija Srbije (Socialist Party of Serbia) with seven, and the dubious minority list (see: Vučićević and Bursać, 2022a) Ruska stranka (Russian party) with one mandate.

The aim of the article is to show how, in accordance with the nationalization theory of the second-order elections, similarities in the institutional framework, election circumstances and actor behavior produce almost identical political dynamics and, consequently, almost identical electoral outcomes at the provincial and national levels. The following section introduces the theory of the nationalization of elections and previous research on this topic, and the basic hypothesis. In the sections that follow, we will examine the circumstances of the December elections and compare their results, coming to the conclusion whether the nationalization of the results of the provincial elections occurred.

2. Theoretical framework and hypothesis

The second-order elections theory emerged in the 1980s (see: Reif & Schmitt, 1980). The focus of research at the time was on local or regional elections held during or mid-mandate of the national parliament and government, and on the analysis of their effects in relation to na-

tional political dynamics. The traditional view of the second-order elections assumes that lower-level elections will share certain characteristics, such as lower interest and lower voter turnout, lower performance of national governing parties that lost votes, either because voters were "punishing" them for the low performance at the national level or warning them to "get their act together" (Simon, 1989), or because voters would take the second-order elections less seriously, and many would not vote strategically, but according to their actual political preferences. Another characteristic was the increase in the balance of votes won by opposition, as well as various regional, protest, new and small parties and movements (Erikson & Filippov, 2001).

This theory also states that the second-order effects are stronger when lower-level elections are organized roughly in the middle of the national election cycle, and are much less pronounced when higher- and lower-level elections are held simultaneously. The authors claim that simultaneous voting encourages the parties to unify their electoral offer at multiple levels and voters to behave congruently, and the traditional effects of second-order elections, in terms of turnout and vote spillover, are not observable (see: Romanova, 2014; Henderson & Romanova, 2016). However, according to some authors, the degree of nationalization often depends on whether it is about regional elections in territorial units, where there are strong competencies of self-governing bodies, and voters feel that their vote really has an influence on the creation of policies that will concern them in the future. Alternatively, in the regions characterized by a distinct cultural and linguistic identity, voters care less about national politics when making decisions (see: Wyn Jones & Scully, 2006; Jeffery & Hough, 2009). In such circumstances, local political actors also have an incentive to create an indigenous electoral offer unrelated to the national dynamics and central political programs of the parties, which also affects a lower degree of nationalization (Thorlakson, 2009).

We could argue that Vojvodina is not a typical example of such a region. Despite autonomy and certain competences, and (limited) budget resources, the provincial competences are not such as to create a separate political dynamic, especially not in the centralized institutional framework and political culture prevalent in Serbia. The existing

regional differences are not enough to create a distinct political culture, such as the ethnically or linguistically homogeneous regions significantly different from the rest of the country, e.g., Quebec in Canada, certain autonomous communities in Spain, or Flanders in Belgium. In these regions, there are autonomous party systems that stand in contrast to the national arena, although regional political entities often participate in national politics as representatives of their regions.

Moreover, Serbia has adopted the political principle of simultaneous voting in one day for several vertical levels of government, aiming to homogenize voting behavior, using the effects of the nationalization of voting and the party system as a whole (based on: Schakel, 2012). Shakel (2012) defines nationalization as the centralization of political patterns at the expense of regional distinctions. Schakel and Jeffery (2013) conducted a detailed study that included 349 cases of regional elections held at the same time as the national elections, and found that the results deviate greatly from the traditional model of second-order elections, rejecting the theory as practically inapplicable to simultaneous elections. In other words, when elections are held on the same day, regional political dynamics and voting patterns simply do not apply.

Vojvodina is the perfect example of this rule. As we mentioned, provincial elections were held simultaneously with parliamentary or presidential elections in 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020 and, finally, in 2023, tying together the actors and outcomes of provincial and national elections. Authors usually express the level of nationalization of regional elections through the dissimilarity index, calculating the difference in absolute numbers between the results of one party's list in regional elections and the results of the same party's list in national elections in a given region (see: Pallares & Keating, 2003; Jeffery & Hough, 2009). This issue has not been well researched in Serbia. The only study so far has been Vučićević and Bursać (2022b) who measured the differences in votes in the simultaneously held parliamentary and Vojvodina elections in June 2020, concluding that even in the unusual context of those elections (pandemic, many opposition parties boycotting the elections), there was a high level of nationalization of the results, which is particularly pronounced with regard to the results of the Serbian Progressive Party (*Srpska napredna stranka – SNS*), whose voters displayed the highest

level of agreement on voting decisions for the National Assembly and for the Vojvodina Assembly. Since the authors measured nationalization at the polling stations, they concluded that there is a very high level of nationalization at work in Vojvodina, where the difference between the results of the national and provincial lists of candidate parties can be expressed in the single-digit number of votes per polling station.

In accordance with the presented theory and empirical research, we propose two hypotheses:

H1: Simultaneous holding of provincial elections in Vojvodina with parliamentary elections for the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia produces a high level of nationalization of provincial political dynamics;

H2: Simultaneous holding of provincial elections in Vojvodina with parliamentary elections for the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia produces a high level of nationalization of the results of the provincial elections.

The hypotheses require several explanations regarding the operationalization that follows. Simultaneous elections is not, of course, the only factor that affects nationalization; other factors are also at play, above all a uniform electoral system, a low level of provincial autonomy competencies and a low "importance" of regional distinctiveness, especially in the context of creating a cultural or ethnic identity distinct from the nation as a whole. Still, we must emphasize that many scholars hold that the common voting date is in fact the main factor of nationalization. In Serbian political practice, this is a frequent occurrence. Provincial and local elections are usually scheduled on the same day as the parliamentary, and sometimes also presidential elections. This is done primarily to effectively mobilize the votes of the ruling parties at all levels, utilizing the popularity of the national list and – more importantly – the national leader at second-order elections. In the current party system, this is acceptable for the fragmented and weak opposition parties, since they have low outreach and poor infrastructure outside of several major cities. As we have already stated, second-order elections do not appeal much to voters so votes are often dispersed. The governing parties, therefore, always benefit from holding elections on the same day, usually justifying this decision as economically responsible.

We also mentioned the unification of the electoral system - namely, In three consecutive election cycles for the Assembly of Vojvodina (2004, 2008 and 2012), a parallel electoral system was used: it was a mixed system where voters had two votes at their disposal: one on the list, and the other on the nominal level. The first was for the electoral lists of parties in the entire province as one electoral unit, where 60 deputies were elected, and the other for individual candidates in their single-mandate electoral unit (60 in total – each local self-government in Vojvodina had at least one representative, while larger cities were divided into several electoral units). In 2014 this system was, hastily and without public debate, changed to a proportional system, with one electoral unit and closed lists, mirroring the national system. The main argument put forward at that time was precisely the unification of electoral rules (cf. Bursać & Vučićević, 2016), while all the potential benefits of the mixed system evident in the previous three cycles and were ignored and were consequently lost. Those benefits include the geographical representation of all cities and municipalities in the Assembly of Vojvodina, prevention of excessive metropolitanization of representation (i.e., over-representation of Novi Sad in the provincial assembly), and personalization (or partial personalization) of elected representatives for whom citizens voted by name in single-mandate units. Another benefit was the higher quality of candidates, since those nominated in single-mandate units were elected as individuals and not on a collective party list, the parties had to pay more attention to candidate selection. The nationalization strategy, therefore, results in the loss of regional political dynamics because it encourages political actors to run lists or coalitions with similar structures and names, as will be shown in the next section using the example of the December 2023 elections. Additionally, the introduction of closed lists for the election of all 120 deputies prevents the personalization of politics present in the earlier single-mandate constituencies in the mixed electoral system, and facilitates the contamination of provincial electoral dynamics with national-level leaders and narratives.

We set out to prove the proposed hypotheses in two ways. Regarding political dynamics, we will use a qualitative comparative analysis, and compare the behavior of actors on two levels during the campaign, in

terms of creating coalitions, list names, holders personalities, list numbers, and campaign topics. Regarding the nationalization of the results, statistical methods will be used, including a dissimilarity index, and the results of the provincial and national electoral lists will be compared.

3. Nationalization of political dynamics in the 2023 provincial elections

To detect whether nationalization occurred, we will compare actor behavior in the 2023 elections on various levels. In the December elections for the Assembly of Vojvodina, a total of 13 electoral lists were nominated. Of those 13, as many as 12 appeared in the parliamentary elections as well, with only the list of the Liga socijaldemokrata Vojvodine (Socialdemocrat League of Vojvodina - LSV) nominated at the provincial level. All parties show a very high level of nationalization on the four criteria concerning the candidacy (see: Table 1): the coalition structure, list names, list holder names, and the serial numbers on the ballot. The following data were taken from the web presentations of the Republic Election Commission (REK, 2024) and the Provincial Election Commission (PIK, 2024).

Table 1: *2023 provincial and parliamentary elections lists*

Leading party	Identical coalition structure on both levels	List name (Autonomous Province of Vojvodina - APV)	List name (National Assembly of the RS-NSRS)	List no. (APV)	List no. (NSRS)	Holder (APV)	Holder (NSRS)
SNS	Yes	A. Vučić – Vojvodina ne sme da stane	A. Vučić – Srbija ne sme da stane	1	1	A. Vučić	A. Vučić
SPS	Yes	I. Dačić – Premijer Srbije	I. Dačić – Premijer Srbije	2	2	I. Dačić	I. Dačić
SRS	Yes	Dr V. Šešelj – SRS	Dr V. Šešelj – SRS	3	3	V. Šešelj	V. Šešelj
Ruska stranka	No	Ruska stranka – Srbi i Rusi braća zauvek!	Ruska stranka – S. Nikolić	4	16	–	S. Nikolić

DSS – POKS	Yes	Dr M. Jovanović – NADA za Srbiju – NADA za Vojvodinu – Srpska koalicija NADA (...)	Dr M. Jovanović – NADA za Srbiju – Srpska koalicija NADA (...)	5	5	M. Jovanović, V. Mihailović	M. Jovanović, V. Mihailović
SVM	Yes	SVM – Za našeg Predsednika, za našu zajednicu, za budućnost!	SVM – Za našeg Predsednika, za našu zajednicu, za budućnost!	6	6	–	–
Srbija protiv nasilja	Yes	Srbija protiv nasilja – M. Tepić – M. Brkić (...)	Srbija protiv nasilja – M. Tepić – M. Aleksić (...)	7	7	M. Tepić, M. Brkić	M. Tepić, M. Aleksić
DSHV – SPP	Yes	T. Žigmanov – Ujedinjeni za pravdu – DSHV, U. Zukorlić – SPP – Bošnjaci Sandžaka	U. Zukorlić – Ujedinjeni za pravdu – SPP – Bošnjaci Sandžaka, T. Žigmanov – DSHV	8	8	T. Žigmanov, U. Zukorlić	U. Zukorlić, T. Žigmanov
LDP	Yes	Č. Jovanović – Vojvodina mora drugačije	Č. Jovanović – Mora drugačije	9	17	Č. Jovanović	Č. Jovanović
NS	Yes	Narodna stranka – Siguran izbor, ozbiljni ljudi – V. Jeremić, S. Kovačević, Dr S. Rašković Ivić, Đ. Vukadinović	Narodna stranka – Siguran izbor, ozbiljni ljudi – V. Jeremić, Dr S. Rašković Ivić, S. Kovačević, V. Gajić, M. Lipovac Tanasković	10	11	V. Jeremić, S. Kovačević, Dr S. Rašković Ivić, Đ. Vukadinović	V. Jeremić, Dr S. Rašković Ivić, S. Kovačević, V. Gajić, M. Lipovac Tanasković

Zavet-nici – Dveri	Yes	M. Đurđević Stamenkovski – B. Obradović – Nacionalno okupljanje – Državotvorna snaga (...)	M. Đurđević Stamenkovski – B. Obradović – Nacionalno okupljanje – Državotvorna snaga (...)	11	4	M. Đurđević Stamen-kovski, B. Obradović	M. Đurđević Stamen-kovski, B. Obradović
DJB – SDS	Yes	S. Radulović (DJB) – B. Tadić (SDS) – A. Pejić (Otete bebe) – Dobro jutro Srbijo	S. Radulović (DJB) – B. Tadić (SDS) – A. Pejić (Otete bebe) – Dobro jutro Srbijo	12	12	S. Radulović, B. Tadić, A. Pejić	S. Radulović, B. Tadić, A. Pejić
LSV	–	Vojvođani – LSV – Vojvođani, Demokratska zajednica vojvođanskih Mađara, Zajedno za Vojvodinu – B. Kostreš	–	13	–	B. Kostreš	–

As the table shows, 11 out of 12 parties have identical structures at both levels, as coalitions (more frequently) or independent party lists (less frequently), such as Savez vojvođanskih Mađara, Narodna stranka (People's Party) and Srpska radikalna stranka (Serbian Radical Party). The only difference between the two levels is, in fact, Ruska stranka, which appeared independently at the provincial level and at the national level in a coalition with Nova komunistička partija Jugoslavije (New Communist Party of Yugoslavia), although this was omitted from the list name.

Most actors adopted the identical name of the national electoral list with a few minor variations related to the use or insertion of Vojvodina in the provincial list name (SNS, DSS - POKS, LDP) or partial changes in terms of list holders, e.g., the Srbija protiv nasilja (Serbia against violence) list replaced Marinika Tepić with Miroslav Aleksić at the provincial level, the Narodna stranka list changed two candidates compared to

the national list (out of a total of five); while the DSHV-SSP list replaced its holders Tomislav Žigmanov and Usama Zukorlić, probably counting on the greater support of the Croats living in Vojvodina compared to the Bosniaks living mostly in central Serbia. The only concrete change in the electoral list was observed in the minority party Ruska stranka, where at the republican level Slobodan Nikolić was the list holder, whereas at the provincial level, the slogan "Serbs and Russians – Brothers forever!" was added to the name of the party.

Since the Republican Electoral Commission and the Provincial Electoral Commission, by law, determine the order on the ballot based on the order of submission and announcement of the electoral list, the parties tend to coordinate the submission at multiple levels to gain marketing advantages of having an identical ordinal number on multiple ballots and the resulting maximization of votes, which also contributes to nationalization. The numbers on the ballot are identical for as many as eight out of 13 provincial actors. Ruska stranka, Liberalno demokratska partija (Liberal Democrats), Narodna stranka, the Dveri-Zavetnici coalition, and LSV failed to obtain the same list number at both levels. When analyzing the list numbers, it should also be taken into account that the electoral offer at the national level was higher, i.e., 18 lists.

Moreover, the majority of parties proposed the same list holders at both levels: in eight cases we find the same names of the list holders, while in two more cases we come across a partial match (the Srbija protiv nasilja list, where one of the two holders is identical, as well as the Narodna stranka list, where the three holders are identical at both levels, while Vladimir Gajić and Marina Lipovac Tanasković from the republican list were replaced by Đorđe Vukadinović in the provincial list). The Savez vojvođanskih Mađara list did not have a prominent candidate at any level, the Ruska stranka list has the prominent name of the candidate Slobodan Nikolić only at the republican level, while the LSV list is nominated only at the provincial level, where the holder is Bojan Kostreš. Interestingly, as many as nine electoral lists for the provincial elections contain the names of candidates who do not have a place of residence at the province, and therefore no right to vote or be elected in the province, but their names are used to increase the popularity of the list by highlighting nationally popular politicians, which confirms the

hypothesis of the nationalization of the provincial party system.

Lastly, we will give a brief overview of the campaign narratives. Although some authors claim that campaign behavior analysis often falls prey to researchers' subjective perceptions (see: Bouteca, D'heer, & Lannoo, 2017), the limited focus of this study impedes the development of a separate complex methodology on this issue. Therefore, we can only present a brief qualitative assessment: most parties opted for the nationalist narrative during the election campaign. Few political entities have led an autonomous provincial campaign for the Assembly of Vojvodina based exclusively on Vojvodina issues. The existing uniform and depersonalized electoral system offers no incentives for candidates to reach out to voters with their own campaign themes and activities. The campaigns focused on issues related to Vojvodina were conducted exclusively by the LSV, since this regional party ran only in the province, as well as the minority SVM and DSHV parties, since their electorates (Hungarian and Croatian population) are concentrated on the territory of Vojvodina - although the focus was not the province itself, but minority communities, which happen to be based in the province. Srpska napredna stranka used its media and infrastructure leverage to highlight the perceived successes achieved in Vojvodina as well, and run a segmented campaign. However, this was not a province-oriented campaign, since the presented results are usually linked to the central figure of this party – the Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić. The rest of the narratives mainly concerned national issues, and were uniform at all levels of the election. Moreover, few parties promoted provincial candidates, and no list publicly nominated a candidate for Prime Minister of Vojvodina before the election. This lead to an absurd outcome: the elected provincial prime minister Maja Gojković (SNS) was not even on the electoral list of her party in Vojvodina.

4. Nationalization of 2023 provincial elections results

Lower turnout, typical of second-order elections, was not present in this case since the elections for the national and provincial assemblies were held on the same day, and the second-order effects were absent.

There were 989,252 voters (59.53%) at the parliamentary elections at 1,776 polling stations in Vojvodina, and 985,829 voters (59.03%) at the provincial elections, at the same number of polling stations, which is a negligible difference.

As noted above, the nationalization of the results will be measured through the dissimilarity index, expressed as the difference between the results of the provincial list and the results achieved by the national list of the same party on the territory of the province (based on: Pallares & Keating 2003; Jeffery & Hough, 2009; Schakel, 2012). The formula for calculating the index is taken from Shakel (2012):

$$Dissimilarity = \frac{1}{2}\sum_{i=1}^{n}|X_{iN} - X_{iR}|$$

The sum of the absolute percentage differences won by each party in the national elections in the territory of the province (iN) and the provincial elections (iR) is calculated, and then divided by two to avoid double counting of the same vote when calculating the difference (the loss of one party represents the gain of the other). Hypothetical score values can vary from 0 (complete equality of party results at the national and provincial level, i.e., complete nationalization) to 100 (meaning that the national parties in the province won no votes, and that all the votes were won by parties that ran only in the provincial elections).

The results of the parties will be presented as the difference in the number of votes (see: Table 2) and the difference in the percentage of votes, which is the basis for the index calculation (see: Table 3).

Table 2: Difference in the number of votes won in the provincial and parliamentary elections in Vojvodina

Leading party	No. of votes (APV)	No. of votes (NSRS)	Difference
SNS	466.035	474.058	8.023
SPS	49.775	45.555	4.220
SRS	21.135	17.318	3.817
Ruska stranka	9.907	3.332	6.575
DSS –POKS	50.582	43.414	7.168
SVM	63.721	60.809	2.912
Srbija protiv nasilja	215.197	221.224	6.027
DSHV – SPP	4.979	3.657	1.322
LDP	3.221	2.179	1.042
NS	8.140	6.622	1.518
Zavetnici – Dveri	22.487	21.931	556
DJB – SDS	14.715	12.665	2.050
Parliamentary elections only lists (6 lists)	–	46.548	46.548
Provincial elections only lists (LSV)	24.625	–	24.625

The differences in votes demonstrate a high level of nationalization of the results. For most of the lists, this difference amounts to only a few thousand votes, and the spillovers can be explained by the different political offer at the provincial and national level. For example, in Vojvodina, the LSV list probably took some of the votes that *Srbija protiv nasilja* received at the national level. Similarly, the *Mi – Glas iz naroda* (We – the Voice of the People) movement, led by Dr. Branimir Nestorović, who did not run in the province took the votes of the SNS, SPS, SRS, Ruska stranka, DSS - POKS list, and others. Nestorović's list is also responsible for the single largest difference between the two levels, since it won over 42,000 votes in Vojvodina in the parliamentary elections.

Table 3: Difference in the percentage of votes won in the provincial and parliamentary elections in Vojvodina and dissimilarity index

Leading party	% votes (APV)	% votes (NSRS)	Difference
SNS	47,31	47,97	0,66
SPS	5,05	4,61	0,44
SRS	2,15	1,75	0,4
Ruska stranka	1,01	0,34	0,67
DSS – POKS	5,14	4,39	0,75
SVM	6,47	6,15	0,32
Srbija protiv nasilja	21,85	22,38	0,53
DSHV – SPP	0,51	0,37	0,14
LDP	0,33	0,22	0,11
NS	0,83	0,67	0,16
Zavetnici – Dveri	2,28	2,22	0,06
DJB – SDS	1,49	1,28	0,21
Parliamentary elections only lists (6 lists)	–	4,71	4,71
Provincial elections only lists (LSV)	2,5	–	2,5
Dissimilarity index			**5,83**

The difference in the performance of electoral lists that participated at both levels never exceeds 1% of the total number of votes. We have calculated that the index of dissimilarity in the parliamentary and provincial elections in 2023 is extremely low, only 5.83, leading us to conclude that there was a high level of nationalization of the results in the provincial elections. The index value is mainly due to the difference between the political offer between the two levels. This value would probably be even lower if Branimir Nestorović's list participated in the provincial elections, since in that case there would probably be a low volatility of their voters in the province. The value of 5.83 is also comparatively very low. For example, authors who calculated the dissimilarity index in regional elections in Spain found a mean value of dissimilarity for the entire period (1982 to 2000), ranging from an average value of 30.29

in the politically and ethnolinguistically distinctive Navarre region to 7.73 in the central region of Castile-La Mancha (based on: Pallares & Keating, 2003). Naturally, the index was higher in regions that can be historically and culturally defined as Catalan and Basque.

Other authors calculated the index of dissimilarity for Canada and Germany from 1980 to 2002: the average value for Canada never fell below 20, while the value of the index in Germany until the mid-nineties was between six and ten, depending on the electoral cycle, after which a special political dynamic began to emerge in the eastern federal states, and these values rose to 13.3 (in 1998) and 15.4 (in 2002) (see: Jeffery & Hough, 2009). The same authors report the index of dissimilarity for Wales (1997: 21.8; 2001: 29.6) and Scotland (12.5 and 23 for the same years), which is again much higher than Vojvodina. Finally, Schakel (Schakel, 2015) analyzed the dissimilarity for six countries of Central and Eastern Europe from 1990 to 2010 and found, in the context of the difference between national and regional results in he given regions, that the values of the index almost never fell below 20 in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia, or below 10 in Hungary and Poland. All these are significantly higher values than in the 2023 provincial elections in Vojvodina: we can therefore confirm that these elections were almost completely nationalized.

5. Conclusion

Based on the two analyses above, we can confirm the high level of nationalization of the provincial elections in Vojvodina, both in terms of the behavior of electoral actors (identical parties and coalitions with identical list names, holders, and even serial numbers on two ballots, as well as running a nationalized election campaign), and in terms of the impact of such circumstances on voters, which is reflected in the high level of concordance, i.e., nationalization. Therefore, both hypotheses - the nationalization of political dynamics and the behavior of electoral actors (H1) and identical results on the national and provincial level (H2) – were confirmed.

The reasons for this include the simultaneous holding of both levels of elections on the same day, the unification of election rules, the low

level of competence of the province and the relatively low level of regional distinction. Nevertheless, in order to confirm these causes, future research on this topic would have to be conducted longitudinally and take into account several previous electoral cycles in Vojvodina, including the cases when provincial elections were not held on the same day as parliamentary or presidential elections, as well as those when different electoral rules were applied, providing different incentives to actors, in contrast to the rigid and highly centralized proportional system with closed lists. The results in terms of the dissimilarity index could then be compared and the exact causes of high nationalization, observed in the December 2023 elections, identified.

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