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Political transition in Montenegro 1989-2010

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The paper reviewed two hypotheses, namely, (H1) that within the concept of political propaganda activities in Montenegro and promotional practices recognize some of the universal characteristics of modern political propaganda and (H2) that the specificity of the political propaganda activities at the time of the newly created political pluralism in Montenegro is derived from the fact that political entities operate in an atmosphere of war environment and in conditions marked by a substantial superiority of one political party, as well as the role and importance of one dominant political entity that has been exercising power for decades. The topic of this paper is the political life of Montenegro from 1989 to 2010. A particular feature of this period is the fact that one political party (Democratic Party of Socialists) managed to hold power so long, in conditions of party pluralism, unstable and war-affected environment, deep ideological, political, social and ethnic divisions in the society, and intense international pressure.

Keywords: transition, Montenegro, politics, reform, political parties.

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Politična tranzicija v Črni gori 1989-2010.

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Prispevek obravnava politično življenje Črne gore med letoma 1990 in 2010. Posebnost tega obdobja je, da se je ena politična stranka (Demokratska partija socialistov) v razmerah strankarskega pluralizma, nestabilnem in od vojne prizadetem okolju, globokih ideoloških, političnih, etničnih in družbenih delitvah in ob mednarodnih pritiskih uspela ves obravnavani čas obdržati na oblasti.

Ključne besede: tranzicija, Črna gora, politika, reforma, politične stranke.

Introduction

Politics is a complex and multidimensional activity, and it is in an unbreakable connection with the struggle for power, establishing and maintaining it. Power is an undeniable imposition of will on behalf of the community, the state. Talking about political problems, as well as media information about an event, regardless of the intent or effect on humans, to some degree shapes their attitude toward political reality. Communication is the basis of all social and cultural processes, and the media in various ways, change forms of communication.¹

Propaganda represents the kind of communication that is performed to convince the message recipient. The ultimate goal of political propaganda is to induce individuals directly or indirectly to participate in political activities of a certain political entity, in a manner and to the extent determined by the very political subject.²

The topic of this paper is the political life of Montenegro from 1989 to 2010. A particular feature of this period is the fact that one political party (the Democratic Party of Socialists/Demokratska Partija Socijalista – the DPS), has managed to hold power until the present day.

The paper at hand aims to verify the basic hypothesis (H1) that within the concept of political propaganda activities in Montenegro and promotional practices recognize some of the universal characteristics of modern political propaganda (propaganda principles and techniques), which primarily relates to use of mass media and other means and forms of political communication, i.e. mass rallies and conventions, political agitation, and interpersonal communication.

The study tested the hypothesis (H2) that the specificity of the political propaganda activities at the time of the newly created political pluralism in Montenegro is derived from the fact that political entities operate in an atmosphere of war environment and conditions of a substantial superiority of a single political party (the DPS) that which emerged from the former League of Communists of Montenegro (SKCG – Savez Komunističke Crne Gore). This enabled the DPS powerful influence of the public, i.e. a dominant imposition of their ideas and attitudes.

¹ Krotz, *Mediatization*, p. 21–40.

² Qualter, *Propaganda and Psychological Warfare*, p. 27: “In this way the propaganda turns into skill and the art of political action, through a deliberate attempt to alter, control or create the attitudes of individuals or groups”.

When processing the topic, methods of scientific description and systematization of specific promotional activities, methods of qualitative content analysis of numerous documents and media messages, methods of functional and structural analysis, historical method and case study method were applied.

The Socio-Political Atmosphere

Power is a means of authority in politics, where the carrier of authority concretizes power and affixes it by activation of power jurisdiction. In a sociological perception of the concept of power, two aspects are the most important: "the power of the individual in relation to social groups and society, and the power of social groups in society". Emphasizing the difference between power and authority, Č. Čupić argues the power is "a characteristic imposition of will despite the resistance, and the authority is acceptance and execution of orders and commands. The kind of relationships quality between superiority and inferiority depends on the nature of the authority, depending on whether the authority is the model or power, the order".³ The authorities must be powerful and legitimate, as well as accepted as justified. Power is determined as retrieving obligatory decisions for all and the ability to profess undeniable will. Power can press, influence and coerce, but only through the government establishes the rule.⁴

Politics as a practical activity deals with regulating relations among people that realized their wishes, needs and interests. Elections, as a basic prerequisite for the existence of a democratic society, are, in fact, the process of forming the government by means of voting, i.e. it is a procedure that allows expressing the will of the people, so that the democratic nature of society is reflected in respect of procedures and processes, although this is often at the level of dispute. The previous electoral practice often showed a tendency that the creators of the electoral rules modify or manipulate the citizens' will through legislation or legal means.

The changing social values resulting from the shocking events, the breakup of the Yugoslav federation, civil war, hyperinflation and rising crime rates, have been a fertile ground for various forms of manipulative activity. The formation of political parties of different ideological orientations, the collapse of the economy and previous social values created a confusion in the Montenegrin public. Those who perceive themselves as at risk or as potential victims of their neighbors or political opponents are easily manipulated. As a result, national identity remains a dominant theme in political discourse, serving the interests of both the Montenegrin ruling elite and the opposition. One of the general characteristics of Montenegro's political legacy was the indisputable authority and the will of the ruler that was personified either by the secular face (the period of the church Metropolitans of the 17th to the mid-19th century) or by an authoritarian monarch (the period of principedom and kingdom of the mid-19. century), or even by the period of communism after 1945.

³ Čupić, *Politics and evil*, pp. 112, 172, 195.

⁴ Jovanović, Dimitrijević, Popović, *Contemporary political systems*, pp. 17, 26, 28.

In the book *Montenegrin themes* Z. Andrijašević depicts governmental technologies and Montenegrins' mentality and their relation to the authority of government in the late 19th and early 20th century.⁵

In the conditions of economic crisis, production decline and inflation increase, numerous devaluations of the dinar, growing nationalist tensions, both within the republic and across the entire SFRY, Montenegro, being the smallest in size and population among the six federal republics, entered a process of multi-party politics, an atmosphere of populism, civil wars, and hyperinflation as the main characteristics of the first half of the 1990s. Burdened by the weight of the past, the dichotomy of Montenegrin and Serbian identity was reflected in the political life, the public opinion, and science, a large number of high-ranking military officers in the Yugoslav People's Army (the JNA) from the war and after it – Montenegro represented an exceptionally complex entity as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious republic. This started from the Berlin Congress in 1878 when it was internationally recognized, significantly expanding its territories into areas inhabited by people of other religions. By manipulating the specifics of national sentiment, the dichotomy of Montenegrin and Serbian identity, highlighting the warrior past and the spirit of freedom – the newly emerged political actors aimed to garner as many voters as possible for their ideas and goals amid the general economic and socio-political chaos, using any means, methods, or techniques. Reopening Montenegrin divisions between the Whites (supporters of unconditional unification in 1918) and the Greens; communists and Chetniks, bringing to light long-concealed crimes of communists, the “left mistakes” during and after World War II, Goli Otok suffering, communist reminders of Chetnik crimes – added further confusion to an already heated socio-political scene. Thanks to these specificities and characteristics, Montenegro was fertile ground for various types of nationalism and political goals and ideas, both concealed in a social form and in plain sight in the form of ultra-nationalism and chauvinism. The “wave of rallies” and the so-called anti-bureaucratic revolution initially under the guise of support and solidarity with Serbs and Montenegrins in Kosovo, combined with social demands and emphasizing the incapacity of the then communist republican elite, resulted in a change of government and the entry into multiparty politics. At the start of the transition, Milo Đukanović and Momir Bulatović came to power with rally-politics (anti-bureaucratic revolution) and as allies of Slobodan Milošević. Bulatovićs and Đukanović's socialists were the direct successors of the former League of Communists of Montenegro, with the entire party organization, assets, etc. Thus, it was an internal takeover of party power just before the transition. There was a coup at the top of the party. Younger cadres replaced the old communists. It can be stated that due to the worsening general economic situation, the general dissatisfaction in society was skillfully exploited, and by populism and directing the general dissatisfaction at the then republican leadership, which was blamed “for all the evils, for incapacity

⁵ Andrijašević, *Montenegrin themes*, pp. 88–91. As the Prince and King Nikola loved to express his political forms by the lyrics, here it is “song” about principle of his reign Montenegrins: Knežević, *History of political culture in Montenegro*, p. 274: “In the cramp hold Montenegrins / so gently, so skillfully / and chastise and cherish/ and you will do with them everything ...”.

and ineptitude,” the desired goal was achieved. Propagandizing in the form of social demands combined with patriotic appeals, awakened nationalism, managed to animate a critical mass necessary for psychological pressure on the republican elite, which, lulled for years in an atmosphere of untouchability and prosperity, was simply caught off guard and blocked by the intensity and speed of events. The manipulation of the masses, the level of organization, the timing, and the intensity of slogans and speeches indicate the power and success of propaganda control. Mobilizing and animating workers, students, and other citizens under the form of accumulated social problems, adding to this social propaganda base the events in Kosovo, and then directing all this dissatisfaction at the republican bureaucracy and its disinterest and inability to tackle these problems, represented a successful propaganda technology that resulted in the overthrow of the then political elite but not a change in the existing socialist system. Naturally, the then communist leadership, with its inertia and showing disinterest in burning social issues, lulled by the benefits brought by leading positions, significantly contributed to its overthrow. Thus, the change was carried out in terms of leadership at the republican and local levels, but all within the framework of the existing League of Communists of Montenegro. Under the pressure of the heterogeneous composition of the “coup” leadership, but also under the impression of global changes in communist systems, the terrain for the introduction of multiparty politics was being prepared, albeit reluctantly, by the League of Communists.

Upon coming to power, after the political changes of 1989, the new ruling Montenegrin political elite set specific rules of the political game in an atmosphere of new-established political pluralism. Although only up to that level that the participation of other political parties in the elections was not brought into question, but a real possibility that another party won the elections and took power was very small. In general, the Montenegrin political life is marked by the fact that in its recent history the change of power has not transpired through election. There was also accentuated hostility toward the ideological opponents as cruel and historical heritage, which left deep traces in the political culture, presented insurmountable obstacle to consolidating a democratic order based on democracy and readiness for compromise. The expert on electoral systems D. Nohlen entitles elections in authoritarian systems “semi competitive” and maintains that they serve primarily to the stabilization of these systems, and are primarily expected to give: 1) the legitimacy of the existing relations of power; 2) political calm to the inside; 3) acquiring the reputation to the outside; 4) disclosure (and partial integration) of the opposition; 5) adjusting the power structure that stabilizes the system.⁶ This party power in Montenegro, as the only one from the former Yugoslavia, continued in the form of a dominant and ruling socialist party almost until the most recent elections, and partly beyond.

The DPS was created simply by renaming the League of Communists of

⁶ Pavičević, *Electoral Systems and Elections in Montenegro 1990–1996*, pp. 24–25: “This treatment of institutions is characteristic for the majority of ‘quasi-authoritarian regimes’ in which the power is not there where it says in the Constitution, but where landlord of biggest power is moved, whatever it is named (the President, the Prime Minister and the like)”.

Montenegro at the congress in 1991. The peculiarity was that this party entered the first multiparty elections in December 1990 under its old name, i. e. the SKCG, and won convincingly, at a time when communist parties across Europe were losing elections. The explanation for this phenomenon should be sought in the renewed “revolutionary legitimacy of the communist party, brought by the leaders of the January coup and its alliance with Milošević’s regime in Belgrade, but also in the monopoly over state media and the existing party infrastructure” (Group of Authors, 2002:149). Thus, the republican communist elites retained all the infrastructure and monopoly only in a new form, allowing newly formed political entities access to the public only as much as was necessary and useful for them as the government at a given moment and from a certain interest, sometimes creating the perception of a sort of “political theater” in which everyone (or at least a good part of political entities) had their (already defined) role.

The declarative proclamation of Montenegro as an “Ecological State” on 1 September 1991, was supposed to draw international public attention to the smallest republic of the former SFRY, and thus to its leadership. It was evident that the “young” leadership wanted to present itself affirmatively to the public and relevant international entities and form a positive image of itself. At a time when green parties and numerous NGOs advocating for the preservation of the endangered environment were gaining strength, the proclamation of a state as ecological, and the “first in the world” at that, had to be met with sympathy.⁷ It was also noticeable that the Montenegrin leadership wanted to express a certain individuality and uniqueness of Montenegro by presenting such an idea.

Most of the political elite in Montenegro acted or politically emerged from Tito’s Yugoslavia and the League of Communists, which legitimized its power largely through the policy of so-called brotherhood and unity and the equality of Yugoslav nations and republics. The main political figures after the January events were the future president and prime minister of Montenegro, M. Bulatović and M. Đukanović. They would mark the entire next decade in Montenegro’s political life, first as collaborators in one party, and later (from 1997) as fierce opponents in two different parties that emerged from the former one.

So, in Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), S. Milošević turned the function of the federal president – by jurisdiction only a protocol one – into a major center of power and authority when he became head of the FRY. Milošević’s unconstitutional position was indirectly acknowledged by major international factors, accepting him as the chief negotiator on behalf of the FRY in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and formally recognizing his status of chief of the FRY delegation during peace negotiations in Dayton in November–December 1995. Neither the then formal president of the FRY nor the president of the federal government had any

⁷ The very structure of Montenegro’s economy, where a significant share of the social product was contributed by the Pljevlja Thermal Power Plant, the Nikšić Steel Plant, and the Aluminum Plant in Podgorica, did not provide serious preconditions for the creation of an ecological state in the foreseeable future.

role or ever appeared in any negotiations on these issues.⁸ Additionally, since 1998 Montenegro has seen a shift in the center of power, with M. Đukanović being the leading position of the DPS. Speaking to Radio Free Europe, the Montenegrin Prime Minister M. Đukanović gave his picture of technology governing and that of the Montenegrin mentality, which is inclined to create a kind of cult of personality: "Having been learning the Montenegrin mentality for 47 years, I will tell you my experience, which I can hardly objectify: Montenegrins were building a cult of personality – while at the same time – very selfishly and pragmatically, they were tailoring system to their own needs, because it has always been easier to them to come to the Lord to solve their problem than to torment themselves with offices and institutions".⁹ Here we can recognize the propaganda principle of the personalization of politics, i.e. The identification of a specific policy with a specific politician, bringing in an unbreakable bond of a certain political program with a very specific personality. Where ex-communist parties were not defeated, but continue to control economic and political power, they have all the conditions to draw attention to the broader institutional programs, socio-economic changes, to co-opt potential opposition by selective material incentives in the executive, to control the state apparatus and large public companies, allowing them to achieve these goals and re-establish the patronage network.¹⁰ Thus, the Montenegrin society was and remained in a certain semi-authoritarian mold, and the best way of fixing this mold and thus the government is developing some type of a cult of personality based on the charisma of leaders, the center of power, whose attitudes and views become a priori acceptable to the most.

The Montenegrin tribal society has largely accepted authority as a real and urgent need in order to make the stronger state cohesion, and the character of leader and ruler as inviolable. However, often there were historical examples of movement in the extreme, in cringe, creating a cult of personality, and thus the moral decay in the battle for the favor of government, which eventually becomes a model and matrix. A binding for one person (or more generally the principle of personalization of politics), not primarily for the idea or program, indicates a lack of emancipation and critical thinking, as well as undeveloped mature social and political consciousness of citizens.¹¹ Thus, during election campaigns in most parties in Montenegro, instead of concrete programs and targets figured party leaders are at the forefront, trying to attract voters from different social classes with their charisma and promises.¹² Typical is the tendency that the attitude of the leader establishes as sacrosanct will of one man, and then he is not a democratic leader anymore, but a

⁸ Darmanović, *Democratic transitions in South and South-East Europe*, p. 182.

⁹ Vijesti, 14 October 2009.

¹⁰ Orlović, *Political parties and power*, p. 81: "Charismatic parties characterized by the tendency of individuals to be close to the charismatic leader."

¹¹ Knežević, *History of political culture*, p. 136: "The political culture of real socialist societies was rudiment and underdeveloped, traditional and parochial, and it resulted in a dominant authoritarian orientation and authoritarian structure of personality".

¹² Milas, *The reasons for the inconsistencies*, p. 474: "Consistency of political choice is not restricted to the class to which a person belongs, so that the connection between social status and voting affection is not absolute".

man who becomes the master of destinies, and the deputies in parliament are only “party soldiers”. Since the breakup of Yugoslavia parties have mutually measured by program, but also by the leaders as holders of different conceptions; along with the party programs, it was important to citizens how persuasive and eloquent their leader was, his charisma and ability to respond to the opponent’s attack in public, etc. Parties sought to shape the public opinion, taking account of what is popular and trendy, which ideas and goals would have a better pass, were accepted as positive, progressive, “in”, etc.

The ex-communist party should be counted among those parties that have their roots in the old regime, it being understood that they inherited a major part of former communist assets, membership and leadership. The DPS took over the property of SKCG and since the unchanged managing set of the ruling Communist Party has become the leadership of the transformed party, it can be concluded that the DPS was the successor of SKCG. The assessment of continuity with the earlier ruling Communist Party is true also for the Socialist People’s Party of Montenegro (Socialistička narodna partija Crne Gore – the SNPCG), although this party later formed in 1998. The case of the SNPCG is unique, because it is a party that seceded from the DPS in mid-1997, but its core staff, the same as the DPS, are individuals who had belonged to the management structures of the SKCG until 1990.¹³

To most people the introduction of a multiparty system was a novelty because an alternative to the Communist Party in the form of new and ideologically diverse political subjects appeared for the first time. Initially, the opposition parties were small with underdeveloped infrastructure and a small number of municipal boards. Such opposition parties had opposed themselves to a large ruling party, which was backed by a state-party apparatus and its influence that was felt in all spheres of society. The technology of ruling in multiparty Montenegro during the 1990s could be characterized as a monopoly of the powerful DPS, which basing on the achievements of the Communist Party, logistics infrastructure and property, imposed its rules of the political game. Thus, political-propaganda activities took place in the newly created conditions of pluralism, economic crisis and the war environment. Populism manifested by way of political meetings, debates, rallies, rhetoric and discourse laden national charge, stressing on political opponents in an atmosphere of hard monopoly of the few media – these were just some of the general guidelines of state. The DPS was before the SPS in Serbia and tried a formal division of ministerial chair in the government with other parties, while maintaining all the key portfolios in the government. It was more a gesture of goodwill towards the opposition than a real need because the DPS had, after the second parliamentary elections in January 1992, absolute power with 46 of the 85 seats in Parliament. Of course, it was the desire of the authorities to present itself to the domestic and international public as democratic, showing willingness to reach consensus and engage in dialogue.

¹³ Goati, *Parties of Serbia and Montenegro*, 64: “SNPCG has not received a piece of property of the DPS, but in this case priority is in the personnel not the property dimension of organizational continuity.”

In the period of multiparty politics, the citizens of Montenegro repeatedly elected the president of the republic: 1992, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2008, and 2013. After the first multiparty elections in 1990 the elections to the Parliament of Montenegro were held three more times until 2000, namely in 1992, 1996 and 1998. After the October changes in Serbia, Montenegro held parliamentary elections in 2001, 2002, 2006, 2009, and 2012. The DPS won dominantly all electoral competition for the Montenegrin Parliament. No other political party in post-communist countries of Southeast Europe can boast such election results. The following table presents the parliamentary election victory of the DPS from 1990 (still under the name of the League of Communists) until the 2009 elections.¹⁴

Elections and year	Registered electors	Voted (%)	Percentage of votes given to the DPS/SK CG	Percentage of seats in the Parliament
1. Parliamentary –1990	402,905	75.8%	56.2% (SKCG)	66.4%
2. Parliamentary –1992	429,047	68.9%	43.8%	54.1%
3. Parliamentary –1996	449,824	66.9%	51.2%	63.4%
4. Parliamentary –1998	457,633	76.0%	49.5% (coalition with the SDP, NS)	53.8%
5. Parliamentary –2001	447,673	79.3%	42.4% (coalition with the SDP)	46.1%
6. Parliamentary –2002	455,791	77.5%	47.3% (coalition with the SDP)	52.0%
7. Parliamentary –2006	484,430	71.4%	48.6% (coalition with the SDP)	50.6%
8. Parliamentary –2009	498,305	66.2%	51.02% (coalition with the SDP, BS iand HGI)	58.0%

During the period 1990–1998, the Montenegrin Parliament convened more frequently than the former Federal Parliament and the National Parliament of Serbia, although the work of the Montenegrin Parliament was not particularly intense. Between 1990 and 1994, the Parliament of Montenegro the average annual sessions totaled less than a month. This could be considered insufficient, since it was the initial phase of parliamentarianism. After examining the operation of the highest representative body of the Republic, it could easily be noted that the government dominated in this work, while the opposition and deputies as individuals were in the background. That is illustrated by data that out of 253 laws that were passed from 1990 to 1994 the government proposed 251, the opposition party only one and someone else also one.¹⁵ In the 1990s the Montenegrin parliament was used as an arena for confronting the attitudes of the authorities and those of the opposition. The transmission of parliamentary sessions by radio and television went in favor of the representatives of the parties that used the using the parliamentary rostrum for a free form of promotion of their ideas and opinions in the form of presentations and replicas.

¹⁴ The table is made on the basis of the final election results, data from various authors, (2007). Elections and the electoral legislation in Montenegro 1990, 2006. CEMI, Podgorica, and the website www.snp.co.me.

¹⁵ Goati, *Elections in Yugoslavia*, p. 131: “The assessment of insufficient intensive activities of the Montenegrin Parliament is not valid for 1997 and 1998 because of the split in the ruling DPS (spring 1997) the focus of political life moved to Parliament”.

Political pluralism, established in the 1990s brought a number of innovations in the Montenegrin political life and society. Although the elections were held on the basis of competition of different (and conflicting) political options and candidates, they actually did not bring a real possibility of changing the party in power. Of course, it was not expected from a well-organized political institution such as the League of Communists that after nearly half a century of monopoly position and influence in political and social life, to hand over the power to someone else. Although under pressure for the introduction of party pluralism, the SKCG still refused to let the decades-long monopoly of power gets out of its hand, imitating still in public the successful “formula” of the previous system. Thus “free of bureaucrats” in January 1989, the League of Communists of Montenegro “smoothly” won the first multiparty elections in Montenegro held that year (83 out of a total of 125 seats in the Parliament of Montenegro). Renaming the Democratic Party of Socialists (the DPS) in mid-1991, as indicated, did not affect the outcome in the public, as shown on the next elections in 1992. Resting on the heritable infrastructure, controlling radio and television, the only daily newspaper in the republic, i.e. “*Pobjeda*”, skillfully manipulating with the national issue, but also striving that national passions did not get out of control, the government in Montenegro managed to outlast significantly other ex-communist elites in the Balkans.¹⁶ Thus, the diversity and fragmentation of the newly formed opposition that was not sufficiently “managed” without the necessary logistics and infrastructure, served the DPS in the process of governance. Also, numerous conflicts within the opposition greatly facilitated the establishment of the DPS governmental technologies. The opposition accused the DPS of having enormous amounts of means compared to the other participants in the political and electoral process from the beginning. The political discourse was therefore based on the relation between the ruling monopolistic DPS and the not favored opposition. The opposition was deeply polarized around the main identity and the political rift – Serbianism opposite Montenegrinism, a common state with Serbia (Unionists) and the idea of the independence of Montenegro (Independents).

In the initial period of the multiparty system, the Montenegrin authorities, as the main political opponent, recognized the Alliance of reform forces of Yugoslavia in Montenegro. Subsequently, the Liberal Union of Montenegro was one of the main targets of government sting. The media took a negative attitude toward a part of the opposition and sought to discredit it morally. At the time of the war and in an environment marked by growing national tensions in Montenegro, this was an easy way to portray political opponents as traitors.¹⁷

¹⁶ Vukadinović, *The new political strategy*, p. 111: “The advantages were the small territory and population of Montenegro, as well as keeping “middle line and measure” in many key political issues. In Montenegro in 1990 there were 21 political parties, and at the end of 1992 that number increased to 27, so that one party came to less than 15,000 eligible voters”.

¹⁷ White, *From codes*, p. 443: “Elite in power therefore used every opportunity in the first years of political pluralism to discredit and minimize importance of political opponents. Also, the few, controlled media were in the function of political struggle, in accordance with the functional and utilitarian logic”.

Skillfully balancing the dichotomy of Serbianism and Montenegrinism, the political elite in Montenegro sought to present itself as a guarantor of peace and stability. In a battle with the opposition, the DPS formally took a position of ideological and political center, but in fact, it was an ally of the Unionists and the SPS in Serbia. However, the DPS was never part of Milošević's ruling party in Serbia (the SPS), and it could dominate only through loyal elite in Montenegro, which was formally an equal federal partner to Serbia, as per the Constitution of 1974 and the Constitution of the FRY in 1992. However, this loyalty had various stages and some inner tensions that culminated in the conflict in 1997.

Forming of coalition, the "National unity" 1996, marked a turning point in relations of opposition parties in Montenegro. It was a sign of their willingness to cooperate that did not exist in the early 1990s. At the time of the first elections in 1990 and the second in 1992 in Montenegro, there were not only frequent frictions between the leaderships of the LSCG and the NS, but also physical conflicts between their supporters on site. Great conflicted charge between the NS and the LSCG in the beginning of the pluralistic period resulted primarily from their uncompromising programmatic political platform. To such different programmatic political platform tied, so to speak naturally, ethnically distinct groups of supporters: to the NS members of the Montenegrin and Serbian nationality and to the LSCG members of national minorities (Muslims, Albanians), which certainly contributed to the inter-party conflict. However, during and after working together in government formed in 1993, in which representatives from the opposition also participated, the relations between them strengthened, crowning in 1996 in the scope of the National Unity coalition. An explanation of the convincing election victory of the ruling DPS in elections in late 1996, should take into account a traditionally broad support that this party enjoyed among the Montenegrin electorate, as well as the ability of the DPS that managed to convince the Montenegrin public that end of the war in the former Yugoslav republics and the abolition of UN sanctions against Yugoslavia, were the results of their peaceful politics. The outcome of the federal elections in Montenegro was certainly influenced by the preeminent position of the DPS in the official media. In addition, the number of constituencies was "adapted to" the ruling DPS, whose influence attributed to an amendment of the federal law on constituencies. By means of the said amendments, which were adopted shortly before the elections despite the resistance of the opposition parties, the number of constituencies in Montenegro increased from one to seven. The proportional electoral system, which was established at the beginning of the multiparty system in Montenegro, has never changed; however, the number of constituencies was changed before each election, which had a significant impact on the electoral system and the election results. Thus, in the first elections for the Parliament of Montenegro in 1990 there were 20 constituencies (equaling the number of municipalities in Montenegro at the time); for the next elections, which were held in December 1992, a system was established that was more favorable for the opposition, with Montenegro as a single electoral district. Ahead of the 1996 elections, the DPS, through a sudden maneuver in the Parliament, altered the number of electoral districts

from one to fourteen without the knowledge or consent of the opposition.¹⁸ Also, the usage of the so-called D'Hondt formula went into the hands of the authorities. The D'Hondt formula, which was used for the distribution of parliamentary seats in Montenegro, meant that the votes of parties that did not cross the threshold were mostly "given" to the strongest party, and hence so overwhelming difference in favor of the DPS, versus "more than half result", that the Montenegrin opposition sharply criticized constantly.

The political elite

After the 1997 split at the top of the DPS, the wing of the party led by M. Đukanović was forced to accept the bulk of yesterday's political opponents as allies. Thus, the formation of a broad bloc in the coalition "For Better Life" prevailed over the rivals who were later personified by the SNP. It was inevitable that under the influence of the new coalition partners changed perceptions and attitudes, primarily about national issues, statehood, and political culture. Since the 1997 collapse of the until that point unified DPS and the *Agreement* the authorities and the opposition began working actively on the improvement of voter lists in September of the same year. The biggest problem with voter lists occurred during the presidential elections in October 1997, when in the period between the two rounds of elections thousands of changes were made. Also, it happened that a large number of citizens did not have the right to vote because of the numerous irregularities that occurred in the voter lists; due to the inefficiency their data were either incomplete or did not correspond with the data in their personal documents. The system was chaotic, leaving enough room for speculation about possible irregularities, and led to doubts about the results of future elections. Đukanović's policy after turning away from Milošević pleased the West (Slovenia played its role here as an intermediary, since Kučan brought him to Brdo during Clinton's visit). It is about pragmatic politics towards the so-called stabilocracy in the Balkans.

Former DPS members became the government's new political opponents after the split in the ruling party; they began founding the Socialist National Party (SNP) and a fierce political campaign. The new political picture demanded new dominant ideas and attitudes. An until then unseen political war unfolded in the Montenegrin space, with numerous allegations and rumors being placed in the public, which heated up the atmosphere. Differentiating by the lines for Yugoslavia "with" and "without" alternative, the matters of the church, language and ethnic divisions. The organization of activities during the election campaign could be roughly presented as follows: electoral staffs were formed on the state and municipal levels, for certain parts of the municipality, local centers, urban zones, coordinators were installed, whose job was to control the work of party activists responsible for a specific village, building or block of buildings, town, etc. This hierarchy was characteristic of primarily large and organized political entities (like the DPS and SNP).

¹⁸ Goati, *Elections in Yugoslavia*.

The DPS is therefore the only former Communist Party that was continuously in power for more than two decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall. From the “pro-Yugoslav Communists” within the Yugoslav federation, across the state union with Serbia, they transformed into “pro-independence” oriented liberal democrats, who won the independence of Montenegro in 2006. Thanks to the decision to resist Milošević, Montenegro gained great favor with the international community (with accompanying “connivance” because of certain measures taken at the national level) and a sort of status of “a striking force” against the undemocratic regime in Serbia (persecuted Belgrade media have registered in Podgorica, and the opponents of the regime whose security was endangered in Belgrade found refuge in the “pro-European Republic”).

Managing to impose and present itself – after the split in the party in 1997 – not only to domestic but also to the international public as the leading democratic force in the former FRY, thus gaining sympathy and support of important international factors, the DPS became a powerful machine with an extremely disciplined electorate and well-organized party and propaganda infrastructure. This is proved by its remaining in power upwards of two decades, which is unprecedented in the ex-communist countries. After Milošević’s enthronization in late 2000, the DPS went one step further in changing the legitimacy of government, moving to the position of realistic independentism, confederalism embodied in an alliance called the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2003. Soon after a period of open independentism arrived and a platform of referendum for independence was adopted. After the referendum of 2006, the DPS governed Montenegro based on the legitimacy of the creator of an independent state and on the platform of Euro-Atlantic integration and reform. This ability for periodic updates of the basis of legitimacy, but without losing support, points to another important factor, i.e. is expressed pragmatism and realism in the treatment of the most difficult political issues. Then, there is certainly a factor of leadership, because the party leader since 1997– M. Đukanović – is a constant winner. The winners are, self-evidently, especially worshiped in that part of the audience that they represent, i.e. that they “play for”. Consequently, it is not surprising that the leader of the DPS reached charismatic popularity among supporters of his policies. Clientelist interventions in significant parts of the electorate certainly contributed to the election victories of the DPS. As the ruling party in the transitional period, it has considerably more partnership and political – than liberal and regulated capitalism – at its disposal, to manage and, if necessary, manipulate with the state budget for electoral purposes, as well as various material resources coming from an alliance of political structures and the emerging class of Balkan “transition” businessmen. Successful and pragmatic foreign politics has made the Montenegrin authorities a very acceptable partner in the eyes of the major international actors, and a successful foreign policy in the Balkans has always been a reliable support and a significant factor in long-term rule. To this should be added the aforementioned technology of ruling with “middle course”, winning minority voters by model of affirmative action and others. Some of the features of the technology of governance in Montenegro could therefore be reduced to:

- the monopoly over state resources and institutions and their control (finance, police, judiciary, education and university);
- the control and monopoly over the media (public and “independent” media);
- pragmatism at the ideological and political changes in line with the mainstream of the global movements (liberal democracy, Euro-Atlantism), which received the status of favorite and support of relevant international factors;
- well organized and elaborate party infrastructure inherited from the Communist Party;
- a relatively small territory and the electorate that is significantly easier to control (where almost “everyone knows everybody”);
- clientelism, a firm connection of power, state structures and big capital;
- holding the kind of moderate “middle course”, where the majority of the other political options seem extreme and whose possible adoption will “led to instability”;
- disunity and fragmentation of the opposition which, in relation to the DPS, looks “immature”, “non-grown”, “not sufficiently capable to cope with the weight of government”, etc.;
- a unique “aversion” of Montenegrin voters to change government as historic heritage.

Providing an explanation for consecutive electoral victories of the DPS still represents a challenge for research, especially considering that the victory was accomplished even though the standard of living of citizens in the 1990s continuously decreased (particularly in the first half of the decade), the atmosphere marked by the surrounding war, bombings, crime and the gray market. Part of the explanation might be sought in the fact that questions of national and state identity dominated at the center of political controversy in elections, while economic issues were pushed into the background. In such circumstances, voters expressed support to the government’s “national” policy, at the same time accepting the burden of economic difficulties as a “price” and following leitmotif of that policy.

Political propaganda and political marketing in transition period

The technology of governing recently converted communist leaders to nationalists, “defenders of national interests”, “fathers of motherland” and “leaders” (*the so-called voždovi*), added up to the harsh crackdown with all potential opponents, using various forms to discredit them, labeling them “traitor of national interests”, “foreign mercenaries”, abuse of various sports fan groups, using insiders in opposition parties to divide them in moments when they become too dangerous to the existing regime or uncooperative, using emotionally strong nationalist statements in order to gain voters and others.

Montenegro did not represent an exception in the whole jumble of ideas, policies and turbulent events on the territory of former Yugoslavia. However, its specificity lay in a smaller space and a smaller population, which nevertheless represented

crucial parameters for easier placement and inducing the desired ideas and policy options. Without the great tradition of political pluralism, in the atmosphere of collapse of the economy, awakened nationalism, war environment, “War for Peace” (the Dubrovnik and Herzegovinian battlefield), a multi-party life represented a real collage of ideas and policies. The war atmosphere had many advantages for the government, such as reducing criticism, strengthening the might of the executive power, reducing and relativizing the power and influence of the Parliament, and any criticism of government was characterized as hostile. The homogenization and mobilization of the nation with the aim to support government policies through accentuation of national identity, with all other identities minimized, were carried out. The legitimacy of its own policies, achieved mainly through the creation of images of “us” and “other” as the complete oppositions by the production of the atmosphere of vulnerability, xenophobia, fear, media hate.

Placing the political ideas, programs, policies and attitudes in the public, in the first stage of the multi-party system, was done through a rough populism, mass manifestations of political support, the square and streets as personifications of awakened democracy and openness. Later, mimicking the global trends, the placement of political attitudes has taken more perfidious and modern forms. Thus, political marketing – which up to then added up to the presentation of programs, ideas and candidates at party conferences and promotions – has with time been overtaken by marketing in the media through advertising spots and the like.

Most party meetings were characterized by emphasizing of the party and national symbols, flags, and frantically exclamations to the leader and the party leadership. There were many instances of using some kind of propaganda techniques of “emotional sandwich” – organizing of musical or *gusle* (traditional musical instrument) events before and after the party promotions, which should primarily attract a greater number of citizens, leave a positive impression and evoke the emotions of attendants, as well as reinforce their positive attitude.

Using populism in the tribunes and rallies, copying from the communist period other agitation techniques on location, accenting party flags and emblems as “trademark”, political parties have sought to act by propaganda on the Montenegrin electorate at that time. Also, the multi-party Montenegrin parliament represented excellent “soil” for gaining political support, because the assembly’s sessions were directly followed and televised, thus facilitating expressions of political attitudes. The media scene began to develop from 1997 onwards and profiled based on the “use and satisfaction”, modeled after more developed regions. Through the open forms of promotional activity, through propaganda of participation in the purpose of considering the audience as passive subjects, propaganda of agitation, using the principle of needs, technique of emotions transfer, the frequent repetition of ideas, attitudes and techniques of reward and punishment, transfer and others, a powerful influence was exercised on the public opinion and voters.

In Montenegro, the Church has a huge influence on society, especially during elections. It is necessary to emphasize that the Church, specifically the Cetinje Metropolitanate, created the state of Montenegro in the fight against the Ottoman

Empire. Only from the mid-19th century did Montenegro become a secular rather than a theocratic state. The influence of Metropolitan Amfilohije Radović during the transition period was enormous. Besides restoring over 600 churches and monasteries devastated during the communist period, he actively participated in and interfered with political developments in Montenegro. It is considered that his support for Milo Đukanović during the political crisis of 1997/98 contributed to Đukanović's victory over Momir Bulatović. To somewhat counter the influence of the Metropolitanate of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Đukanović's government formed the Autocephalous Montenegrin Church, registering it on 20 January 2000, at a police station in the city of Cetinje. Although small, this religious community was given significant media space and finances.

At the beginning of the new millennium, Montenegro received investments worth several billion dollars from the Russian capital. Even the leading political party DPS signed a strategic cooperation protocol with Putin's United Russia. After Montenegro joined NATO (without a plebiscite, referendum, or the will of the people) – relations with the Russian Federation cooled under Western pressure.

Conclusive considerations

The topic addressed in the paper at hand is the political life of Montenegro during two decades. In the given period, the Montenegrin society underwent a major political transformation and change in all aspects of social life. The aim of this paper is to analyze the socio-political changes from the introduction of multi-party system to 2010. Previous bibliography, critical and scientific reviews clarifying the turbulent events in the recent social and political history in the territory of Montenegro are very fragmentary. The reason for this probably lies in the insufficient historical distance to the events of that period; nowadays, their relapses and reflections have a significant impact on the socio-political reality of the modern Montenegrin society. In response to the hypothesis in the paper, it could be generally concluded that within the concept of political-propaganda activity in Montenegro during the period of social transition and through promotional practices, some of the universal characteristics of modern political propaganda are recognized, which was principally related to the use of mass media and other means and forms of political communication: mass rallies and conventions, political agitation, and interpersonal communication with potential electorate.

Several used propaganda techniques and principles, depending on the period, were more significant and dominant (first of all, the influence of emotions, manipulating with conformism of the voters). They are associated with certain modifications in accordance with the mentality of environment and space where they manifested. The widely used principle of simplifying the image of the world, the creation of an enemy figure and finding the culprit (labeling them traitors of national interests, criminals, robbers, foreign mercenaries and others); the personalization of politics (binding political agenda with a leader's name and charisma), the separation of identity and image; the segmentation of audience and stratification of

propaganda (the creation of regional, national and status separation and the activity on the target groups: pensioners, youth, labor); by using techniques of direct and indirect promotion, transfer techniques (linking political programs or leaders with positive or negative categories, institutions or personalities from history or public life); techniques of reward and punishment (the fear manipulation, vulnerability, conformism, financial status, etc.) are the predominantly used propaganda principles and techniques. These techniques and principles are not an inheritance, an *apropos* “product” of Montenegrin political scene, but were used as universally persuasive “skills and knowledge”, with some “local” modifications in accordance with the needs of the moment.

Special hypothesis was concerned with the kind of political “phenomenon“, atypical for most ex-communist states – that former Montenegrin Communist Party, after decades of political monopoly continued to rule (in the changed political circumstances) decades after the collapse of the communist system. Acting on several tracks of diverse electorate, trying to present itself as the only possible solution and choice at a time, pursuing the “golden middle” and medium political course, one party emerged from the League of Communists of Montenegro (renamed the DPS), using the existing infrastructure and monopoly over the media, holding the state resources in propagating the party’s program and with time becoming a respectable and dominant political entity. Building upon the system of monopolies inherited from the single-party period and by efficiently building the party infrastructure, the DPS created an extremely strong party organization, a kind of political “machinery” to win election. Managing – after a split in the party in 1997– to present itself not only to the domestic but primarily to the foreign public as the leading democratic force in the former FRY and thus gaining sympathy and support of important international factors, the DPS has become a powerful organization with an extremely disciplined and stable electorate and well-organized party and propaganda infrastructure, which is attested by the fact that it remained in power upwards of two decades, which is unprecedented in the ex-communist countries. Of course, its advantage was the disunited and disputed opposition, often immature and claiming that all elections in Montenegro were “staged and the results were known in advance“. The advantages of the DPS would basically be reduced to the following:

- Maximum utilization of resources and its benefits as the strongest and the ruling party in Montenegro;
- minimizing its own weaknesses (the legacy of communism, compromised staff, linking with the economic and social difficulties in the country, linking the war in former Yugoslavia, smuggling and corruption, personal conflicts);
- maximum exploitation of the opposition’s potential weaknesses (Leadership: opposition government in some municipalities and its temptations; ideological segment, bad program development and poorly organized party infrastructure, apparent abstruseness and inconsistency in policy; intra-party conflicts and rivalries; personal conflicts and leadership vanities; political inexperience, lack of training professionals, incompetence and inexperience of staff; conceptual

- stereotypes of revenge and retaliation if they eventually win power; stereotype of non-patriotism and betrayal of national interests, etc.);
- maximizing the impact of certain organizations, associations (other political parties, various local political organizations; veterans' organizations, "pro-government" NGO organizations etc.), whose activities supported government policies or the minimization of some parts of the opposition;
 - maximizing the effects of international activities, support and assistance;
 - tight control of the media and manipulating them in the creation and transferring of the desired policy;
 - a unique symbiosis in many segments of the party and the state, or at least the lack of clear boundaries.

Party activities of the DPS were realized through:

- parliamentary work of the deputies and councilors of the ruling DPS;
- organized activities of membership in the government and public enterprises and institutions;
- persuasive engagement of the membership through state bodies and the work of party activists on site ("door to door").

On the other hand, it is often perceived that the Montenegrin opposition enjoyed advantages and benefits. Political experience tells us that since the introduction of the multi-party system, many, primarily medium and smaller opposition parties, have had undoubted benefits arising from their opposition status. Thanks to the "privilege" of being in opposition, they were very sharp critics of the government, sharply criticizing its every move, not being required to have solid arguments, weight and level of responsibility similar to that of the DPS as the holder of power. This of course has not prevented them from occasionally entering the same government when it was "necessary" (and profitable) to be constructive and tip the scale in a helpful manner. This holds true primarily for the People's Party (in the period 1998 – 2000), the Liberal Union (2001–2002), and the SDP (1998 – present). The practice of some sort of manipulation of ethnic and religious corps of the electorate is interesting as well. Thus, the two dominant Albanian parties (DUA and DS) imposed themselves as the protectors of the interests of the Albanian minority in Montenegro; the SNS, the DSS, the NS and a few other small parties considered themselves to be "primarily and mostly Serbian". On the other hand, a number of parties with Muslim and Bošniaks prefix did not have much impact on their "corps" because the bulk of this corpus is composed of supporters of the SDP and the DPS (however, until 1997 they mostly supported the SDA in the beginning, then the LSCG and the SDP).

The government was preparing the ground for the implementation of certain political concepts and ideas and tried to form public consciousness by means of which these ideas would be supported and accepted. By resorting to manipulation, it has really sought to create images of reality that resembled reality. The desired vista was created and on a daily basis strongly and persistently imposed by the media. In doing so this vista became common and a valid benchmark. Any

criticism of thus designed reality is associated with a potential risk for the state, fundamental national interests, the society's stability and security. The extent and historical presentation of facts might be a certain drawback of this paper; however, extremely complex events that are discussed must be explained in a broader social context that witnessed persuasive activities of political subjects in Montenegro, and review the political propaganda and its characteristics through a political history of a turbulent period. The aim was to present a highly complex and turbulent epoch through which Montenegrin society passed (in an atmosphere of global fractures, war environment and bombings, nationalism of all kinds, economic collapse, diametrically opposing objectives of the ruling elite created in the short term) through a prism and form of political and promotional activities. We hope that this paper will represent a contribution and stimulation for further detailed scientific understanding of this period.

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POVZETEK

Politična tranzicija v Črni Gori 1989-2010

Radenko Ščekić – Aleksandar Ćuković

Članek obravnava politično življenje Črne Gore v letih 1989–2010. V tem času je šla črnogorska družba skozi pomembno politično preobrazbo in spremembe v vseh vidikih socialnega življenja. V članku so analizirane socio-politične spremembe od uvedbe večstrankarskega sistema do leta 2010. Za ta čas je značilno, da je oblast ostala v rokah starih struktur, saj je Demokratična stranka socialistov (Demokratska partija socijalista Crne Gore – DPS), ki je bila v obravnavanem času vodilna in vladajoča politična stranka, nastala s preimenovanjem nekdanje Zveza komunistov Črne Gore. Pri tem se je lahko naslonila na že obstoječe partijske infrastrukture, na medijski monopol, ter na državne vire v svojih rokah. DPS je tako nastopala kot dobro organizirana stranka z izjemno discipliniranim in stabilnim volilnim telesom ter razvito propagandna infrastrukturo. Glede na ostale (novoustanovljene) stranke je imela DPS tako odločilno prednost, ki jo je znala dobro vnovčiti. Na osmih parlamentarnih volitvah v Črni Gori med letoma 1990 in 2009 je bila zmagovalka in je praviloma dobila več kot polovico vseh poslanskih mest. To ji je omogočilo, da je bila več kot dveh desetletij na oblasti, kar je brez primere v nekdanjih komunističnih državah.

Na splošno je mogoče reči, da so v konceptu politično-propagandnega delovanja v Črni Gori v obdobju družbene tranzicije in skozi promocijske prakse prepoznane nekatere univerzalne značilnosti sodobne politične propagande, povezane z uporabo množičnih medijev, shodov in konvencij, politično agitacijo in drugimi oblikami komuniciranja s potencialnimi volivci. Tehnike in principi niso dediščina, oziroma »proizvod« črnogorske politične scene, ampak so bili uporabljeni kot univerzalne prepričljive »veščine in znanja«, z nekaj »lokalnimi« modifikacijami v skladu s potrebami trenutka