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# The Role of Elites in the Formation of National Identities: The Case of Montenegro

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The Role of Elites in the Formation of National Identities: The Case of Montenegro


by


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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to answer two interlinked central questions with respect to Montenegrins' divide over statehood and identity: Why and how Montenegrins, whom were once called 'the purest and the best of Serbs', sought to end their century-long common state experience with Serbia and instead establish their own nation-state in 2006, and what explains the rise of Montenegrin national identity and its transformation into nationalism? In attempting to answer these questions, it traces the historical development of Montenegrin national thought dating back to the early 20th century when Montenegro was annexed by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. Through the use and examination of opinion polls, newspaper articles, political and ethno-cultural state policies implemented by the ruling political elites, and their interviews, public speeches, and press conferences, this study also seeks to unveil how Montenegrin-ness evolved over time.

The central argument running through this thesis is that Montenegrin nationalism as a political phenomenon was precipitated through elite competition. In their competition over social, political, or economic resources, the Montenegrin elites, through the implementation of political and ethno-cultural state policies and the active use of media outlets, managed to turn certain facts and events into points of reference for the citizens of Montenegro in the way they identify themselves. Thus, those events have become the basis of people's belonging to a certain community and helped demarcate that specific community (Montenegrins) from that of Serbs. Backed by the reconstructed meaning of Montenegrin-ness, this emerging Montenegrin national consciousness facilitated the breakup with Serbia and the declaration of independence on 21 May 2006.

**INTRODUCTION**

The 20th century history of the Balkans has been predominantly shaped by the efforts of both the international community and the South Slav states to establish a common state encompassing ethnically diverse peoples of the region. Responsible for this has primarily been both the old dream of unifying South Slav peoples and gathering them under a single roof and the reconfiguration of the European balance of power altered by the fall of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. The materialization of this centuries-long common state ideal was first marked by the proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 and then took various forms of Yugoslavias (the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia from 1944-1946, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1963, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992). However, the establishment of the first common state carried different meanings for each constituent state. From the Serbian standpoint, it served as a means of extending its influence in the region. Conversely, for Montenegrins, it marked the loss of the tradition of independent statehood which was granted by the international community at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. For Slovenes and Croats, it would operate as an umbrella in which they could preserve their socio-cultural distinctiveness (Pavlovic, 2003a) and pursue national interests.

On one side, these divergent interests both undermined the first unified South Slav state which, as Ivo Banac remarks (1984), did not meet even the principal aspirations of some constituent states, and provided a fertile ground for the Serbian state to extend its dominance. On the other, the constituent republics' conflicting interests played the key role in the violent breakup

of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Triggered by Slobodan Milosevic's ethno-nationalist policies seeking to place the Serbian republic in a more advantageous position under the federal umbrella, the Slav dream which once managed to unify six republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia) and two semi-autonomous provinces (Kosovo, Vojvodina) came to an end in 1991. Unlike its Soviet and Czechoslovak counterparts, however, the demise of Yugoslavia was not peaceful. Conversely, it was marked by intense ethnic wars between Serbia and the republics that declared independence from SFRY (Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina) with the exception of Macedonia. Hence, the map of the Balkans was constantly redrawn throughout the 1990s. Yugoslavia, in particular, was torn apart. The only republic committed to a common future with Serbia was Montenegro.

The Montenegrin case in itself represents new avenues for the study of nationalism. Surprisingly, however, until the Euro-Atlantic integration process gained importance and momentum, Montenegro had been one of the most under-researched parts of the Balkan peninsula. As Florian Bieber rightly pointed out (2003), the absence of ethnic armed conflict and its small size has led Montenegro to remain in the periphery of scholarly debates. Yet, it is exactly the nonexistence of ethnic war in Montenegro, during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, as well as at the time of the proclamation of independence in 2006, which makes the Montenegrin case deserving of special attention. First and foremost, the question of why and how Montenegro, where 95.4% of the voters supported the continuation of Yugoslavia in the 1992 referendum, showed a radical break in the aftermath of the fall of Milosevic, opted for independence in 2006, and achieved to do so in a democratic way unlike other former Yugoslav states is still in need of clarification. This study, in a sense, is an attempt to fill that gap.

The radical transformation Montenegro experienced during the post-communist era, which eventually steered the country toward independence, is primarily connected to what analysts have referred to as the 'Montenegrin Question'. Initially coined to address the question of statehood and the inclusion of Montenegro into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the Montenegrin Question, in its contemporary usage, refers to Montenegrins' divide over statehood and identity. To put it explicitly, are Montenegrins ethnic Serbs or do they constitute a separate ethnic community? Should Montenegro commit to a common future with Serbia under a single roof or reassert itself as a sovereign state? This century-long dilemma for Montenegrins once again came to the fore in the aftermath of the breakup of Yugoslavia. The Montenegrin political scene, subsequent to the split in the governing party of Montenegro (Democratic Party of Socialists – DPS) in 1997, was structured primarily around the question of independence, leading to extreme levels of polarization within the country.

Furthermore, as the census results indicate, the ethnic composition of Montenegro experienced a dramatic change within the post-communist era. The percentage of self-identified Montenegrins decreased from 61.9% to 43% between the years 1991 and 2003, whereas the share of Serbs increased from 9.34% to 32%. Chapter three and four reveal that this was mainly caused by the shift in the meaning of Montenegrin-ness, which started under the federal umbrella of Yugoslavia and accelerated following the breakup. Once implying nothing more than a territorial and tribal attachment, Montenegrin-ness gradually came to mean the ethnic/national identity of Montenegrins, a clear sign of the fact the Serb and Montenegrin identity schemas became mutually exclusive. Accordingly, even though the 1991 and 2003 census results show a decrease in the share of Montenegrins in proportion to those of Serbs, what we have seen in the Montenegrin case since the DPS-split may well be defined as the rise of Montenegrin ethnic/national identity and its

transformation into nationalism. The net effect of this transformation has manifested itself in the increasing support for the government's policies aiming to gradually detach Montenegro from federal institutions and to drive her toward independence. Eventually, following the establishment of a less-strict federation between Serbia in 2002, 55.5% of Montenegrin electorates, on 21 May 2016, voted in favor of independence, marking the official end of the Slav dream.

The preceding analysis presented Montenegro's sui generis road leading to independence in general terms. However, the questions remain of what caused Montenegrins, whom were once called 'the purest and the best of Serbs' (Lazarevic, 2011), to estrange themselves from Serb-ness, break ranks with Serbia, and pursue a different path? Why Montenegro didn't opt for secession from the common state with Serbia in the first place but rather waited fifteen years to follow other former Yugoslav republics? If the issue of identity change in Montenegrin population experienced between the years 1991 and 2003 would explain this, considering centuries-long histories of South Slavs, then what caused the identity change in the first place and how come such a radical shift could occur within such a short time period? If nationalisms and national identity formations are precipitated and shaped by political elites as it has been claimed by several studies examining the emergence of nationalist movements and ethnic conflicts (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990), then what role do elites exactly play in these processes and how do they affect the outcome? Are there any other causal factors? Specifically, what is the importance of the economic and political environments for the trajectory of nationalist movements and how do cultural elements function in elites' agendas? If nationalisms are elite projects, does this mean they are not inevitable but irreversible? To provide answers to these questions, this thesis examines the role of elites in the rise of Montenegrin ethnic/national identity and its transformation into nationalism. This is done employing the logic of the instrumentalist approach which conceives

ethnic/national identity formation as a process originating from the elites' efforts to politicize ethnic differences for political ends (Brass, 1991).

**Methodology**

This study may well be classified under the category of disciplined configurative case studies, employing process-tracing method to address the question of Montenegrin ethnic/national identity formation and its transformation to nationalism process (George & Bennett, 2005). Through the use of an existing theory, namely Paul Brass' (1991) theory of nationalism, this thesis attempts to identify whether or not there exists a causal relationship between elite actions and the emergence of Montenegrin nationalism. By tracing the causal path hypothesized by Paul Brass from the early formulations of divergent national thoughts in Montenegro to present-day, it seeks to unveil how and to what extent elites, along with other intervening variables, play a role in the outcome.

The decision to employ Montenegro as the case under examination stems from two major reasons. First, since the motivation behind this study is to understand why and how national identities emerge and undergo radical changes through time and what leads to such outcome, it was of crucial importance to examine a case where this is explicit. As far as the Montenegrin case is concerned, census results indicate that Montenegro has experienced radical fluctuations in its ethnic composition since the establishment of SFRY. To put it explicitly, the share of the population who identified themselves as Montenegrin was 90% in 1948 census, 81.3% in 1961, 68.65% in 1981, 61.9% in 1991, 43% in 2003, and 45% in 2011. By contrast, the percentage of self-identified Serbs in Montenegro was 1.8% in 1948 census, 3% in 1961, 3.32% in 1981, 9.34% in 1991, 32% in 2003, and 28.7% in 2011. Considering the absence of a large migration wave, the census results show that the percentage of self-identified Montenegrins decreased from 90% in

1948 to 42% in 2003, whereas the share of the population who identified themselves as Serbs increased from 1.8% in 1948 to 32% in 2003 (Malasevic & Uzelac, 2007; Lazarevic, 2011; Imeri, 2016. This dramatic fluctuation in its ethnic composition within a half-century explains why Montenegro constitutes an ideal case, worth examining for the causal mechanisms at work.

Second, the question of independence still dominates the political scene in Montenegro today. Additionally, the extreme polarization of the population over the issue of statehood and identity still persists. Two contemporary examples can demonstrate this: the alleged coup attempt on 16 October 2016, and Montenegro's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 5 June 2017. The two cases are interlinked and mirror the discomfort among nearly half of the population against the country's Euro-Atlantic integration process. In the former case, as claimed by the Montenegrin government, a group of Montenegrin and Serbian citizens attempted to assassinate President Milo Djukanovic and overthrow the government due to the government's decision to join NATO (Luhn, 2017). In the latter, Montenegro's accession to NATO was ratified without holding a referendum. On the one hand, as it will be highlighted in the fourth chapter, Milo Djukanovic is considered by the Montenegrins to be the main advocate of Montenegrin independence and of the country's Euro-Atlantic integration objective. In addition, the Euro-Atlantic integration process is strongly attached to the Montenegrin identity schema and has become an identity marker in contemporary Montenegro. The majority of the self-identified Serbs are still in favor of a common state with Serbia and oppose the country's NATO accession. On the other, the government's initiative to ratify the membership to the organization by a parliamentary vote resulted in protests in some parts of the country. Combined with the alleged assassination attempt against the symbol of Montenegrin independence and Euro-Atlantic

integration process, these two incidents show that Montenegro is still an arena in which divergent national thoughts (Montenegrin and Serbian) compete with one another.

      The reason why process-tracing is employed in this study lies underneath the logic, pointed out by Pieter Troch (2008), that only by examining the historical development of national thought in Montenegro we can uncover the existing huge areas of ambiguity encircling Montenegrin identity. Considering the significant role of competition among elites, which constitutes the starting point of the causal chain theorized by Brass (1991), in the development of divergent national thoughts in Montenegro, it is reasonable to use process-tracing which is "particularly well-suited for measuring and testing hypothesized causal mechanisms" (Bennett & Checkel, 2015, p. 3). For George and Bennett (2005), it is an essential tool for both theory testing and theory development because it produces various observations within a case and these observations need to be connected in specific ways to explain the case. For Derek Beach, the process-tracing method enables the researchers to make strong causal inferences via within-case evidences about how causal processes operate in actual cases (Beach, 2017). To provide a clear definition, Bennett and Checkel (2015) refer to process-tracing method as "the analysis on process, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypothesis about causal mechanism that might causally explain the case" (p. 7).

      Besides its suitability in this study, an appropriate process-tracing practice, as stressed by George and Bennett (2005) and Bennett and Checkel (2015), requires the researcher to deal with three core problems. These are namely the resource problem, the measure-of-fit problem, and the problem of equifinality. The resource problem can occur in the absence of necessary amount of information, which undermines the researcher's search for alternative explanations and consideration of potential bias in sources. The measure-of-fit problem raises the question if the

evidence is good enough to accept or discard a hypothesis (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). To overcome these two, this study attempted to gather diverse evidence relying on three types of data. First, I examined political and ethno-cultural state policies implemented by the ruling political elites to reformulate Montenegrin identity schema. Second, the opinion poll conducted by Ipsos Strategic Marketing in 2011 as a part of the project "Symbolic Nation-Building in the West Balkans" (see Appendix for the use of the survey results) is taken into account to determine the effects of those state policies. Third, I examined fourteen interviews conducted with Montenegrin political elites to unveil how Montenegrin identity was discursively reformulated. Finally, to overcome the problem of equifinality, I paid great attention on taking alternative theoretical explanations into consideration.

**Definition of Terms**

One of the major debates that encompass the study of nationalism has been the question of how to define the twin concepts of nation and nationalism. Scholars from several disciplines attempting to make sense of this arguably the most hotly-debated phenomenon of the post-modern era have offered a substantial number of definitions. Even though they vary in their premises, as Gregory Koers rightly pointed out, they all stress the acquisition of an independent nation-state (Koers, 2000). Accordingly, since this study is primarily concerned with the role of elites in the rise of Montenegrin nationalism, I employ Benedict Anderson's definition of 'nation' and John Breuilly's definition of 'nationalism' due to the fact they both scholars emphasize the political aspect of these two phenomena.

According to Benedict Anderson (2006), a nation is an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). It is imagined in the sense that it is unthinkable for members of any nation to know, meet with, or even hear of, most of their fellow

members. It is imagined as limited because even the largest nation has no infinite borders or intention to spread across the globe, nor desires to incorporate the entire human race. Finally, it is imagined as sovereign since the phenomenon emerged in the modern period when the legitimacy of the hierarchical dynastic realm was in decline (Anderson, 2006).

For John Breuilly (1993), the concept of nationalism refers to "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments" (p. 2). As he remarks, a nationalist argument therefore is a political doctrine rest upon three principles:

1. "There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.

2. The interests and values of this notion take priority over all other interests and values.

3. The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires the attainment of at least political sovereignty" (Breuilly, 1993, p.2).

With regards to the concept of elite, I use John Higley's definition, for whom it refers to "persons who, by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially" (Higley, 2008, p. 3).

**Organizational Structure of the Study**

This study is divided into four parts. The first chapter provides an overview of the predominant theoretical explanations to the major debates that permeate the study of nationalism. In doing so, it examines the leading theoretical approaches under three main schools of thought: primordialism, modernism, and ethno-symbolism. For Paul Brass (1991), the conceptual difference among scholars dealing with the very nature of the groups involved characterizes the distinction between these categories. While the primordialist approach conceives nation as a cultural and socio-biological phenomenon, the modernist and ethno-symbolist schools of thought regard nations as creations of the modern period, of decision-makers, of elite groups, or of the

political system in which they are embedded (Bacova, 1998). For the scope of this study, particular attention will be paid to the modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches with regards to the potential role of elites in precipitating the rise of ethnic/national identities and their transformation into nationalism. Finally, this chapter elaborates on Paul Brass' theory of nationalism, outlined in his work *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (1991). To sketch his core argument briefly, Brass holds that ethnicity and nationalism are not givens, rather they are political and social constructions of elites, who draw upon, deform, and even invent materials to secure political and/or economic profits. The competition among them, in this regard, is the basic dynamic that precipitates ethnic conflict under certain conditions, which emanate from the larger economic and political surroundings rather than from the cultural values of the groups involved (Brass, 1991).

Chapter two deals with what contemporary debates over the cultural and political distinctiveness of Montenegro was built on. Specifically, it delves into the emergence of the 'Montenegrin Question' and traces back the early formulations of divergent national thoughts in Montenegro. In doing so, this chapter attempts to demonstrate that contemporary divisions over statehood and identity in Montenegro are not a product of the post-communist era; rather, its roots can be found in the interwar period (1918-1941). It was in this period when two competing forms of national thought, namely the Green (Montenegrin) and White (Serbian) traditions, emerged and increasingly diverged in Montenegro.

The third chapter explores how the communist regime laid the groundwork for the construction of national identities and how Montenegrin political elites' formulations of national thoughts evolved during the Yugoslav twentieth century. I argue that post-World War period of state socialism is of decisive importance to make sense of Montenegro's present-day ethno-political divide. It is in this period that the necessary conditions for making the transition from

ethnic group to community and for nationalist movements occur (industrialization and modernization) could be met in Montenegro. Besides that, the communist regime in Yugoslavia pervasively institutionalized nationhood which provided a fertile ground for Montenegrin elites to construct mutually exclusive categories of national identities.

Chapter four has two objectives. First, I analyze how the three breaking moments in post-communist Montenegrin history (the split in the Democratic Party of Socialists in 1997, the establishment of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2002, and the declaration of independence from Serbia in 2006) radically transformed the Montenegrin political sphere and shaped identity politics in Montenegro. Second, I explore how and through what means the reconstruction of Montenegrin-ness took place. Such examination demonstrates that the ruling political elites, through the implementation of political and ethno-cultural state policies and the active use of media outlets, managed to turn certain facts and events into points of reference for the citizens of Montenegro in the way they identify themselves. Thus, those events have become the basis of people's belonging to a certain community and helped demarcate that specific community (Montenegrins) from that of Serbs. This not only explains the path leading to Montenegrin independence, but helps us to make sense of the ambiguity surrounding the contemporary debate over statehood and identity, namely the Montenegrin Question.

In the conclusion, finally, I summarize the preceding chapters and conclude the study with an assessment of the causal explanation offered by Brass, concerning the rise of national identities transforming into nationalist movements.

**CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW OF PREDOMINATING THEORIES OF**

**NATIONALISM**

**Introduction**

The Nationalism Project, a leading online archive established by the Association for Research on Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Americas (ARENA), identifies three major debates that encompass the study of nationalism: first, the question of how to define the concepts 'nation', 'nationality', 'nationalism', 'nationhood', 'ethnicity', and 'ethnic group'; second, the debate on the period nations first came into being; and finally, the question of why and how nations and the idea of nationalism evolved over time (Zuelow, n.d). Varying in their premises, scholars of the study of nationalism have gathered around these three central questions and attempted to make sense of arguably the most hotly-debated phenomenon of the post-modern era.

Are nations timeless phenomena whose existence went hand in hand with the creation of mankind? Or are they products of the modern era? In other words, are nations something we socially created, invented, 'imagined', or have they always been there, as primordialists suggest? If they are not given or natural, then who does the making or imagining and how? What are their boundaries? Who belongs to the nation and who does not? If nations are imagined, as modernism and ethno-symbolism hold, then through what means are the nationalist ideas spread? What is the rationale behind nationalistic tendencies among individuals and nationalistic state mentalities? Why are they so untouchable in our moral nature to be questioned, and too powerful and deep-seated in our cultural immune systems to simply ignore or counteract?

This chapter has three main goals. First, it seeks to provide a brief overview of the major theoretical explanations to these questions. It needs to be stressed at this point that the selection of prominent scholars included in this chapter is affected by time and space limitations of the study and does not claim to be perfect or unbiased. Generally speaking, contemporary theories of nationalism have been divided into three main categories: primordialism, modernism, and ethno-symbolism. The distinction within the three, P. Brass highlighs, stems from "the conceptual difference among scholars concerning the very nature of the groups involved, namely, whether they are 'natural', 'primordial', 'given' communities or whether they are creations of interested leaders, of elite groups, or of the political system in which they are included" (Brass, 1991, p. 69). While the primordialists think of nation as a cultural and socio-biological phenomenon, the latter two focus on a political understanding of the nation and the nation-making process (Bacova, 1998).

Broadly speaking, the primordialists maintain that nations are natural, given, timeless phenomena. Each member of the society possesses certain primal 'feelings' sprang from blood, racial category, spoken language, religious affiliation, and the birth place. These feelings form the 'givens' of the human behavior and are deep-seated in the emotions of the people (Kohn, 1939; Brass, 1991). On the contrary, the modernists argue that nations were in no sense primordial or outcome of given and deep-seated historical developments. Instead, nations were the products of "recent historical developments and of the rational, planned activity made possible and necessary by the conditions of the modern era" (Smith, 1998, p. 19). The main conditions determined the construction of nations include industrialization, urbanization, and the rise of secularism and of centralized states (Gellner, 1983). Finally, ethno-symbolism, widely seen as a middle-ground between the two opposite poles of the debate (Kennedy, 2011; Woods, Schertzer & Kaufmann, 2013; Inglis & Almila, 2016), acknowledges the modern nature of nations, on the one hand, but

emphasizes the significance of myths, symbols, memories, values, ritual, and tradition in the formation of modern nations, on the other (Anderson, 2006; Smith, 2009).

Second, this chapter aims to critically analyze the central presumptions of the modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches, which fall into the school of thought labeled instrumentalism, concerning the role of elites and of the state in the construction of ethnic identity. Briefly stated, leading figures of the modernist school of thought have interpreted nations as 'discursive formations', imagined, manipulated, and even fabricated by states and their leaders to take control of the political sphere, to secure their status, and to make political and/or socio-economic profit (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). For modernists, it is the elites to a large extent that play the determining role - through the use of 'invented traditions' - in the formation of ethnic identity (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Smith, 2009). On the other side, while acknowledging the role of political institutions and of elites in the formation of modern nations, ethno-symbolists do not address nations as pure elite designs. Such a consideration, for ethno-symbolists, fails to account for the role of ethnicity as well as the rationale behind nationalistic tendencies among the members of society (Smith, 2009). For them, what is of crucial importance is the need to make sense of the intricate interplay between the 'ethnies' (ethnic communities) and elites in terms of symbols, myths, values, and traditions that resonate with them (Smith, 2009).

The final aim of this chapter is to provide a general outlook of Paul Brass' theory of nationalism detailed in his study *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (1991). In a nutshell, two main arguments summarize his position on the creation of ethnic identities and nations: first, "ethnicity and nationalism are not 'givens,' but are social and political constructions. They are creations of elites, who draw upon, distort, and sometimes fabricate materials from the cultures of the groups they wish to represent in order to protect their well-being or existence or to gain political and

economic advantage for their groups as well as for themselves"; and second, "ethnicity and nationalism are modern phenomena inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state" (Brass, 1991, p. 8).

**Primordialism**

Among the grand narratives of nationalism primordialism is the first that attempted to explain the nature of nations and roots and vigor (strength) of ethnic bonds in the study of nationalism. It is widely accepted that the term, used "in reference to relationships within the family", was originally formulated by E. Shills in 1957 and developed by C. Geertz in 1973 (Eller & Coughlan, 1993, p. 183). Generally speaking, primordialism is an approach that views nationality, like race, as a natural component of human beings originating from overpowering and indescribable and yet coercive primordial attachments, and that regards nations as a form of extended kinship (Smith, 1998; Ozkirimli, 2000; Llobera, 2004; Neufeld & DeMaris, 2009; Smith, 2009). Though these remarks constitute the core of the primordialist approach, there is a need to point out that premises of the proponents of primordialism have varied in time, making researchers unable to identify them in a uniform body. Borrowing from Smith (1998), in what follows I will review the primordialists under three sub-categories, namely organic/naturalist, socio-biological, and cultural perspectives.

The naturalist approach, arguably the most extreme form of the primordialist viewpoint, holds that ethnic identity is a natural part of us: all human beings have a nationality in the same way they have sense organs. Interrelatedly, naturalists also assert that the nation to which a man pertains is predetermined: put it differently, being part of a nation is in no sense different than being born into a family. Therefore, this natural partition of humankind into distinct ethnies is a component of the natural order (Ozkirimli, 2000).

The socio-biological perspective basically maintains that primordial attachments that constitute the essence of ethnic identities are biological/genetic in nature (Brass, 1991). For socio-biological primordialists, nations as well as ethnic groups and races are extensions of 'kin selection' (Van den Berghe, 1978; Smith, 1998; Ozkirimli, 2000; Berman, 2012), and ethnicity, spoken language, religious affiliation, and homeland are fundamental foundations and bonds of human association since time immemorial (Smith, 1986). Nations and ethnic identities in this sense are indeed primordial: that is to say, they precede modern and recent formations; what is more, they lay the foundations upon which the modern conception of nationalism can be constructed. Scarcely less significant, these primordial attachments have separated human beings throughout history, just like have skin color and sex, and will remain to do so. Therefore, ethnicity, nations and nationalism are in no sense modern, imagined, or invented (Smith, 1986).

Finally, the cultural primordialist approach, widely associated with E. Shills and C. Geertz's writings, dwells on the understandings and beliefs of human beings; it is grounded on the notion that, Ozkirimli remarks (2000), "what generates the strong attachments people feel for the 'givens of the social existence' is a belief in their existence" (p. 74). Borrowing from Eller and Coughlan, major premises of the cultural primordialist approach can be summarized as follows:

1. Primordial attachments are given; they precede all human experience. Primordial identities are in no sense sociological, but natural even 'spiritual'; they have existed throughout history.

2. Primordial attachments are indefinable, dominant, and coercive.

3. The concept of primordialism is basically a question of emotion (Ellen & Coughlan, 1993, p. 187).

**Modernism**

The modernist approach, the dominant orthodoxy of the study of nationalism, emerged both as a challenge to the primordialist perspective that regards nations as preceding nationalism, and as an outcome of the tragedy of two total wars and of the destruction created by extreme nationalist/racist/fascist ideologies. Even though there were various scholars who had stressed the modern character of nations since the turn of the century, not until the 1970s did the modernist approach become the reigning paradigm in the study of nationalism. Notwithstanding persistent criticisms raised by ethno-symbolists since the late 20th century, the modernist school of thought still predominates the field of nationalism.

Despite the fact that the modernists do not constitute a monolithic category just like the primordialists, they do have a common ground that encompass the modernist school of thought: the belief that nations are recent and novel; that nationalism, as an ideology and a movement, is too recent and novel; and that both came into being as a result of the process of modernization (Smith, 2009). In other words, for modernists, nations and nationalism, emerged during the 19th and early 20th century, are the outcomes of recent developments such as modernization, industrialization, and centralization process of states; all together necessitated the idea of nationalism, from which the nations were arose (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 1995; Llobera, 1999; Ozkirimli, 2000; Berman, 2012). Therefore, prominent scholars of the modernist approach in their attempts to make sense of the origins of nations and nationalism have had three common denominators: first, nations and nationalism are modern constructs; second, both came out as a consequence of the evolution from traditional to modern society; and third, nationalism precedes nations.

Besides these three common denominators, exponents of the modernist paradigm do not have much in common; not only are there diverse interpretations of the role of the state and of elites in the construction of ethnic identities, but they centered on different factors as the fundamental reason for the emergence of nationalistic ideas. For this reason, borrowing from Ozkirimli (2000), in what follows the modernists will be examined under three categories with regards to the main factors they have underlined addressing the development of nationalism: namely, economic, political, and social/cultural.

**Economic transformation.** The central position of the scholars who perceive nations in economic terms is the premise that national consciousness is essentially some sort of 'false consciousness.' Put differently, economic interests lie beneath the idea of nation. This way of perceiving the 'national question', through economic lenses, has been a widespread form of interpretation among Marxist and non-Marxist scholars. Even though this explanatory framework emerges in different forms in contemporary literature, they all reject "the specific character of the national fact" (Llobera, 1999, p.13).

Among the most prominent attempts are the Marxist theorists that regard nationalism as a product of the modern era and that presuppose a causal relationship between the expansion of industrial capitalism and the emergence of the nation-state and nationalism (Smith, 1998; Llobera, 1999). According to Marx, the nation state was the essential platform for the installment of market capitalism. That is to say, for Marxist thought, free and secure circulation of the capital, merchandise, and labor required for wide-ranging production and exchange could only become possible in a nation-state. Accordingly, the establishment of uniform nations was of crucial importance for industrial capitalism, and thus the advancement of the capitalist system necessarily attached to "the political and cultural development of the leading nations" (Smith, 1998, p. 47).

Essential in this examination is that the nation had never been a fundamental category of social entity for Marx, instead it was an impermanent institution constructed by the capitalist class to ensure the growth of industrial capitalism (Llobera, 1999).

Besides neo-Marxists scholars, especially the Austro-Marxian tradition, whose exponents stressed the role of culture and society as independent variables in the development of nations, the classic Marxists to a large extent strict to economic analyses that either clarified or demoted nationalist movements to the mechanisms of the capitalist system (Smith, 1998). Despite the difficulty of speaking of an agreement regarding the national question, the following themes have frequently been highlighted by the Marxist scholars:

1. "The petit-bourgeois nature of nationalism, its locus in an intelligentsia increasingly squeezed between big capital and the great proletarian movements;

2. The use of nationalist ideologies by a triumphant bourgeoisie to induce 'false consciousness' and thereby divide and divert the masses who threatened their position

3. The progressive nature of anti-colonial liberation movements –nationalisms - led by a nascent colonial bourgeoisie against the exploitation of imperialist capitalists" (Smith, 1998).

Tom Nairn once stated in his The Break-up of Britain (2003) that "the theory of nationalism represents Marxism's great historical failure" (p. 317). In the aftermath of the nationalist movements in Europe and N. America, along with classical Marxism's failure to explain these developments, 1970's witnessed various attempts to make sense of nationalism along revised Marxist lines. Chief among them were Tom Nairn's *Uneven Development* (1977) and Michael Hechter's *Internal Colonialism* (1975) theories in which the roots of nationalism were sought in

"the rational workings of the world economy and the social and economic interests of individuals" (Smith, 1998, p. 5).

Originating from the Marxist thought, yet recognizing Marxism's inability to account for the national question, Tom Nairn contended that the origins of nationalism need to be "sought in the general process of historical development" since the turn of the nineteenth century. Accordingly, a 'world history' is of crucial importance to understand the notion of nationalism. Nationalistic ideas, in this regard, ushered in by certain aspects of the world economy in the modern period, since the French Revolution up until present time (as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 89). That being said, for Nairn, nationalism wasn't merely an inescapable outgrowth of industrialization, rather its roots are situated in the 'uneven development' of history in the modern era. To put it more explicitly, it had been widely accepted by Western philosophers that industrial civilization would grow evenly and increasingly. As long as the periphery properly trail the capitalist development, along with the establishment of the necessary institutions, it would eventually catch up with the core. As experienced throughout the world, however, proponents of the 'even development' thought proved wrong and capitalist development did not take place 'evenly'. On the contrary, the core dominated over the periphery (as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 89).

For Nairn, the result of this uneven development and of the deepening gap between the core and the periphery was the unavoidable necessity for the leaders in the peripheral states to take the control of their own destiny. To do this, catching up with the core, required these elites to pursue a different path that has no place for the core's direct intervention and no option but appealing to the people (as cited in Smith, 2000). In his words, "this meant the conscious formation of a militant, inter-class community rendered strongly aware of its own separate identity vis-à-vis the outside forces of domination" (as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 90).

Briefly stated, nationalism, for Nairn (1996), "is not a reflection, a mirror of ethnic variety. It is a set of levers (which are sometimes weapons) through which ethnos is driven into a new salience in human affairs" (p. 270). It is an outgrowth of the uneven development of the capitalist system. The uneven march into modernity, in which elites manipulated, subjugated, and transformed others, took nationalism out of nationalities (Nairn, 1996).

The uneven development between the core and the periphery, in Hechter's Internal Colonialism approach too, is situated at the core. In his study of the national development of the British Isles, Hechter argues that the prevailing economic dependency and underdevelopment of the British Isles vis-à-vis England was exacerbated by capitalist industrialization, and this deepening uneven development manifested itself in ethno-national movements (as cited in Llobera, 1999, p. 11).

For Hechter, the process of geopolitical unification was always unequal between England and the Celtic fringe (Ireland, Scotland, and Wales). England had always been predominant compared to other British Isles; however, becoming England's 'internal colonies' for those could only become possible when political incorporation was added to economic exploitation. For Scotland, Wales and Ireland, this transition from heartlands to the peripheries or internal colonies was ushered in by the spread of industrialization. The role of capitalist industrialism in this process was that it caused peripheral states to become economically dependent to the center. This dependence created a new network of social connections in consequence of 'intensified and regular' encounters between the peripheral states and the core (as cited in Smith, 1998).

The focal point of the 'Internal Colonialism' theory is the premise that the process of internal colonialism created a hierarchical 'cultural division of labor' (Hind, 1984). For Hechter (1975), cultural division of labor refers to "a system of stratification where objective cultural distinctions

are superimposed on class lines. High-status occupations tend to be reserved for those of metropolitan culture; while those of indigenous culture cluster at the bottom of the stratification system" (p. 30). In the final analysis, unequal stratification of social order in favor of the core deepens as capitalist industrialization advances; therefore, ethno-nationalism emerges as a reflection of the subordinates' perceived political and economic dependence and material exploitation (Llobera, 1999).

**Political transformation.** Another theoretical variation of the modernist approach is what has been called as political modernism. It is widely acknowledged by exponents of this line of modernist school of thought that the state and the nations surfaced concurrently in the West. The American and French revolutions ushered in a new world order in which the 'nation-state' was both the predominant political structure and the chief agency of collective identity (Smith, 1998). In what follows, I will review the theoretical explanations of scholars who centered on the modern, centralized, bureaucratic state and its political elites in explaining the rise of nations and nationalism.

Among the foremost proponents of political modernism, who dwelled on political transformation to account for the emergence of nationalism, John Breuilly principally argues that the concept of nationalism needs to "be understood as a form of politics" and that that form of politics becomes meaningful solely in terms of the specific political context and aim of nationalism. The development of the modern state is fundamental to an understanding of that aims and context. It both regulates nationalist politics and equips that politics with its central task: control of the state (Breuilly, 1993).

Breuilly acknowledges that there existed ethnic groups and national attachments in medieval Europe; however, nationalism as a political phenomenon only emerged in the modern

era as an opposition to political modernization, manifesting itself in three forms, namely, separation, reform and unification (Breuilly, 1996). Accordingly, for Breuilly (1993), nationalism refers to "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments" (p. 2). As he notes, a nationalist argument therefore is a political doctrine rest upon three principles:

- "There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.

- The interests and values of this notion take priority over all other interests and values.

- The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires the attainment of at least political sovereignty" (Breuilly, 1993, p. 2).

The modern state, argues Breuilly, constituted the key mechanism in this struggle as a framework within which nationalisms could function effectively (as cited in Baycroft, n.d.). It provided the environment in which nationalist ideologies, elites, symbols and ceremonies could mobilize the masses in opposition to the state (as cited in Smith, 1999). Even though socio-economic and cultural factors and the interests of elites are not without significance, Breuilly notes, they do not enable us to make sense of nationalism completely. Breuilly contends regarding the role of elites in the construction of national identities that elites have been essential actors in shaping, manipulating, and leading national revolts; however, it would be an illusion to regard nationalism as the politics of elites. Instead, what is of crucial importance is to understand nationalism as a form of politics; that politics is about power; and power is about control of the state. Therefore, the main objective should be to relate nationalism to the pursuit of seeking and exercising state power (Breuilly, 1993).

Another significant contribution to the study of nationalism can be found in Eric Hobsbawm's *The Invention of Traditions* (1983) and *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990). The British Marxist historian Hobsbawm can be categorized amongst the proponents of political modernist approach that maintain political transformation lie beneath the emergence of nations and nationalism. Acknowledging the modern character of nations and nationalism, Hobsbawm treats nationalism as an 'invented tradition' engineered by elites in order to secure their status which was being threatened by the rapid transformation of society since the industrial revolution (Hobsbawm, 1983).

A central assertion arising out of his analysis of nationalism is the effect new traditions fabricated by elites had on the emergence of nations. Hobsbawm principally argues that one could not explain the appearance of nations without understanding the origins, rationale and function of invented traditions. As he puts it:

"Invented tradition is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past…However, insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of invented traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition" (Hobsbawm, 1983, p. 1-2).

Hobsbawm specifies two forms of 'invention': the orientation of aged traditions to new conditions, and the fabrication of new ones for novel objectives. While the first invention is common to all communities, the second invention emerges solely as a reaction to a rapid

transformation of society that diminishes the social patterns that aged traditions had been designed for. The most widespread versions of such 'invented traditions' in this sense are nations and nationalism (Hobsbawm, 1983; as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 116-117).

The underlying reason for such invented tradition, claims Hobsbawm, stemmed from the increasing involvement of once ostracized portions of the public into the political sphere. This renaissance of mass politics caused the ruling elites to face difficulties with preserving the fealty and compliance of their populaces. The major plan of rulers to eliminate the dangers of mass democracy was the creation of new customs and rituals. Chief among them were forming a secular institution that mirror the role of the church; the creation of national holidays (e.g. Bastille Day); and the construction of historical monuments (e.g. the Neue Wache). Consequently, nationalism turned out to be a 'secular religion' and an effective way of securing social cohesion via the repetition of shared customs and rituals (Hobsbawm, 1983).

For Hobsbawm, these developments coincided with the period starting from 1870 up until the breakup of the first world war, indicating the initial phase, when it emerged and expeditiously progressed, in the development of nationalism (Hobsbawm, 1990). The second phase, from 1918 to 1950, indicates the period when nationalism reached its peak. Hobsbawm contends that what made this period the zenith of nationalism arose from the growth of nationalistic ideas on the left. Throughout the anti-fascist era, the world witnessed a firm association between nationalist ideology and the left, bolstered by anti-imperial struggles. For Hobsbawm, this is the reason why independence and decolonization struggles during this period were identified with socialist anti-imperial struggles (Hobsbawm, 1990; as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 119-120).

Finally, the third phase of the historical development of nationalism covers the late 20th century. Hobsbawm maintains that nationalistic movements of this time period functioned for

different purposes than their predecessors. While the earlier forms of nationalism were emancipatory as well as unifying, nationalisms of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century created divisions and conflict (as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 120). In the contemporary world, Hobsbawm argues (1990), "nationalism is historically less important. It is no longer, as it were, a global political programme" (p. 191).

In short, for Hobsbawm, nationalism precedes nations. Along with the state and its ruling elites, nationalism invented nations through the fabrication of new traditions, myths, symbols and a 'suitable history'. As Hobsbawm puts it, though constructed from above, nations and nationalism are dual phenomena that cannot be comprehended unless also studied from above (Hobsbawm, 1990).

**Social/Cultural transformation.** The third theoretical variant of the modernist approach is composed of scholars who regarded social/cultural transformation of the society as the major cause of the emergence of nations and nationalism. Two of the most prominent examples of this approach, namely the contributions of Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson to the study of nationalism, will conclude this section on the modernist school of thought.

Scholars of the study of nationalism have considered Gellner's theory of nationalism as one of the greatest attempts to explain the emergence of nations and nationalism. Basically, Gellner's remarkable analysis, outlined in his *Thought and Change* (1964) and *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), remarked that the origins of nationalism lie in the distinctive structural necessities of industrial society, and that the only way to make sense of nationalism is to analyze it in the context of the new industrial order (Gellner, 1983; as cited in Llobera, 1999, p. 15).

In his widely accepted and adopted definition, Gellner referred to nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent"

(Gellner, 1983, p. 1). For him, nationalism is also a product of the modern period and industrial order because leaders did not structure political institutions using nationalistic ideas in the pre-modern period. Nationalism as a 'sociological necessity' only arose during the modern era (as cited in Ozkirimli, 2000, p. 130).

Gellner divides world history into three phases: the hunting-gathering, agrarian and the industrial. The absence of states during the first stage, for Gellner, marks the lack of necessity for nationalisms. In the second phase, by contrast, most agro-literate societies have been 'state-endowed'. Depending on their forms and regimes, some societies possessed 'strong' states, while others had weak ones. The existence of states during the agrarian stage was to a large extent an option (Gellner, 1983). On the other side, in agrarian societies, a big portion of the populace consisted of agricultural laborer, divided into distinct, self-supporting social structures and indigenous cultures (Smith, 2000). Above them existed numerous elites, who had no dealings with the lower class, possessing an aristocratic culture that differentiated the elites from the peasantry. Hence, the agrarian society is characterized by a discrepancy/conflict between the high and low cultures. The elites were in no need of 'cultural homogeneity'; instead, they took advantage of deep diversity within the stratas of the society (Ozkirimli, 2000). Therefore, lack of cultural homogenization in agrarian societies too brought the absence of nations and nationalism with it. Conversely, perpetual growth-oriented, industrial and modern societies required much more literate, mobile and homogenous residents to sustain economic success (Smith, 2000). The ruler and the ruled in this sense had to be banded together through the establishment of a common 'literate culture'. Accordingly, nationalism and its concomitant phenomena played a unifying role in industrial societies.

For Gellner, the foundation of this transformation lies behind the sui generis feature of modernization. Like a tidal wave, modernization spread over the world, unevenly though, hitting different regions at different times and degrees. the rapid spread of modernization, in return, had two striking outcomes. First, traditional social structures (religion, family, community) were undermined and a literate, linguistic culture came into prominence, obliging the residents to be mobile and literate. Thus, industrial societies have found themselves in a position that only a 'literate culture' could bind once food producers to urban places and make them 'citizens'. A literate culture in this regard necessitated the establishment of a standardized public education system. In other words, the only way to transform food producers into active citizens and 'culturally homogenous workforce' was to make them schooled and literate (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 2000). And the only institution capable of nourishing and controlling such an immense system was the centralized state.

The second outcome of the spread of modernization was that it generated new types of conflicts between the new and old inhabitants of cities fighting over insufficient assets such as housing and jobs. On the one hand, if the new residents keep pace with the tradition, religious affiliation and language of the local populace, there only occurs social rivalry and maybe class conflict; on the other hand, if the new residents preserve their traditional social structures and cultural differences between the two cannot be bridged then there occurs ethnic conflict. The emergence of ethnic conflicts is highly likely in that case when the elites on both sides instigate animosity and call for secession and construction of their own nation-state, making in the process new nations looking for their own states (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 2000).

Accordingly, as Gellner puts it, it is nationalism that engenders nations not the opposite, and that necessitates a 'culturally homogenous society' since the ideal of a mobile, literate high

culture is a fundamental constituent of industrial society. Therefore, the means of modern, industrial society create the appeal of nationalism (Gellner, 1983; Smith, 2000).

Another leading proponent of the modernist school of thought, who underlined social/cultural transformation of the society in explaining the creation of nationality, nations, and nationalism, Benedict Anderson contends that nationality and nationalism are 'cultural artefacts of a particular kind' (Anderson, 2006). The emergence of these artefacts, at the turn of the 18th century, ushered in by "the spontaneous distillation of a complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they became 'modular,' capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations" (Anderson, 2006, p. 4)

According to Anderson (2006), a nation is "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). It is imagined in the sense that it is impossible for the members of even the smallest nation to know, meet with, or hear of, most of their fellow members. It is imagined as limited in the sense that even the largest nation has restricted territories beyond which exist other nations. No nation seeks to spread across the globe. Not even the most extreme nationalist does imagine nor desire the entire human race to join their nation. It is imagined as sovereign because the concept arose in an age when Enlightenment and Revolution were demolishing the legitimacy of the hierarchical dynastic realm: the nations were seeking freedom. Lastly, it is imagined as a community in the sense that "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship": it is this sense of fraternity, Anderson notes, that leads millions voluntarily to sacrifice their lives for their nations (Anderson, 2006, p. 6-7).

The imagining of the nation, for Anderson, in the final analysis, was made possible by three historical developments: First, the decline of the dynastic realm and the sacred/religious community offered the geographical and historical space nations needed to surface; second, the transformation of the pre-modern apprehension of time from 'a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present' into 'homogenous, empty time' made it possible to imagine the nation; and third, 'the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language' laid the foundation for national consciousness, paving the way for the modern nation (Anderson, 2006).

**Ethno-Symbolism**

A middle-ground or a compromise between the two opposite poles of the debate on nation and nationalism has recently been proposed by a number of specialists, who seeks to unearth the symbolic legacy of pre-modern ethnic ties for modern nations, adding a new dimension to our understanding of nation and its concomitant phenomena. Now seen as the third grand narrative of the study of nationalism, the ethno-symbolist approach centers on the role played by pre-existing ethnic bonds and attachments in explaining the construction of today's nations. In doing so, ethno-symbolists challenged both primordialists who claimed that nations are immemorial and modernists who restricted the nation to a particular period of time, a political community, and an invention engineered by elites.

Central to the objective of ethno-symbolism is the necessity to study the creation of nations in 'longue duree' with a specific focus on the 'inner world of ethnicity and nationalism' (Hutchinson, 1987; Armstrong, 1995; Smith, 2009). The rise of today's nations in this sense, for ethno-symbolists, should be investigated in previous ethnies because the roots of many modern nations, if not all, lie underneath the pre-modern identities and their heritages. This point of

departure constitutes the main difference between modernists and the ethno-symbolists. Ethno-symbolists consider ethnies and ethnic ties are of fundamental importance for the emergence and continuance of nations, while modernists underestimate their roles. Accordingly, contrary to the modernist perspective, ethno-symbolists maintain that the difference between earlier ethnic communities and today's nations is of degree rather than kind (Ozkirimli, 2000; Berman, 2012). Even though nations are "active, purposive sociological communities" located in specific historical contexts, their emergence and persistence cannot be solely associated with a specific era, the process of modernization, or capitalist industrialization (Smith, 2009, p. 20-21). In other words, contrary to modernists' firmness on the impracticability of nations in pre-modern eras, ethno-symbolists claim that they found noteworthy parallels in pre-modern period to the contemporary sense of national identity, and that they found movements that had striking similarities with 'modern' sense of nationalism on various counts, and that there were 'frontier ethnies', diaspora communities, ethnic amphictyonies, and even states controlled by specific ethnic communites (Smith, 1986; Smith, 1998).

Therefore, for ethno-symbolists, the modern sense of nation emerged out of two factors: ethnic ties and shared experiences of many generations. Traditions, values, memories, myths and symbols constitute the "defining cultural elements from which ethnic groups emerged" (Smith, 1998, p. 192). The nation in this sense, as Smith puts it (2009), is "a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or 'homelands', create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardized laws" (p. 29)

A second point ethno-symbolists differentiate themselves from the modernists is the emphasis placed on the role of elites in the formation and continuance of nations and nationalisms.

Smith argues that modernist attempts to a large extent are concerned with the central role of elites in 'inventing' nations. Conversely, ethno-symbolists seek to account for how nations are forged by means of the complex interaction between elites and their national projects and the masses whom they attempt to mobilize. Accordingly, ethno-symbolists remark that even though nations may be to some extent forged by political elites and institutions, they necessitate ethnic/cultural attachments to form a solitary society due to the vital significance "for a sense of national identity of subjective dimensions" (Smith, 2009, p. 21). For ethno-symbolists, it is this reason what obliges us not to consider nations as pure elite undertakings. Instead, elites and political institutions contributed to the formations of nations "on the basis of an ethnic model and around a dominant ethnic core population" (Smith, 2009, p. 28). Myths, symbols, memories, traditions and values shared for a long time in this sense are what give a nation its basic foundation, and a nationalist movement its strong appeal.

**Paul Brass' Theory of Nationalism: The Role of Elites in the Construction of National Identity**

So far, this chapter provided an overview of the three grand narratives of the study of nations and nationalism: primordialism, modernism and ethno-symbolism. In a nutshell, the primordialists hold that nations are given, immemorial phenomena; the modernists stress the modern character of nations that emerged as an outgrowth of the processes of modernization and industrialization; and for ethno-symbolists, ethnic ties and shared experiences (myths, symbols, memories, rituals, values and traditions) of many generations helped to the formation of modern nations. In what follows this chapter will provide a concise analysis of Paul Brass' theory of nationalism presented in his study Ethnicity and Nationalism (1991).

Known for his remarks underlining the 'instrumental' character of nations and nationalism, Brass' studies have been categorized under either instrumentalist approach or the second school of the modernist perspective which centers on political transformation to account for the emergence of nations and nationalism. In general terms, the instrumentalist point of view stresses that ethnic and national units provide suitable sites for elites to gain the masses' support in their endeavor to secure their status and prestige or to gain wealth and power (Smith, 1986). Contrary to the primordialist view that considers ethnic identities are 'fixed and 'given', instrumentalists hold that cultural symbols, tenets and practices of ethnic communities are constantly redefined and reformulated in line with the shifting settings and interests of ruling elites. Ethnicity and nationality in this respect is essentially instrumental (Smith, 1986; Ozkirimli, 2000).

One of the leading figures of the instrumentalist approach, Paul Brass argues (1991) that "whether or not the culture of the group is ancient or is newly-fashioned, the study of ethnicity and nationality is… the study of the process by which elites and counter-elites within ethnic groups select aspects of the group's culture, attach new value and meaning to them, and use them as symbols to mobilize the group, to defend its interests, and to compete with other groups" (p. 75).

Standing in stark contrast to primordialist approach, Brass holds (1991) that ethnic identities are constructed as a result of the process shaped and manipulated by elite competition. In other words, elite competition, for Brass, is what frames, leads, and sets the ground for the formation of national identity and the emergence of nations and nationalism. His position, however, differentiates Brass from the most extreme instrumentalist interpretations in which all choices are seen as economic options. As he puts it, his purpose is not to discard the importance of cultural traditions, practices, and values of ethnic communities; instead, he argues that those cultural forms constrain which types of appeals elites can make to mobilize masses.

The central arguments of Brass' theory of ethnicity and nationalism can be sketched in a few main points. Primarily, Brass argues that the emergence of ethnic and national identities and their conversion into nationalism is not inevitable. Contrariwise, only under certain conditions do cultural disparities between different ethnic groups transform into bases for political alienation. Second, in line with the modernist premise that traditions are fabricated and social realities created, Brass claims that competition among political/economic/religious elites is what paves the way for the rise of nationalism and ethnic conflicts under certain circumstances, which emanate from the wider political and economic environments. The third argument Brass suggests stresses the crucial role of the interplay between the state and elites, specifically "the roles of collaborators with and opponents of state authority and state intrusion into regions inhabited by distinctive ethnic groups" (p. 14). Fourth, Brass maintains that the process of ethnic identity construction framed by the competition among different elites as well as between elites and the state affects both the definition and continuance of the ethnic community involved. Cultural assets, memories, values, and traditions of the ethnic community in question become political tools at the hands of elites who compete for political or economic profits. That cultural markers turns into symbols which are evoked when necessary and used to create a political identity. Depending on the political environment and practices of state authorities, the symbols called up and used may also become subject to change. Ultimately, Brass argues (1991) that "the process of ethnic identity formation and its transformation into nationalism is reversible" (p. 17).

The relevance of Brass' theory for the topic of this study's concern is that it is expected that Brass' theoretical framework, which is mostly centered on the ways in which national identity formation and change occurs, shed some light on the construction of Montenegrin nationalism. To

this end, this chapter will conclude with Brass' analysis dealing with the process of transformation from ethnic groups to national identities and the role of elites in this process.

Brass notes that "the movement from ethnic group to community is a transition that some groups never make, that others make initially in modern times, and that still others undergo repeatedly at different points" (Brass, 1991, p. 23). Those communities, according to Brass, are forged and transformed by certain elites in societies where modernization and industrialization stirred up radical social change. This transformation, in any case, contains rivalry between opposing elites for political and/or economic advantages. Various students of the study of nationalism have asserted that the uneven development of industrialization and march into modernity provided more advantages for some ethnic communities or ethnically distinct regions than others, promoting the development of national consciousness in the long run. Brass remarks that, however, the uneven development between culturally different communities or regions does not per se lead to an increase in ethically-based demands or the transformation of ethnic differences into ethnic/national consciousness. Only if there is a clash between elites from different ethnic groups can ethnic conflict, self-consciousness, and demands occur, triggering the development of nationalist movements. For Brass, there are four types of conflict between elites that can lay the foundation for such ethnic/national consciousness to emerge: local aristocracy versus alien conqueror, inter-ethnic competition between religious elites, intra-ethnic competition between native aristocracies and religious elites, and finally competition between indigenous religious elites and alien aristocracies.

The first type of elite competition emerges when foreign intruders in preindustrial societies attempt to bring the lands and landowners under control through either constituting a direct link between the peasantry and the state, or replacing the old ruling class, or winning their cooperation.

If such attempt succeeds then the formation of national consciousness among the local populace may be postponed until the process of industrialization creates new social classes. If the foreign invader fails to gain control over the land and landowners and the local ruling class lacks the ability to preserve the territorial integrity, the local aristocracy may strive to create an ethnic consciousness of its people to secure their position and interests. The second form of elite rivalry is highly likely to emerge in case the dominant external group strives to proselytize local people in its religion. The native religious leaders, in such situation, will step into action to secure their status by encouraging ethnic consciousness among the followers of the existing religion and mobilizing them against the dominant external group. The third form of elite conflict, Brass suggests, may occur if a local ruling class unites with an external authority. In that case, those local elites, even if they do not embrace the religion of the foreign authority, accepts and supports the foreign culture, which in turn puts the authority of local religious elites at risk. This type of conflict between local aristocracy and religious leaders, Brass argues, is one of the most common divisions that incite ethnic communalism. The final form of elite competition occurs between local religious elites and foreign aristocracies. In such situations, "ethnic identities and the early stages of nationalism were promoted by parish priests and 'the native lower clergy". Ultimately, in Brass' theory, it is these four kinds of elite conflicts that precipitate the early stages of ethnic identity formation (Brass, 1991).

In other cases where religious affiliations do not constitute a major determinant in elites' endeavor to gain political/economic benefits in multiethnic modernizing societies, major ethnic conflicts are based on class, language, or tribe. Brass holds that in such instances, the formation of ethnic/national consciousness depends on whether or not local aristocrats are collaborationist. If they are not, its prominent members may encourage the language and culture of the ethnic

community in question. If the local aristocracy is collaborationist, then, the rise of new social classes and elites arising out of the process of modernization will determine the formation of ethnic/national consciousness (Brass, 1991).

Brass argues that government employment opportunities, along with elite competition, are of crucial importance in the development of ethnic conflicts since it enables the ruling elites both to reward the collaborationist ruling class and to produce new ones through the uneven distribution of employment opportunities. However, neither elite rivalries nor job competition is enough in modernizing societies to drive culturally distinct communities into ethnic conflicts. The processes of industrialization and modernization may create a critical unevenness among distinct ethnic communities, which in turn causes some of them to be assimilated into others' culture and language. In order this to emerge, however, governments ought to favor one group over another. In the absence of native religious leaders and socially mobilized groups, the backward group gradually assimilates into the dominant group's culture and language. As long as the processes of modernization and industrialization starts to drastically influence these places, new elites emerge to mobilize the backward communities. The boundaries of these groups, however, will have been influenced perpetually by the previous period of assimilation. For Brass, the case of Serbia & Montenegro conforms to this pattern of development (Brass, 1991).

# CHAPTER TWO: EARLY FORMULATIONS OF A DISTINCT MONTENEGRIN NATIONAL THOUGHT

## Introduction

Srdja Pavlovic, a leading Balkan historian, once stated that "for scholars interested in Montenegro's past, writing about its history means probing through layers of mythologized yesteryears and trying to shed more light on the question of the origins of Montenegrins" (Pavlovic, 2008, p. 29). The question of the existence of a distinct 'Montenegrin identity' is naturally intertwined with that Montenegro's past. How far can we date back (trace) the historical development of Montenegro? Who are Montenegrins? Are they ethnic Serbs living in the territory called Montenegro? Or do they constitute a distinct ethnic group just like their Slavic counterparts such as Serbs and Croats?

No agreement exists today in the literature about the issue of identity in Montenegro. Nor is there available sources, especially in English literature, that can explain these questions. What the literature agrees on is that the early contacts, mixing, and intermarrying of Slavs with the native inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula completely blur the lines of ethnic differences. The absence of an agreement, in return, leads every issue about Montenegro to center on the contested identity of Montenegrins (Pavlovic, 2008). From one point of view, Montenegrins are ethnic Serbs occupying the territory called Montenegro; from the other, they constitute a separate ethnic community.

Since the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes this division has manifested itself as two groups having entirely opposing views: those (who will be called as 'Whites' or 'Bjelasi' later in time) who support the idea that Montenegrins are ethnic Serbs and

that the two should be united under the leadership of Serbia versus those ('Greens' or 'Zelensi') who hold that Montenegrins constitute a distinct ethnic community, that the incidents of 1918 indicated the annexation of Montenegro by Serbia, and that Montenegrins should seek their independence.

With the question of ethnic/national Montenegrin identity at the center, this chapter has two objectives. First, it provides a brief historical development of Montenegro since its establishment until the first World War. In doing so, particular emphasis will be placed on Montenegrin resistance against the Ottoman expansion into the Balkans between the 15th and 19th centuries and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 since contemporary debates on the cultural and political distinctiveness of Montenegro, as we shall see in the following chapters, are built on these two.

Second, it seeks to address the early formulations of divergent national thoughts among political elites during the interwar era. In doing so, borrowing from Pieter Troch, it examines the ways in which elites formulated opposing national thoughts under four sections. The first section reviews the early formulations of national thought. Section two provides an analysis of the incorporation of Montenegro into the Serbian Kingdom and how this affected the emergence of a second variant of national thought in Montenegro. The third section examines the development of 'Montenegrin national thought'. Finally, section four concludes this chapter with the period between 1929 and 1941 when the two national thought camps increasingly diverged.

**Montenegro Until World War I**

A big portion of the Balkan historians dates back the history of Montenegro to the 7th century when the Slav migration waves hit the Balkans. Among one of those Slavic peoples, for Zivko Andrijasevic, were Montenegrins who inhabited the district known as Doclea/Zeta (today

known as 'Old Montenegro') (as cited in Morrison, 2009, p. 14). According to Andrijasevic, early Docleans/Montenegrins were recognized as a distinct ethnic group:

"the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905-59) refers to the Montenegrins as Docleans, explaining that their name derived from the fact that they had settled in areas around the Roman town of Doclea. As he did not supply any data about the ethnic origins of Docleans, it may be assumed that he viewed them as a separate ethnic group, just like Serbs or Croats. … He may not have known the real ethnic origin or Docleans, but he obviously did not regard them as Serbs or Croats" (as cited in Morrison, 2009, p. 14).

According to Pavlovic, however, only at the turn of the 13th century did we encounter with the name 'Montenegro' on historical records and only since the 15th century has it been used to refer to a state (Pavlovic, 2003b).

Starting from the 15th century, the history of Montenegro was marked by the resistance against the expansion of the Ottomans into the Balkan peninsula, in a time when the tribes occupying the lands of 'Old Montenegro' were under the rule of vladikas who functioned as both secular and religious leaders of the tribes (Malesevic & Uzelac, 2007). Constituting the main feature of Montenegrin society, tribes - composing of several clans (bratstvos) – "organized along territorial lines comprising self-governing communities within a geographical and economic framework" during the 15th and 16th centuries (Morrison, 2009, p. 19). Considering the mountainous structure of the Balkans, these tribes were secluded from one another, which in turn led to the fragmented structure of Montenegro. The absence of unity among the tribes and of strong centralized state ultimately led tribal bonds of inhabitants to be their major source of identity (Morrison, 2009).

The lack of centralized state authority ushered in by deep tribal identification and division had two significant consequences for Montenegro. The absence of unity undermined the resistance against the Ottomans, on the one hand, and caused Montenegrin lands and population to remain underdeveloped, isolated, and tribal, on the other. The only factor that could alleviate the conflicts among clans and gather them under a single roof was their intense anti-Turkish sentiments and the objective of the elimination of the Ottoman threat from the Balkans (Morrison, 2009). The same desire, the expulsion of the Ottomans from the Balkans peninsula, was common in Serbian population as well. Hence, for a great majority of Balkan historians, their parallel backgrounds and interests oriented the two to act in unison against the common threat. Contrary to Serb lands, however, Montenegrin territories could have never entirely been brought under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire. This brings us to the first pillar of the contemporary debates on the cultural and political distinctiveness of Montenegro: for advocates of a distinct Montenegrin identity, Montenegrins, in contrast to Serbs, have always maintained their practice of independent statehood.

With regards to the lack of central authority in Montenegro, only after the establishment of the Petrovic dynasty could vladikas' long-awaited endeavor to unite the tribes partially take place. The Assembly of Centinje's decision (1697) to elect Bishop Danilo Petrovic as the ruler of the Montenegrin tribes and allowing him to appoint his successors marked the period until 1918 when Montenegro gradually enjoyed the consolidation of central authority and tribal unity. Besides that, during the reign of the Petrovic dynasty Montenegro experienced strengthening cooperation with Russia and the gradual decline of Ottoman authority in the Balkans (Pavlovic, 2008).

It would therefore be safe to argue that the history of Montenegro during the 19th century marked by the attempts to transform the system of equality between clans into a system of

centralized governance and secular rule to counter Ottoman threat and to strengthen the relations between European powers, especially with Russia.

Another significant component of Montenegrin politics of this era was the intertwined relationships with Serbia. The military defeats and loss of territories against the Ottoman troops during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century created an atmosphere in which Serbia and Montenegro embarked upon enhancing their bilateral cooperation. It also led both states' elites to alter their political agenda in relation to forging a security agreement and in the long run a union between the 'Serbian peoples'. To this end, both leaders, Prince Mihailo Obredovic from Serbia and Prince Nikola from Montenegro, agreed on forming a security alliance against the Turks (Pavlovic, 2008).

As part of the agreement, both states settled on to initiate rebellion in areas neighboring Ottoman lands. On the other hand, the Montenegrin leader, Prince Nikola, agreed to incorporate Montenegro into Serbian territories and to recognize the Serbian leader as his superior. The Serbian prince, in return, promised to ensure the equality of both peoples (Pavlovic, 2008).

The deal settled on by Serbian and Montenegrin rulers was explained by M. Pirocanac, Serbian representative, as the initial stage leading to more intimate affairs 'between two Serbian states'. However, Pavlovic argues, neither Serbian ruler nor Montenegrin prince were completely disposed to implement the terms of the accord since it would undermine their dynastic interests. Particularly Prince Nikola's reluctance to remain in the background ended up a rivalry between the two dynasties influencing their relations (Jelavic, 1983; Pavlovic, 2008).

Diligent efforts of both sides against the Ottoman authority were rewarded by Russia at San Stefano and Berlin in 1878. Especially for Montenegro, the treaty imposed on the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish war provided significant profits. Montenegro not

only extraordinarily extended its lands and gained right to access to the sea, but also took its place among the independent states of the world (Glenny, 2012).

Decades following the independence of Montenegro until the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were marked by Prince Nikola's attempts to restructure state administration, to strengthen his authority, and to establish constitutional monarchy. Nikola's endeavor to consolidate state apparatus under his control, however, was challenged by tribal and parliamentary opposition. First, progressively marginalized tribe elites rebelled against Nikola's autocracy. Second, the diminishing importance of the constitutional assembly led to an increase in parliamentary opposition (Pavlovic, 2008). Ultimately, conflicts of interests among the tribal leaders and political elites became a characteristic of Montenegro in the period preceding World War I.

The principal outcome of these confrontations was the polarization of the political landscape of Montenegro into two sharp opposing camps: The People's Party (Klubasi) and The True People's Party (Pravasi). The former called for the dethronement of Nikola and unification with Serbia, while the latter supported the prince. The manifestation of the interests of the Prince of Montenegro was the establishment of the Kingdom of Montenegro which radically exacerbated the power struggle between the Serb and Montenegrin dynasties (Pavlovic, 2008).

For the House of Karadjordjevic, Pavlovic argues, Nikola's attempts to strengthen Montenegro's position as an independent state and to proclaim the Kingdom of Montenegro meant undermining the primacy of the Kingdom of Serbia among the South Slavs. As Nikola Pasic, the head of the People's Radical Party in Serbia, stated the establishment of the Kingdom of Montenegro "is a new bad political occurrence among the Slavs because it confronts two dynasties… A possible conflict between the two means a conflict between their states, and such a

thing could lead to the division of 'Serbdom' into two antagonistic camps" (as cited in Pavlovic, 2008, p. 46).

For the supporters of King Nikola, mainly members of the True People's Party, on the other hand, the establishment of the Montenegrin Kingdom and the enthronement of Prince Nikola as its king would mean the preservation of the tradition of independent statehood. Going further, they asserted that being the chief figure among the Serb countries had been the historical right of Montenegro. Prince Nikola in a similar vein stated during his enthronement that "he had been for some time aware of the glorious role of this land of ours in the history of the Serb nation" (as cited in Pavlovic, 2008, p. 46).

Essential in this examination is that the polarization between the two states and between the two opposing camps in Montenegrin domestic politics deepened further during the reign of Prince Nikola. Even though Nikola and the True People's Party were among the advocates of the Serbian origins of Montenegro, their political interests led them to highlight the cultural and political distinctiveness of Montenegro, to underline Montenegro's centuries-long independence, and to politically distance Montenegro from other South Slav states, especially Serbia.

However, it is of decisive importance to state that emphasizing the distinctiveness of Montenegro and keeping it distanced from other Serb states was by no means ethnic/nationalist in character. Rather, constructing a Serbian national identity among Montenegrin inhabitants was at the forefront for Nikola. The construction of a South Slavic (Serbian) state in this regard was the ideal if only Nikola and the house of Petrovic would be at the wheel. Before getting into the details of Nikola's ideal of a unified Serbian state, this section will provide a brief overview of how the question of Montenegrin statehood, or what Srdja Pavlovic calls 'the Montenegrin Question', evolved over time.

Pavlovic argues (2008) that every leader of the Montenegrin tribes until Nikola I Petrovic had always tried to unravel 'the Montenegrin Question' outside of the broader political context. Even the idea of creating an independent Montenegro rose to the surface after the turn of the 18th century. Until that time, the common objective among the vladikas was the removal of the Ottoman Empire by courtesy of great-powers such as Venice or Russia. In time, with the decline of Venice, Russians gained prominence in Montenegrin princes' strategies.

During the reigns of Danilo I Petrovic (1697-1735) and Vasilije Petrovic (1744-1766), the idea of revitalizing the state ruled by Crnojevic noble family was predominating. In both leaders' perceptions, the Crnojevic noble family was the last ruler of the region called Old Montenegro and the symbol of the Montenegrin tradition of statehood. Contemporary princes of Montenegro in this regard were the legitimate successors of the house of Crnojevice and had 'historical right' on contemporary southeast Europe. Pavlovic argues that from the 17th century onward, the perception of 'historical right' and of revitalizing an old empire constituted the historical consciousness of every Montenegrin vladika (Pavlovic, 2008).

The reigns of Petar I Petrovic Njegos (1784-1830) and Petar II Petrovic Njegos (1830-1851) was marked by attempts to strengthen central authority and the state and expand its territories. In their vision, the question of Montenegrin statehood could only be resolved through the elimination of the Ottoman threat. To do this principally required the establishment of a 'Christian' empire (Serb or Slav) (Pavlovic, 2008). The future of Montenegro in this sense lied underneath a union consists of Balkan Christians.

Finally, the reign of Prince Nikola I Petrovic-Njegos (1860-1918), unlike his predecessors, was marked by his attempts to unravel the question of Montenegrin statehood through the emancipation and unification of the entire Serb populaces. His vision, Pavlovic argues (2008), was

shaped both by the idea of national awakening emerged after the French Revolution and by the literary works of some former vladikas who regarded Montenegrins as ethnic Serbs. Hence, for Nikola, Montenegro had always been and will always be one of the constituent parts of the great Serbian Empire, and should fight for the ideal of 'one (Serbian) nation, one (Serbian) state'.

During Nikola's reign, Pavlovic asserts, Montenegrin society and culture progressively 'Serbianized'. The role of the ruling and literary elites in this process was of decisive importance. Chief among their actions were the alignment of the Montenegrin public education system with pan-Slavist ideals. The establishment of the United Serbian Youth (Omladina) organization and the School Commission in this regard needs to be highlighted. Designed to shape Montenegrins social and cultural milieu and ethnic/national consciousness, the United Serbian Youth movement laid the groundwork for attempts to expedite the unification of all Serbs. On the other side, the establishment of the School Commission helped to reformulate the school system, mostly through the readjustment of textbooks, along Serb lines (Pavlovic, 2008).

A prominent example of such Serbian lines can be found in one of those textbooks designed for elementary schools:

"Our ancestors began their journey from their homeland in Asia, and . . . reached the land called Europe. Learned men from those times told us that our ancestors were called Serbs . . . and that the Serbs were the most numerous people of the period. After their numbers grew even further, they started dividing into tribes. Each tribe used its own (tribal) name, while later all of them began calling themselves Slavs. It was only we . . . who kept our old ethnic name, the Serb" (as cited in Pavlovic, 2008, p. 55-56).

Regarding the origins of Montenegrins, textbooks demonstrated Montenegrins as ethnic Serbs and Montenegro as the protector of Serbian freedom. To put it explicitly, "In Montenegro

live pure and true Serbs who speak the Serbian language . . . The majority of them are of the Eastern Orthodox faith, whereas there are small numbers of them that are of the Roman Catholic and the Mohammedan faith . . . it is important to know, however, that all of us are of Serbian origin and Serbian ethnicity" (as cited in Pavlovic, 2008, p. 57).

It is therefore safe to argue in the light of these remarks that the ruling and literary elites during the reign of Prince Nikola worked diligently to reformulate Montenegrin socio-cultural landscape and national identification. The ultimate aim was, as Pavlovic put forward (2008), to revitalize the old Serbian Empire in which Petrovic dynasty would enjoy ruling privileges, which in return meant the removal of the house of Karadjordjevic.

The rivalry between the house of Petrovic and of Karadjordjevic, however, went in the house of Karadjordjevic's favor with the defeat of Montenegro against the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the first World War. Up to that point, as John Treadway claimed (1998), Montenegro was anything but Serbia's full-time partner. Only under specific conditions could the two cooperate. Moreover, Nikola's political maneuvers throughout his reign favored the Karadjordjevic dynasty more than it preserved the Montenegrin tradition of statehood. Especially, the net effect of his attempts to reshape the cultural and social landscape of Montenegro was the 'Serbianization' of the country. During his stay on the throne, Montenegro turned out to be less Montenegrin.

What followed his removal from office as a result of the defeat against the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the end of Montenegro's centuries-long tradition of independent statehood, on the one hand, and the advent of the 'unified Serbian state' (the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes), on the other. However, the inclusion of Montenegro into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was contested – while some referred to that as the unification of Montenegro and

Serbia, others considered it as the annexation of Montenegro by Serbia. This brings us to the second pillar of the contemporary debates on the cultural and political distinctiveness of Montenegro: the latter group (which will be called as the Greens), or the government in exile, whose adherents claimed the merger into the Serbian Kingdom was as an act of annexation, would become a strong opponent of the union with Serbia during the inter-war period and will set the tone in the political scene after the breakup of Yugoslavia.

**The Formation of Divergent National Thoughts Among Elites in Montenegro: 1910-1941**

Srdjan Darmanovic once stated that "whether or not to seek its own place among the sovereign states of the world has long been a dilemma for Montenegro" (Darmanovic, 2003, p. 146). As the first section of this chapter highlighted, however, the period preceding the first World War did experienced anything but a movement or a national thought seeking an independent and sovereign Montenegrin state without the influence of Serbia or great-powers such as Russia.

This is to a large extent because during the pre-modern period the existence of a national consciousness among Montenegrin tribes was not a matter of discussion. Only under specific circumstances did Montenegrin tribes possess a sense of unity and form alliances. It needs to be stressed in line with Pavlovic that even those impermanent tribal coalitions cannot be think of in contemporary understanding of national identity. Rather, for tribe leaders and members, the autonomy of tribes was more important than the strength of central authority. Additionally, the primary objective of those temporary coalitions was to counter the Ottoman threat. Hence, as far as the pre-modern period is concerned, for leading Balkan historians, what supplied the means for identification in Montenegro was the tribes, not the state.

The only period we can think of the construction of a national consciousness and national identity in Montenegro coincides with the reign of Prince Nikola who worked diligently to

'Serbianize' the Montenegrin population. The reformulation of the public education system during his rule enabled Nikola to initiate the formation of Serbian ethnic/national identity in Montenegro. Until WWI, the Serbian proto-national idea, whose supporters advocated the notion of unity between Serbs and Montenegrins, remained the only legitimate national thought in Montenegrin political landscape. Only after King Nikola was exiled from Montenegro and Montenegro joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes did the Montenegrin political sphere witness the emergence of a distinct Montenegrin national thought.

**Early Formulations of National Thought.** In his influential study concerning the national question in Yugoslavia, Ivo Banac (1984) specifies two 'proto-nationalist' Montenegrin traditions existed since Montenegro proclaimed its independence in 1878: the native (Montenegrin) tradition and the Serb tradition. The former based on the separate heritage of Zeta/Doclea and the uninterrupted tradition of independent statehood, while the latter, perpetually evoked by the church, based on the heritage of the medieval Serbian empire and the cultural, religious, linguistic, and historical uniformity of two peoples (Banac, 1984).

Troch remarks (2008) that, however, neither of these traditions did exclude one another. Rather, they became prominent in different occasions. Moreover, he argues, the native proto-nationalist tradition persisted only in a limited area (Old Montenegro). As Montenegro expanded its territories during Nikola's rule, the native tradition could not expand its influence on these new lands. On the contrary, the Serbian proto-nationalist tradition came into prominence and remained, until the first World War, the only legitimate national thought in Montenegro (Troch, 2008).

Prominent Balkan historians and scholars have pointed out that the emergence of the early modern national thoughts in Montenegro coincided with the turn of the 19th century when Montenegro's march into modernity accelerated and the formation of the modern political

atmosphere progressed with the establishment of the parliament and the first Montenegrin constitution in 1905 (Banac 1984; Pavlovic 2003a & 2003b; Pavlovic 2008; Troch 2008; Morrison 2009; Dzankic 2014b). For them, it is safe to date back the early formulations of a 'Montenegrin national thought' to this era.

Even though the early 20th century witnessed the emergence of divergent interpretations of national ideas, however, it is crucial importance to restress that Serbian proto-national tradition was predominant among political elites. As mentioned before, Prince Nikola had worked hard for that to happen. Recognition of his diligent work manifested itself in the newly-established Montenegrin parliament in which all members highlighted the oneness of Serbian and Montenegrin peoples and called for the unification of the two.

The period preceding the first World War experienced two relatively diverged interpretations of Serbian national thought. One form of such interpretations advocated the idea that the two states ought to unite and the House of Karadjordjevic prevail. It is surely beyond doubt that supporters of this view asserted that Montenegrins are pure ethnic Serbs and therefore should unite with Serbia. Contributions of literary elites, who were invited from Serbia and shaped Montenegrin school system during Nikola's reign, need to be underlined in the formation of this interpretation. A prominent example of this view can be found in students' statement regarding the establishment of the constitution in 1905:

"The correct interpretation of the national interests in the new life of Montenegro . . . must succumb to the idea of freedom and unification of the Serbdom" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 24-25).

The second version of the Serbian national thought was advocated by the elite group known for their intimate relationship with the Prince (King) Nikola. Acknowledging the Serbian origins

of Montenegrins, they supported the idea that the process of unification of all Serbian lands and nations should be directed by Montenegro. Hence, the House of Petrovic, not the Serbian dynasty, ought to remain in power. Troch argues (2008) that most significant proto-national native tradition facets existed in this version of Serbian national thought because of the emphasis placed on the Montenegrin dynasty and statehood tradition. Adherents of this version, following the political and economic developments occurred during the first-half of the 20$^{th}$ century, gradually distanced themselves from the pure Serbian national thought and advocated the 'historical right' of Montenegro, Montenegrins, and the House of Petrovic. It is widely accepted for Balkan historians that the early foundations of the contemporary sharp division between the two national thoughts laid during this period. Nikola's speech during the declaration of the Kingdom of Montenegro may well illustrate the standpoint of this second form of Serbian national thought:

"The royal dignity belongs to Montenegro according to its historical right and its own merits. All great powers will greet . . . the Slavs and all Serbs as one more guarantee for the survival and better future of the Serbian tribe" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 25).

The defeat against the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the first World War, causing King Nikola to leave Montenegro following the collapse of the Kingdom of Montenegro, led to the further divergence of these two versions of the Serbian national thought. From this period onward, both elite groups, namely the government in exile and the government in Podgorica, claimed to be the legitimate representative of Montenegrins. The former, the King in exile and his supporters, emphasized both the existence of a Montenegrin unit within the Serbian nation and the age-long tradition of Montenegrin statehood. The latter, on the other hand, dwelled on the oneness of two peoples and called for unification of the two under the Serbian dynasty. Ultimately, the difference between the two groups widened. While the dethroned leader and his followers demanded the

restoration of Montenegro and the House of Petrovic after the war, the newly-established government in Montenegro demanded the 'unconditional unification' of the two states under the House of Karadjordjevic. Both elite groups legitimized their interests by referring to national consciousness (Troch, 2008).

**The Unconditional of Montenegro with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.** The period between 1916 and 1918 was marked by the attempts of both sides to determine the future of Montenegro. Podgorica, during this period, became a political arena where both elite groups reformulated Montenegrin politics along two competing national ideas: the one that favored unconditional unification with Serbia under the Serbian dynasty, and the one that demanded the preservation of the tradition of independent statehood. The zenith of the confrontation between the two emerged when the newly-established Montenegrin Committee (Montenegrin Committee for National Unification), backed by the Serbian dynasty, issued a call for elections in 1918 to resolve the question of unification.

The National Assembly hosted two political groups: Zelensi (better known as 'Greens'), supported by the government in exile, whose members maintained that Montenegro should be one of the equal constituents of Yugoslavia, not a Serbian lackey; and Bjelasi ('Whites'), backed by the Serbian Kingdom, whose followers demanded immediate unification. The following excerpts, the first from the final decision of the National Assembly (dominated by Whites) and the other from the proclamation of the leader of the Christmas Uprising (Greens), illustrate two competing national ideas:

"The Serbian people in Montenegro shares the same blood, the same language, the same aspirations, the same belief and habits with the people that lives in Serbia and other regions; shared

is their glorious history . . . shared ideals, shared national heroes, shared suffering, shared in everything that makes a nation into a nation" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 27).

"The Assembly, gathered in Podgorica, . . . is held against the regulations of the constitution of our country, and most of all against the will of the absolute majority of the Montenegrin people . . . Montenegro [should have] entered one big Yugoslav state, equal to the other regions" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 28).

Central to this examination is the emphasis placed by both sides on the ethnic identity of Montenegrins. Neither Bjelasi (Whites) nor Zelensi (Greens) challenged the Serbian ethnic/national identity of Montenegrins. Both acknowledged that Montenegrins are ethnic Serbs; however, they diverged on the way unification with Serbia should actualize. Contrary to the Whites, however, the Greens propagandized that 'Montenegrin Serbs' had maintained a different tradition of statehood that ought to be conserved (Troch, 2008). In this sense, for Greens who outmaneuvered Whites in Old Montenegro, the decision taken by the Great National Assembly declaring the unification of Montenegro with Serbia under the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 marked the 'annexation' of Montenegro by Serbia (Banac, 1984).

The backlash of the National Assembly's decision was the widening polarization of Montenegrin population. Banac argues that bipolar reactions demonstrated historic divisions of Montenegrins. Supporters of both interpretations existed in every tribe; however, while the Whites consisted of elites and affluent and educated portions of the society, the Greens were generally lower class. In the wake of 1919, the Greens, seeking 'justice, honor, and the freedom of Montenegro', rebelled against the decision to join Serbia, which will be remembered as the Christmas Uprising (Rastoder, 2003; Felberg, 2012). Banac highlights that even though the Greens respected Nikola, he was not the driving force of the revolt. Rather, the key motivation for the

masses was the preservation of 'Montenegro's dignity'. In spite of the fact that the Greens were mainly not against the idea of unification, they demanded two conditions to be met: equality between peoples should be ensured and Montenegrin identity be preserved. For them, however, the National Assembly's decision was an act against these principles. The following excerpts, the first is a letter from one of Green leaders to a Serbian commander, and the second is a declaration submitted to the White and Serbian troops, express their inconvenience and demands:

"Montenegro, our father land, had defended and safeguarded the torch of Serb freedom for six hundred years . . . Only Austro-Magyars had succeeded in extinguishing that torch, and the Montenegrins awaited the day of liberation: We greeted your arrival with great enthusiasm thinking that you were coming as brothers to brothers . . . But you were insincere. You brought us Judas' silver pieces, to buy with them our dear Montenegro and turn her over as a dowry to the Karadjordjevic king" (as cited in Banac, 1984, p. 288).

"We concur with the idea that Montenegro enter into a great Yugoslav state with the same rights as all the other provinces, without any internal political frontiers. The form of governance we leave to the legal decision of a regularly elected assembly of all Yugoslavs . . . to which we shall heartily submit" (as cited in Banac, 1984, p. 289).

Even though the Green revolt was quelled by Serbian troops, backed by Whites, Troch (2008) argues, the question of Montenegrin identity, from the Christmas Uprising onward, has started to dominate Montenegrin political sphere. The following except may well illustrates Greens' formulation of national thought during the interwar period:

"The Montenegrin people have a history that is four centuries older than the Serbian; those four centuries, full of self-sacrifices and tortures for the general national case, covered the Montenegrin name with a legendary glory and decorated it with the wreath of a national martyr,

not only for the whole nation, but also for the whole, big Slavonic race" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 28).

To summarize the points put forward so far, early formulations of national idea among elites in Montenegro emerged in the interwar period as an outgrowth of the way unification with Serbia took place. The two variants of national thought, namely native (Montenegrin) tradition and Serbian tradition, were predominantly Serbian at the beginning. Both considered Montenegrin people as a part of the Serbian nation. However, the native national thought gradually distanced itself from the Serbian tradition by claiming that Montenegrins had constituted a century-old distinct political unity within the Serbian peoples. The claim that the two Serbian peoples should unite under the Petrovic dynasty was transformed by elites, who took side with dethroned King Nikola, into the idea that Montenegro ought to be part of a great Yugoslav state in which all constituent states enjoy equal treatment and preserve their traditions of statehood. Even though the native tradition was to a large extent supported and propagated by the government in exile, Troch argues, the death of Nikola did not result in the decline of the Montenegrin national idea. Rather, from this period onward, it became a crucial part of the Montenegrin political sphere.

**The Trajectory of the Montenegrin National Thought within the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.** The century-old dream of a unified Slav state officially became a reality on December 1st, 1918 (Sotirovic, 2007). The role of the Kingdom of Serbia in the unification of South Slavic peoples, however, has long been a contested issue for the constituents of the newly-established state. The Serbian dynasty and government was without doubt the driving force of the unification which, for Banac (1984), failed to recognize the aspirations of other Slav states who demanded a federal state organization. In this sense, it created an organization in which other Slavic peoples were vulnerable against the dominance of the government in Belgrade. For

Montenegro, in particular, recent studies have to a large extent claimed that the superior power of the Kingdom of Serbia restrained Montenegro from holding fair elections and exercise its self-determination right (Banac, 1984; Pavlovic, 2003; Pavlovic, 2003b; Pavlovic, 2008; Rastoder, 2003; Imeri, 2016). For the topic of this study's concern, the way these Slav states unified and the determining role of the Serbian government in the process and aftermath of the unification created an atmosphere in which different interpretations of national idea in Montenegro increasingly diverged.

The divergence of national thoughts among the elites during the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes owes its increase, recent studies claim, both to the emergence of multi-party system in Montenegro and to the exiled politicians and intellectuals' attempts to reformulate Montenegrin identity. With regards to domestic politics, Montenegrin political scene in the 1920s witnessed the establishment of six political parties, creating a fertile atmosphere in which different viewpoints could exists. Due to the dominance of the Serbian government over Montenegrin politics, however, none of these parties initially acknowledged Montenegrins as a distinct political or cultural community (Banac, 1984; Troch, 2008; Sistek, 2014).

It was only after the elections of 1923 that two of the newly-established parties gradually transformed their party programs and formulated a different outlook that acknowledged the distinct character of Montenegrin society. Among those political parties were the Montenegrin Federalist Party and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Notwithstanding their emphasis on the view that Montenegrins are ethnic Serbs by origin, leaders of the Montenegrin Federalist Party, particularly Sekula Drljevic asserted that different historical developments led both Montenegrins and Serbians to construct separate identities. Montenegrin autonomy in this sense needed to be preserved in a decentralized state structure. For them, only a federal Yugoslavia could provide a suitable

foundation to reform Montenegro's economic and political conditions. In this regard, it seems safe to argue that the Greens found their voice in the parliament through the Montenegrin Federalist Party. The following quote illustrates the national thought the Montenegrin Federalist Party adopted following the elections of 1925:

"We, the Montenegrins, are a political people that have formed its state by its own force and have preserved it in the most painful moments in the history of our race. We do not have the ambition of becoming a Serbian district, or whoever's province. Montenegro was Serbian and must always stay Serbian but with all rights . . . it demands only equality and that in the interest of the unity with Serbia and other provinces of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 30**).**

On the other side, there was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia which advocated the idea that Montenegrins and Serbians both formed separate identities because of their different historical developments. Troch reminds that the communist party was, during the establishment of a unified Slavic state, among the foremost supporters of a centralized state structure. The ban imposed on the party in 1921, however, canalized the Montenegrin communists to fight for a federalist Yugoslavia in which all 'nations' could enjoy equal rights. In their journal *The Battle*, they demanded "a free (federative) union of all nations on the Balkans, Montenegro included, as historically separately developed units, in a political, economic and cultural sense" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 31). For Troch, this marks the very first interpretation of a separate Montenegrin national identity.

As far as the government in exile's initiative is concerned, subsequent to the unconditional unification with Serbia, a group of intellectuals and ousted politicians close to King Nikola embarked upon reconstructing Montenegrin identity. Chief among those attempts were the

writings of political publicist Nikola Petanovic. Despite claiming the common Slav origins of the two peoples, Petanovic advocated the distinctiveness of Montenegrin identity by pointing out different historical developments Serbia and Montenegro experienced over time. For him, like Drljevic, what set Montenegrins apart from Serbs was the protection of independent statehood in Montenegro against the Ottoman occupation. While the centuries-long foreign invasion altered Serbs' cultural traditions, mentality, and genetic make-up, the Montenegrins preserved their national identity by remaining culturally and ethnically immune to external effects. This in turn, for Petanovic, led the two peoples to construct separate identities (as cited in Sistek, 2014, p. 89-90).

The unconditional unification of Montenegro with Serbia added a new dimension to the opponent politician and intellectuals' attempts to redefine Montenegrin identity. In their writings, Serbs substituted the Ottomans as the threat to Montenegro's independent statehood. Montenegro in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was represented as an exploited, invaded, and colonized territory whose glorious yesteryears and national identity have been constantly suppressed. In one of these interpretations, prominent publicist Savic Markovic Stedimlija imagined Montenegrins as victims in 1928 by claiming that "since the day of the re-occupation in 1918 until the end of this decade, Montenegro has been waiting. There have been no changes for the better since then" (as cited in Sistek, 2014, p. 91).

To sum up, Montenegrin political sphere during the period between 1918 and 1929 was under direct control of the government in Belgrade. Political parties in Montenegro were in favor of a centralist state structure and adherents of pure Serbian national thought. But notwithstanding this, the emergence of new political parties provided some elites an environment in which they could formulate their own national thoughts. In doing so, the Montenegrin Federalist Party and the

Communist Party of Yugoslavia stood for a federative Yugoslav state in which all constituent parts could enjoy equal rights. On the other hand, this era was marked by a set of ousted politician and intellectuals' attempts to reformulate the national identity of Montenegrins. Even though the idea of Montenegrins and Serbs shared common Slav origins remained untouchable, elites increasingly propagated the idea that the two peoples constituted separate identities due to their divergent historical developments over time, which differentiated Montenegrins from Serbs.

**The Divergence of National Thought in Montenegrin Politics in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.** The proclamation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929 marked a break in Montenegrin multi-party system. Any political party that did not adopt Yugoslavism and that were not organized across the entire Yugoslavia were not permitted to continue their activities in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Troch, 2008). Thus, further divergence of elite national thought in Montenegro until the second World War entered into a period of stagnation. The polarization between the two dominant opposing national ideas, however, deepened.

On the one hand, the White or Serbian national tradition continued to remain the predominant national thought and did not experienced a major change. As the following excerpt from the journal *the Free Thought* illustrates, the White national tradition carried on stressing the pure Serbian ethnic/national identity of Montenegrins:

"They [the Montenegrins] have always lived and died for the Serbian name, faith and freedom, to fulfil the Serbian oath and thought that consists of the liberation and unification of the whole Serbian nation . . . That all that is the truth, the Montenegrins proved with their Serbian blood and strengthened it through five painful centuries. They confirmed it with their historical decision in Podgorica . . . with the unification of Montenegro with Serbia" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 34).

On the other hand, the native, Green, or Montenegrin national thought witnessed the emergence of a more separatist outlook. For the first time in Montenegrin political scene, the Greens tended towards the idea of distinct Montenegrin nationhood. Departing from his previous arguments, Sekula Drljevic, leader of the Green movement, rejected the idea that Serbians and Montenegrins belong to the same nation. Rather, for Drljevic, Montenegrins constituted a distinct nation: "With its language, the Montenegrin people belong to the Slavic linguistic community. By their blood, however, they belong [to the Dinaric peoples]. According to the contemporary science of European races, [Dinaric] peoples are the descendents of the Illyrians" (as cited in Banac, 1984, p. 290).

Montenegrin communists were among those who claimed that Montenegrins constituted a separate nation. The establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 and the 'annexation' of Montenegro into it, for communists, marked the loss of national freedom for Montenegro. "The *Montenegrin people* . . . is conscious of the its Montenegritude and the battle it must do, together with all democratic elements, to regain its lost freedom" (as cited in Troch, 2008, p. 33 from the communist manifest from 1939).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted that the interwar period in Montenegro was marked by political elites' attempts to formulate two competing national thoughts, namely the native (Montenegrin or Green) tradition and Serbian (White) tradition. The divergence between the two, Troch contends, stemmed to a certain extent from their search for solutions to the displeasing political and economic conditions of Montenegro. While adherents of the Serbian tradition stood for a unified Serbian state under Karadjordjevic dynasty for the liberation of all Serbs, supporters of the Montenegrin tradition took side with the dethroned King Nikola and called for the

preservation of the century-old tradition of Montenegrin statehood. In the wake of the unified Slavic state, the difference between these two relatively opposing national thoughts was minimal. Both groups acknowledged that Montenegrins and Serbs belong to the same nation and that the two states should unite. The difference between them was therefore a matter of power struggle: who should assume the leadership role in the unified Serbian state. To support their claims, the Whites emphasized the pure Serbian ethnic identity of Montenegrins, while the Greens propagated the Montenegrin state tradition and 'historical right' of Montenegro, Montenegrins, and the House of Petrovic. By the advent of the World War II, however, the two competing forms of national thought increasingly polarized. Even though the White national thought did not experience a major change in its interpretation of Montenegrin national idea throughout the interwar period, the Green perspective gradually transformed itself and formulated a separate Montenegrin national thought that regarded Montenegrins as a separate nation. Thus, it is safe to argue in line with Troch that the interwar period is of crucial importance regarding the emergence and divergence of opposing national ideas among the Montenegrin political elites. It is also significant to grasp contemporary debates on the national identity of Montenegrins.

**CHAPTER THREE: ETHNO-POLITICAL DIVIDE IN MONTENEGRO DURING THE YUGOSLAV TWENTIETH CENTURY**

**Introduction**

Until recently studies explaining present-day division of national identity in Montenegro have either traced it back to the early-modern period, implying a primordialist perception of nationhood, when the Montenegrin political sphere was dominated by the resistance against the Ottoman Empire, or focused merely on contemporary political developments starting from the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991. The former accounts have explained the rise of nationalist movements in the 1990s by introducing the 'return of the repressed' view which holds that "national identities and national conflicts were deeply rooted in the procommunist history of eastern Europe, but then frozen or repressed by 'anti-national' communist regimes" (Brubaker, 1998, p. 285). Growing decentralization of power to the constituent republics, a process began in Yugoslavia during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the weakening of the communist regime, in return, instigated these conflicts to reappear with doubled force (Brubaker, 1998). In the latter accounts, the split of the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) in 1997 was demonstrated as a milestone for Montenegro's divide over statehood and identity. In both cases, the role of the federal structure and workings of Yugoslav state socialism in the foundations of contemporary division of national identity in Montenegro have, to a certain extent, been neglected.

Only recently a few scholars have begun to analyze the design and workings of the communist regime to make sense of Montenegro's present-day ethno-political divide. A central theme emerging from their analyses is the significant effect the communist state had on the

development of the national phenomenon (Brubaker 1998; Malasevic & Uzelac 2007; Troch 2014). The objective of this chapter in this regard is to examine how the communist regime laid the groundwork for the construction of national identities and how elites' formulations of divergent national ideas evolved during the Yugoslav twentieth century.

**The Design and Workings of Yugoslavia**

    **Federal Structure and Constitutional Amendments.** Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, also known as the second Yugoslavia, came into force with the promulgation of the first constitution on January 1, 1946. Constitutionally, the federal umbrella encompassed six republics and two semi-autonomous provinces. Montenegrins, in particular, were not only positioned on equal footing with the other five republics, but also recognized as one of the five constituent nations (Muslims became the sixth constituent nation in 1968) (Jenne & Bieber, 2014).

    Designed extensively based on its Soviet counterpart, the first Yugoslav constitution materialized a highly centralized one-party state under which each republic would enjoy equal status and the right to self-determination. Officially executive power and legislative was concentrated in the bicameral National Assembly, comprised of a Council of Nationalities and a Federal Council. In practice, however, the Communist Party and its chief executive organ, the Politburo, whose members were selected by Marshal Tito, held the real authority (Pavkovic, 1997; Roberts, 2007).

    The second constitution, promulgated in 1953, marked the initial steps toward the development of state socialism. The introduction of the Council of Producers, which incorporated the Council of Nationalities, aimed to institutionalize workers' social self-management. One of the most important outcomes of this amendment was the reduction of the weight of the Council of Nationalities to the benefit of workers. The third constitutional amendment, took place in 1963,

renamed Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia as the SFRY. Further enhancing social self-management system, the 1963 constitution strengthened the power of republics and self-managing organizations in the economy. In a similar vein, the 1967 and 1971 constitutional amendments gave greater powers to the republics and, therefore, gave rise to weakening central control and political and economic decentralization (Singleton, 1985; Hudson, 2003).

By far the most influential constitutional amendment on the federal structure of Yugoslavia, which provided a fertile ground for republics seeking more autonomy, took place in 1974. Initially aimed to reassert the primacy of socialist authority, the 1974 constitution gave more autonomy to constituent republics, made the locus of power republican and, therefore, accelerated the process of decentralization in Yugoslavia (Hudson, 2003). Chief among its provisions that undermined the federation were the introduction of veto power for republics over legislation and the exemption of the Federal Executive Council, the second pillar of federal government, from the principle of equal representation for all republics. Specifically, the latter precipitated the collapse of Yugoslavia by damaging the 'ethnic key' principle which soon paved the way for Serbs to dominate the state apparatus (Roberts, 2007).

**Yugoslav Supranational Identity and the Montenegrin Question.** Even though the intellectual origins of the Yugoslav idea, namely Yugoslavism, can be traced back to the early 19th century, the materialization of the project of forging a Yugoslav national identity could take place with the creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. The divergent interests among the constituents of the first South Slav State regarding the state's constitutional structure, however, condemned the Yugoslav idea to failure. Serbian monarch's initiative in 1929 to reconcile the disagreements among constituent states' elites by imposing a unitary Yugoslav

identity and ideology could only remain in force during his stay in office (Pavkovic, 2014). The collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1941 marked the end of the short-lived Yugoslav idea.

Apart from the divergent interests of the constituent states, the Yugoslav idea owes its first failure, to a certain extent, to the fluctuating trajectory practiced by the Communist Party (KPJ). Even though the party ranked third in the 1920 elections, it was of crucial importance for the first Yugoslavia because it was the only party, except the democrats, whose support was not limited mainly to one national group (Pavkovic, 1997; Lampe, 2000). As highlighted in the previous chapter, members of the communist party during the first years of the unified Slavic state were in favor of a centralized state structure and of Yugoslav national unity. The ban imposed on the party in 1921, however, caused the communists to reject their earlier theses and to call for the disintegration of Yugoslavia based on self-determination rights of all constituent nations.

Starting from the 1930s, however, the KPJ experienced a radical transformation. With the reorganization of the party structure led by the new administrative staff, the Communist Party adopted a more moderate stand regarding the question of national identities. Earlier arguments were discarded and the party stood for the federalization of the Yugoslav state based on solidarity and equality among constituent nations. Regarding the question of fascism and of extreme nationalism, however, the party took a firm stand against both. Hence, on the one hand, communist parties in each republic acknowledged the existence of local national identities, and even institutionalized them with no room for extreme nationalism. On the other hand, they recognized the overarching Yugoslav supranational identity (Troch, 2014).

For Montenegrin political sphere, under the rule of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the League of Communists of Montenegro had become the chief opposition against the Serbian regime, particularly through meetings and protests. Along with its counterpart in

Macedonia, the KPJ in Montenegro ranked first in the 1920 elections by winning 38% of the total votes cast. Their opposition throughout the 1920s depended mostly on the distinctiveness of Montenegrin nationhood and right to seek its freedom. However, they did not explicitly attempt to dissociate Montenegrin nationhood from Serbian nationhood (Lampe, 2000; Troch, 2014). Only towards the end of 1930s did the communists advocate that Montenegrins formed a separate nation.

It was again the communists who revitalized the Yugoslav idea in the aftermath of WWII. The 1946 constitution divided the second Yugoslav state into six constituent republics encompassing five distinct nations. Unlike its predecessor, the new Yugoslav model preserved, and even underlined, the distinctness of the constituent nations, each had its own unique past, culture, and literature. Despite their differences, for communists, these were equal and fraternal nations (Pavkovic, 2014).

This notion of 'Brotherhood and Unity' was further reinforced by the Communist Party in the 1950s with the initiative to indoctrinate a Yugoslav supranational identity, exceeding but not suppressing existing national identities (Pavkovic, 1997). Joseph Tito, who relentlessly emphasized the need for an overarching Yugoslav identity, was the leading figure in efforts to foster Yugoslav brotherhood and unity. It was during his reign that the number of people who identified themselves as Yugoslav reached its peak (1,216,463 according to the 1981 census) (Kajtezovic, 2015).

According to this new Yugoslav model, one could be a Montenegrin or a Macedonian and a Yugoslav at the same time. Furthermore, at its 7th congress in 1958, the Communist Party redefined Yugoslavism as a 'socialist Yugoslav consciousness' which would be advanced through the formation of a shared Yugoslav culture. To produce a common Yugoslav culture, the communists planned to create new common school curricula and textbooks, cultural organizations,

and literary Serbo-Croat standards. In practice, however, such attempts could only remain in effect for a short term. Specifically, Pavkovic remarks, no uniform school textbooks were ever manufactured in SFRY. Given the role of republics in undermining the efforts to create a common Yugoslav culture, Yugoslavism rapidly fell into a decline during the mid-1960s and the official communist ideology was discarded. At the 8th national meeting of the communist party, Joseph Tito, instead of acknowledging a common Yugoslav culture, emphasized the multinational character of Yugoslavia (Pavkovic, 1997; Morrison, 2009). But notwithstanding the gradual decline of importance attached to Yugoslavism by the communist regimes, the Montenegrin population welcomed the supranational Yugoslav identity to a large extent. According to the 2011 opinion poll, 73% of the Montenegrins and 81% of the Serbs in Montenegro said they once felt that they were a Yugoslav, and 45% of the Serbs declared that they still feel like one (Ipsos Report, 2011).

With regards to the Montenegrin Question, unlike other republics, the dialectic balancing action between national and supranational culture occurred in Montenegro within Montenegrin, Serbian, and Yugoslav identities (Wachtel, 1998). The Communist regime's approach to the identity of Montenegrins was that, Morrison argues (2009), they were "different Serbs than other Serbs" (p. 66). In an article published in 1945 in Borba, the communist party's newspaper, Montenegrins were represented as a part of the Serbian branch of the South Slav people. Despite their common language, religion, and historical traditions, however, Montenegrins were differentiated from Serbs due to their different historical development into a modern nation. While the Serbs completed that transition during the 19th century, it took one more century for Montenegrins to do so (Troch, 2014; Sistek, 2015). Therefore, for communists, because of their distinct historical developments, Serbian people were divided into two separate nations.

For some scholars, this interpretation of Montenegrins as Serbs with distinct characteristics, along with their recognition as a separate nation, was an attempt to prevent Serbian hegemony or to curb the Serbo-Croat dichotomy. For others, it was initiated to find a middle ground between the White and Green interpretations of Montenegrins' national identity.

Malasevic and Uzelac argue (2007) that this search for a neutral position, to abstain from precipitating political conflicts between the Greens and Whites, manifested itself as an attempt to keep Montenegrin and Serbian ethno-national classifications as ambiguous as possible. In doing so, the communist party strove for keeping Montenegrin, Serbian, and Yugoslav identities profoundly inclusive of one another. Hence, being Montenegrin did not imply a distinct sense of nationhood for everyone. Rather, for some people it was nothing more than a territorial description. Put it differently, the communist regime sought to present Montenegrin-ness in a way that is not in direct conflict between other categories of identification, which, in turn, enabled people to identify themselves as Montenegrins or Serbs or both at the same time. For Malasevic and Uzelac, this explains the huge proportional difference between those who declared themselves as Serb or Montenegrin: 3% vs. 81.3% in the 1961 census, 3.32% vs. 68.65% in the 1981 census, and 9.34% vs. 61.86% in the 1991 census (Malasevic & Uzelac 2007).

**Institutionalization of Nationhood.** Against the widely accepted 'return of the repressed' view, recent studies have revealed that instead of suppressing nationhood, the communist regimes inadvertently institutionalized it. For Brubaker, the institutionalization of nationhood by the regimes occurred in two ways. First, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was divided into six republics, each defined as the homeland of a specific ethnic group with its own constitution, legislature, name, territory, and cultural institutions. Second, the citizenry was carved up "into a set of exhaustive and mutually exclusive ethnic nationalities" (Brubaker, 1998, p. 286).

Thus, through the classification of republics, ethnic/national identity "served not only as a statistical category, a fundamental unit of social accounting, but also, and more distinctively, as an obligatory ascribed status" (Brubaker, 1998, p. 286). It was recorded in documents of personal identification, was used for almost every official procedure, and was made obligatory for purposes of education and occupation. Therefore, Brubaker argues, ethnic/national identification and territorial nationhood were pervasively institutionalized.

Further institutionalization of nationhood occurred with the abandoning of Yugoslavism in mid-1960s. Declining importance of the Yugoslav supranational identity made it increasingly difficult for those who identified themselves as Yugoslav only to either get a professional job or find a government position. Along with the growing decentralization of powers to the republics, individuals were more and more obliged to belong to a certain national group (Pavkovic, 2014).

However, by no means does this mean the communist regime did not repress nationalism. It did so for sure; but, on the other hand, representing ethnic nationality and territorial nationhood as essential social categories inadvertently shaped the political sphere in a way conducive to nationalism. In a sense, for Brubaker, the communist regime was anti-nationalist, not anti-national (Brubaker, 1998).

**The Role of State Socialism in Montenegro's Drive into Modernity: Transition from Ethnic Group to Community**

For Paul Brass, the transition from ethnic group to community requires two components: first, a radical social change stirred up by modernization and industrialization; and second, rivalry between opposing elite groups for political and/or economic advantages. As the previous chapters highlighted, however, Montenegrin society until the post-World War II era remained agrarian, traditionalist, tribal, illiterate, and underdeveloped. Even though Prince Nikola's reign experienced

the initial steps into modernity through the development of infrastructure including roads, public school system, banking and telecommunication systems (Pavlovic, 2003a), most significant indicators of modernity (e.g. mass-scale education, high literacy rates, mobile and literate high culture, advanced division of labor, enhanced transportation and communication systems) were non-existent in Montenegro before communist rule. By 1945, there were very few daily publications, literate population (below 50%), and secondary schools with almost no higher education institutions. Additionally, industrial development, division of labor, and urbanization was lacking. As Malasevic and Uzelac underlined (2007), even though we can talk about the existence of elite competition based on two competing national thoughts, Montenegro until the communist period did not meet the preconditions for the development of nationalist movements.

Then, considering the growing demands for an independent Montenegro in the post-communist era, when did Montenegro experience the radical social change stirred up by modernization and industrialization? What role did Yugoslavia play in meeting these preconditions which helped Montenegro to make the transition from ethnic group to community? And, what was the development strategy within Yugoslavia as regards Montenegro?

Given the devastating effects of WWII, the survival of Yugoslavia could not be achieved by only revitalizing the ideal of unity among Yugoslav peoples, but through political, military, and economic readjustments as well. With regards to the economic reconstruction of the new state, the communist regime embarked upon establishing industrial development plans in the underdeveloped areas with the aim of improving backward republics and, therefore, balancing economic conditions within the union. In this respect, Montenegro, the smallest and the least developed republic of Yugoslavia, became the focus of diligent efforts to overcome economic backwardness. The Yugoslav leadership invested heavily in industry, power plants, mining, and

infrastructure. By the mid-1950s, Montenegro was ranked the first republic in average annual percentage per capita. Even though its deep-rooted economic problems were not completely resolved, Montenegro experienced a significant increase in economic stability by the end of 1970s (Roberts, 2007; Morrison, 2009).

Besides the industrial sector's increasing role in Montenegrin economy, the establishment of the Bar to Belgrade railway accelerated the development of Montenegro's transportation infrastructure. Moreover, the success of the economic reforms enacted in the mid-1960s provided a certain degree of liberalization including some access to European markets (Roberts, 2007). Montenegro's march into modernity, however, was not limited to economic and infrastructure-driven developments.

It is also in this period that diligent efforts were made by the communist regime to increase intellectual and cultural freedom. Specifically, the education sector enjoyed a significant degree of improvement during this period. Furthermore, the educational and cultural infrastructure of Montenegro was built under the communist regime: the first college in 1947, the Historical Institute in 1948, the State Archive in 1951, the National Theatre in 1953, the first university faculty in 1960, the first full-fledged university with six faculties in 1973, and the Montenegrin Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1976. Equally important, Montenegrin mass media experienced significant development during the Yugoslav twentieth century. For instance, under the communist regime, 13 TV channels were set up, the number of radio stations increased from one to thirty-one, and the number of newspapers increased by seven times. As a result of these, Montenegro witnessed radical social change stirred up by modernization and industrialization. By the demise of Yugoslavia, Montenegrin population living in urban places increased from 14.2% to 58.2%; the

industrial sector enlarged its share in the economy from 6% to 35%; and the literacy rate increased up to 94.1% (Rastoder, 2003; Roberts, 2007).

Finally, the transition from ethnic group to community in Montenegro was promoted by the rise of new political institutions. Following the promulgation of the 1946 constitution, Montenegro gradually achieved the trappings of a nation-state. Chief among those were the acquisition of a republican government, constitution, assembly, media, and national academies, and the adoption of a new flag and coat of arms (Jenne & Bieber, 2014). Taken into account the growing autonomy of the republic as a result of the constitutional amendments, for J. Allcock, the rise of new political and cultural institutions played an important role in consolidating a separate Montenegrin identity (as cited in Morrison, 2009, p. 73).

However, the 1980s brought several problems that undermined the foundations for an independent existence. First and foremost, growing decentralization of powers to the republics made it highly difficult for the communist regime to overcome the financial crisis shaking the union. With the death of Tito, federal institutions became more and more vulnerable to being dominated by Serbs. Additionally, deteriorating economic conditions (high inflation, massive job cuts, and widespread bankruptcies) led to mass demonstrations, particularly in Montenegro, which provided a fertile ground for nationalist elites to rise. In Montenegro, the net effect of demonstrations, reinforced with Milosevic-driven pan-Serbian nationalism, entailed the replacement of ruling elites with those close to Milosevic. Lastly, even before the financial crisis, the Montenegrin economy was not efficient enough for an independent existence. Despite the significant economic and infrastructure-driven developments that took place by the 1970s, Montenegro was still the least developed republic in Yugoslavia.

**Further Formulations of Divergent National Thoughts**

The elite interpretations of Montenegrin and Serbian nationhood gradually became mutually exclusive in Montenegro under communist modernity. Leading historians and linguists such as Radoslav Rotkovic, Vojsilav Nikcevic, and Radoje Radojevic gradually formulated the argument of a distinct Montenegrin nationhood. As a prominent example of these formulations, Savo Brkovic, in 1974, challenged the early moderate position of the communist party by arguing for a separate Montenegrin national development which, he asserted, started during the $9^{th}$ century following the advent of Montenegrins as 'Slavs' on Old Montenegro. For Brkovic, the confusion with Serbian national identity was ushered in by both the assimilation policy of the Serbian aristocracy and the shared attachment to the Orthodox Church (as cited in Troch, 2014, p. 17).

The 1980s were marked by the strengthening elite formulations of Montenegrin national identity. The state-owned daily newspaper *Pobjeda*, which remained the only daily newspaper in Montenegro by 1997, published five articles in 1980 concerning the ethnic origins of Montenegrins, arguing that the Montenegrins formed a separate ethnic community since their arrival on Old Montenegro (as cited in Troch, 2014, p. 29). The 1990s, in a similar vein, witnessed the emergence of publications on the distinctiveness of the Montenegrin nation. In "the Montenegrin nation and the Serbian political genocide against them", composed of articles written by prominent historians and linguists in 1990, the case of exclusive Montenegrin nationhood was brought into question. The central arguments of the book can be summarized as follows: Montenegrins belonged to a separate Slavic tribe which had no dealings with the Serbian nation; they had spoken a different language starting from their entrance into the Balkan peninsula; and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church, which was abolished with the proclamation of the Kingdom

of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, typified the separate Montenegrin ethnic/national identity (as cited in Troch, 2014, p. 32).

On the other side, advocates of the Serbian ethnic/national identity made great efforts to prove the Serbian origins of Montenegrins by referring to the literary works of Montenegrin prince-bishops, especially Petar II Petrovic-Njegos's 'the Mountain Wreath' (Pavlovic, 2003a). The accumulation of these formulations, therefore, marked the development toward exclusive Serbian and Montenegrin national thoughts under the communist regime.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, essential in this examination is that the post-World War period of state socialism is of decisive importance to make sense of Montenegro's present-day ethno-political divide. It was the communist regime that laid the groundwork for the preconditions to make the transition from ethnic group to community, and that made it possible for the establishment of institutional and structural conditions which enabled elites to construct further diverged national ideas. On the one hand, even before the communist era there existed elite competition based on opposing national ideas, however, only under the communist rule could it become possible for Montenegro to meet the preconditions, namely modernization and industrialization, for the development of nationalist movements. It is the Yugoslav twentieth century in which Montenegro was transformed from an agrarian, rural, illiterate, and underdeveloped society to a somewhat urban, literate, modern, and industrialized society. On the other hand, contrary to popular belief, the communist regime pervasively institutionalized nationhood. The regime's attempts to present national identities as inclusive of one another turned into mutually exclusive categories of national identification towards the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Finally, elites' formulations of distinct national ideas increasingly diverged as an outgrowth of the institutionalization of national

identities. By the end of the Yugoslav twentieth century, elites constructed a Montenegrin national idea that regarded Montenegrins as a separate nation which was differentiated from the Serbian nation ethnically, linguistically, and religiously.

**CHAPTER FOUR: CAUGHT BETWEEN GREEN AND WHITE: IDENTITY POLITICS IN POST-COMMUNIST MONTENEGRO AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MONTENEGRIN-NESS**

**Introduction**

The breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) marked the initial stages of a radical transformation in Montenegrin political sphere, ushering in a new age of politics of identity. Such radical transformation not only led to an intra-Montenegrin dispute over the future of Montenegro but also resulted in a dramatic change in the share of population who declared themselves Montenegrins or Serbs. On the one hand, Montenegrin politics once again caught between Green and White; that is to say, the disintegration of the constituent republics of SFRY one by one obliged Montenegro to face with the perpetual dilemma of whether to seek independence or to remain with Serbia. On the other hand, the classifications of identity, namely Montenegrin and Serbian, gradually became mutually exclusive.

The effect of that shift manifested itself as the polarization of Montenegrin population. According to the population censuses held in 1991 and 2003, the rate of population who declared themselves as Serbs has shown a dramatic increase from 9.3% to 32%, while the share of Montenegrins decreased from 61.9% to 43% (Bieber, 2003; Malesevic, 2011). The results of the referendums held in 1992 and 2006, in a similar vein, reflects the radical shift in the political views of the Montenegrin population. Even though 95.4% of the population, with a 66% voter turnout, in 1992 referendum voted for Montenegro to remain with Serbia, the next referendum held after fourteen years revealed a quite different picture. Montenegrin independence referendum in 2006

was approved by 55.5% of the population, with 86.5% voter turnout, just 0.5% above EU's requirement for recognition (Dzankic, 2014b; Imeri, 2016).

The transformation of Montenegrin political sphere during the post-communist era was facilitated by few breaking historic moments. Chief among them was the split in the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPS), which ended up with the displacement of Momir Bulatovic by Milo Djukanovic, ushering in a period of democratization and of political reorientation towards the West (Bieber, 2003). A second turning point emerged with the signing of the Belgrade Agreement, which marked the replacement of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) with the Union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2002. By far the most significant milestone in Montenegrin social, economic, and political landscape, however, took place in 2006 when Montenegrin society opted for independence.

This chapter examines how each of these historic moments helped to transform Montenegrin political sphere and shaped politics of identity in Montenegro. In addition to that, in line with Paul Brass' theory, it analyzes the role of elite competition in the formulation of national identity. In doing so, this chapter first covers the three breaking moments and then analyzes what Jelena Džankic called the 'reconstruction of the meaning of being Montenegrin', with the aim of unearthing how and through what means Montenegrin identity was constructed.

**Montenegro in Post-Yugoslav Era**

**The breakup of Yugoslavia and the emergence of new Montenegrin elites.** The ideal of creating unity among Yugoslav peoples entered into a dead end with the advent of Slobodan Milosevic's ethno-nationalist policies, precipitating the emergence of the so-called 'anti-bureaucratic revolutions'. Through the use of Serbian dominance over the Yugoslav army and mass media, Milosevic attempted to gain control over the republics and provinces where he had

ethnic Serb minorities to mobilize, including Montenegro. The outgrowth of such ethno-nationalist approach was the disintegration of the half of the constituent republics of SFRY.

The collapse of the union led Montenegrin elites, as happened in other republics and provinces, to be torn between independence or pan-Serb nationalism (Darmanovic, 2003). Considering the role of Milosevic in provoking the protests seeking resignation of the Montenegrin government, which was substituted by a new elite close to Serbia, Montenegrin decision to remain with Serbia came as no surprise. At the referendum held on 1 March 1992, Montenegro favored a joint state with Serbia (Lukic, 2005).

The replacement of Montenegrin leadership, as an outcome of the mass protests, however, cannot solely be attributed to pan-Serbian nationalism. Rather, as Florian Bieber points out (2003), demonstrations mainly stemmed from the bleak economic and social conditions of Montenegro. Among chief outcomes of the economic crisis of the late 1980s were high inflation, massive job cuts, and widespread bankruptcies including the republic itself. Thus, the protests arouse out of the workers' demands for reform and better living standards (Bieber, 2003; Vladisavljevic, 2014).

During the course of protests, however, the motive of the protestors was transformed and their call for improvement, with the help of the efforts of Milosevic backed political elites, turned into 'Serbophile ethno-nationalism' (Malesevic & Uzelac, 2007). Hence, discontent with the existing conditions, Bieber argues (2003), "found their outlet through nationalism" and the demonstrators who "came as workers went home as Serbs" (p. 15). It was against this background that the demonstrations came about which ultimately steered Montenegro to remain with Serbia.

It is in this context that both the first free Montenegrin elections in 1990 were held and the party leadership in Montenegro was replaced with a new elite group close to Serbia. The overwhelming success of the League of Communists (SK CG), which will be retitled as the

Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS), by winning more than 50% of the votes, marked the first transition in Montenegrin politics. While maintaining close ties with their Serbian counterparts, the new political elites henceforth embarked upon establishing autonomous decision-making mechanism and moving Montenegro away from Serbia's active zone of influence. That political agenda, following the elections, was grounded on what Tom Gallagher called as the twin-track policy: first, to preserve the close relationship with Slobodan Milosevic and the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS); and second, to maintain some degree of Montenegrin distinctiveness (Bieber, 2003; Gallagher, 2003).

Apart from the eternal dilemma of whether to seek independence or to remain with Serbia, the breakup of SFRY also led Montenegro to be caught between participation in Serbian campaign over the newly established independent states of former Yugoslavia and remain neutral. The intensifying tension between the Croatian army, Serb militias, and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) in Croatia following the country's secession from the union steered Montenegro to take part in the battle in Croatia, if not directly (Bieber, 2003). Montenegrin reservists in the JNA, however, were withdrawn by the parliament as the conflict proceeded, showing the reluctance of the Montenegrin officials to get involved in the war (Roberts, 2007). Their hesitation also manifested itself when Bulatovic government supported the Carrington Peace Plan which proposed the establishment of a loose association among constituent republics of SFRY (Morrison, 2009). The support of Montenegro with other republics for the European Community's peace plan, however, gave rise to harsh criticism and pressure from both Serbia and Milosevic-backed Montenegrin officials before it was withdrawn (Gallagher, 2003; Bieber, 2003).

The importance of the wars in other republics for Montenegro was that it deepened the divergence between opposing camps in Montenegrin politics over identity discourse and foreign

policy of the republic. Once again, Montenegro had to face with the old dichotomy of Green versus White. Hence, the 1990s were marked by the attempts to bridge Montenegrin politics with Serbia on the one hand, and to break ranks with Milosevic and Serbian nationalism, on the other.

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LSCG) stood at the one side of the political spectrum, representing the anti-war and pro-independence camp of Montenegrin politics. Both parties favored independence and, especially the SPD, opposed the establishment of a joint state with Serbia. The Liberal Alliance grounded its program on the idea of an independent and internationally recognized Montenegro committed to the supremacy of liberal democracy, reform in political sphere and economic conditions, integration into the West, and ethnic reconciliation. Another aspect of the core of the Liberal Alliance was its emphasis on the distinctiveness of Montenegrin identity and its anti-war appeal which protested the participation of Montenegro in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia (Barnes, Levaditis & Finn, 1998; Bieber, 2003; Woehrel, 2007).

On the opposite side of the political spectrum stood the People's Party of Montenegro (NS), representing the pro-federation camp. Aligning itself with the Milosevic regime and the Democratic Party of Serbia, the People's Party advocated closer ties with Serbia and the preservation of the integrity of Serbian peoples. Even though the party gradually dissociated itself from the Milosevic regime and extreme Serbian nationalism due to the incidents in the Bosnian war, it favored a joint state with Serbia and advocated the Serb-ness of Montenegrins (Barnes, Levaditis & Finn, 1998; Bieber, 2003; Woehrel, 2007).

The Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro (DPS), the successor of the LSCG, placed itself at the blend of the two sides until the split within the party in 1997. Until that time,

the DPS favored close ties with Serbia while maintaining some degree of Montenegrin distinctiveness (Barnes, Levaditis & Finn, 1998; Bieber, 2003).

The intra-Montenegrin debate over identity and alliance with Serbia continued to shape Montenegrin politics even after the establishment of FRY. The relations between Montenegro and Serbia throughout the 1990s were governed by the DPS which dominated every election since 1990 and remained the most powerful party in Montenegro. The dual strategy of the party was successful enough to preserve the union of Serbia and Montenegro; however, it couldn't manage to ease the deteriorating relations between the two republics. Nor could it succeed in alleviating the intra-party dispute over the future of Montenegro. On the one hand, the DPS increasingly broke ranks with the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and Milosevic mostly due to the SPS's extreme ethno-nationalist approach and attempts to influence Montenegrin politics. On the other hand, the predominating dichotomy of Green vs. White of Montenegrin political sphere spread into the DPS as well. On the one side stood Milo Djukanovic who championed the idea of an independent Montenegro committed to democratization, progressivism, and Euro-Atlantic integration. Momir Bulatovic on the other side advocated the federation with Serbia and pursued a conservative-nationalist approach (Bieber, 2003; Woehrel, 2007).

**The realignment of Montenegrin politics: the split of the DPS.** As illustrated in previous chapters, the Green versus White conflict have always been one of the defining characteristics of Montenegro. The DPS, seen as the middle ground of post-Yugoslav Montenegrin politics, was among the arenas in which it has survived. Underneath overwhelming election victories was an intra-party dispute over the agenda should the party pursue. What precipitated the rift among the party members regarding this contested party program to surface, among other things, was the

direct and/or indirect involvement of Montenegro in the ethnic wars in Croatia and Bosnia and the severe sanctions targeting FRY by the international community thereupon ensuing.

Considering its size and insufficient economic capacity, the smallest constituent republic of the former Yugoslavia, which constituted 2% of SFRY's GDP and 5% of its territories, was more adversely affected by the cost of wars and the sanctions than Serbia. For this reason, the 1990s for Montenegro became a time of intense economic instability triggered by hyperinflation, rising unemployment rate, poverty and inequality (Gallagher, 2003; Jeffries, 2003; Uvalic, 2006). Along with the burden of Belgrade's ethno-nationalist policies, growing economic dependency on Serbia and deteriorating trajectory of the republic therefore intensified the split within the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro. While pro-federation members of the party gathered around the President Momir Bulatovic, the pro-independence bloc banded together under the leadership of the Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic (Darmanovic, 2003; Mochťak, 2015; Vukovic, 2016).

The clash of the two rival blocs of the DPS emerged to a certain extent because of Djukanovic's growing anti-Milosevic campaign which peaked when he publicly criticized Milosevic's policies in a Serbian news magazine in 1997. In consequence of Djukanovic's interview, Bulatovic took side with Milosevic and called for the removal of Djukanovic and other pro-independence supporters from the government. His campaign was successful enough to force Djukanovic to resign as the vice president of the party; however, Djukanovic managed to remain as the Prime Minister of Montenegro (Bieber, 2003).

Only after the elections in late 1997 did the intra-elite competition in the DPS come to an end. Both Bulatovic and Djukanovic were separately nominated by their adherents for the 1997 presidential election. While the Bulatovic wing of the DPS promoted the preservation of the status

quo, the pro-Djukanovic bloc based its campaign on political and economic reforms, more intense collaboration with Western countries, and the improvement of intra-ethnic relations within Montenegro. The net result of the 1997 elections was the replacement of the office by Djukanovic who gained 52.79 percent of the votes. Apart from the removal of Bulatovic, the 1997 presidential elections also marked the DPS's break with Milosevic and the SPS. Following the replacement of the administrative staff by the pro-Djukanovic wing, the DPS formed a coalition with the parties advocating secession and the parties supporting minority rights (Bieber, 2003; Morrison, 2016).

The impact of the 1997 elections was threefold. First, it revealed the limits of Serbian influence **on** Montenegrin politics. A candidate discredited by Belgrade won the elections for the second time in Montenegrin politics. Second, DPS's phenomenal dominance in every election since 1990 came to an end when the pro-Bulatovic wing detached from the party and subsequently formed the Socialist People's Party of Montenegro (SNP). The official split of the DPS not only disambiguated the lines of confrontation between Green and White, but also helped to expedite the pluralization of Montenegrin political sphere (Bieber, 2003). Third, Montenegro's democratization process gained momentum following the victory of Djukanovic. As Mochťak remarks (2015), besides Djukanovic's pro-democratic and pro-Western policies, the rivalry between competing political factions which emerged ensuing the establishment of SNP operated as an arena for democratization.

The expiration of DPS's dominance in Montenegrin politics due, to a certain extent, to the separation of pro-federation camp obliged the party to assemble a coalition for the 1998 parliamentary elections. Despite the party's clear departure from pro-unionist approach, the coalition called "For a Better Life / To Live Better (Da Zivimo Bolje - DZB)" consisting of the People's Party, DPS, and the Social Democratic Party abstained from holding a strong pro-

independence stand. Hence, it would also safe to argue that the DPS remained a part of the middle ground movement in Montenegrin politics with the formation of DZB, partly due to the People's Party's pro-unionist yet anti-Milosevic stand and partly due to the absence of the Liberal Alliance of Montenegro, main advocate of Montenegrin independence, in the coalition.

Thus, on one side of the political spectrum this time stood the pro-independence Liberal Alliance of Montenegro. On the other end was the pro-unionist SNP led by Momir Bulatovic. In the middle stood the DZB which advocated political and economic reforms, the rule of law, enhancement of social justice and security, the acceleration of the democratization process, and the development of Montenegrin autonomous decision-making mechanism (Bieber, 2003).

The outcome of the 1998 parliamentary elections proved the discontent in Montenegrin society against ethno-nationalist and interfering Milosevic policies on the one hand, and validated the middle ground position in Montenegrin politics, on the other. Among seventeen parties partaken on the 1998 elections, the coalition DZB achieved to become the first party with gaining 49.5 percent of the votes, whereas its main rival Socialist People's Party acquired slightly more than one-third of the votes (Goati, 2000; Vance & Paik, 2006).

**'Creeping Independence': the death of the Yugoslav idea.** On 14 March 2002, Montenegrin and Serbian officials, with the help of EU's mediation efforts, agreed on transforming the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into a loose federation, enabling the road to independence wide open for Montenegro. The formation of a less-strict federation took place as an outgrowth of the newly-elected Djukanovic-led Montenegrin government's policy of estrangement from Serbia and of increasing the republics' autonomy. While during the 1990s Montenegro was the only republic willing to remain with Serbia and pursued pro-Milosevic foreign policy (albeit with hesitation), with the inauguration of Djukanovic, the years preceding the replacement of FRY with

the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro became a period when Montenegro initiated what Elizabeth Roberts (2002) called a 'policy of creeping independence'.

This period was marked by the attempts to gradually detach Montenegro from Serbia and strengthen the autonomous decision-making mechanism of the republic. As Zuber and Dzankic pointed out (2017), the application of this policy necessitated the detachment from federal institutions and the foundation of independent political institutions. In this context, Montenegro, following the inauguration of the Djukanovic government, embarked upon taking over functions of the federal state. Chief among those measures was the initiative to take over the monetary and banking system, taxation, customs regime, and foreign trade (Lukic, 2002). The decision in 1991 to introduce dual currency system which adopted the German Mark as a legal tender, before replacing both with the Euro in 2002, marked the Montenegro's move towards economic separation (Darmanovic, 2003; Gallagher, 2003). The same year, Montenegro one-sidedly changed the visa requirements and passed a law regulating citizenship rights of Montenegrins different from the federal state. Moreover, in 2000, Montenegro created its own police and paramilitary forces (Lukic, 2002; Bieber, 2003).

In short, Montenegro, following the two years since the split of the DPS, diminished the crucial role Belgrade had played on its economy to a certain extent. What is more, as Lukic (2002) emphasized, the establishment of independent institutions from the federal state allowed Montenegro to enjoy partial independence. Before the declaration of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, the influence of the federal state over Montenegro was limited to the military presence.

Two historic developments during this period played essential role in Montenegro's transition to the path without Serbia: 1999 Kosovo crisis-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and the

rise of opposition in Serbia. First, the impact of the war in Kosovo, and the NATO intervention thereupon ensuing, was twofold. The idea of Montenegrin independence gained considerable support due to the increasing burdens of Milosevic's policies, on the one hand, and the anti-West domestic opposition among the pro-unionist citizens of Montenegro strengthened because of NATO's military intervention in a sovereign state, on the other (Bieber, 2003; Drewett, n.d.). Besides its influence on internal debates, Bieber (2003) underlines, the crisis in Kosovo also triggered 80.000 refuges' (exceeds 10% of Montenegrin population) slide into Montenegro by the end of 1999, and led Western countries to look for alternatives to Milosevic. Following the end of the war, Montenegro enjoyed financial aids from its Western allies.

Second, the decline of Milosevic in Serbia in late 1990s altered the political environment in Montenegro as well, leading to a process of realignment in Montenegrin political scene. One outcome of the rise of opposition in Serbia was that the Socialist People's Party of Montenegro withdrew its support for the Milosevic regime, yet maintained its pro-unionist stand. Another consequence was the short-term support of the People's Party for the Djukanovic-led coalition, preserving its pro-Yugoslav standpoint though. Finally, the electoral victory of the opposition in Serbia on 24 September 2000 diminished the influence of Serbia over Montenegro, creating a fertile atmosphere for the intra-Montenegrin debate over independence from FRY to strengthen (Bieber, 2003).

Therefore, century-old intra-Montenegrin debate once again manifested itself prior to the 2001 parliamentary elections. This time, the pro-independence wing was represented by two political camps. Among them the Liberal Alliance was the most vigorous advocate of Montenegrin independence. Keeping itself slightly distanced from the DPS, the Liberal Alliance favored an independent Montenegro from FRY and encouraged the acceleration of reforms. The other pro-

independence camp was the coalition called "Victory for Montenegro" consisting of the DPS and the SDP (Social Democratic Party). On the other end of the political spectrum in 2001 parliamentary elections stood three political camps. The most important one, considering its influence on Montenegrin politics, was the coalition named "Together for Yugoslavia" consisting of the Socialist People's Party (SNP), the People's Party (NS), and the Serbian People's Party (SNS). The coalition based its political campaign on the preservation of Yugoslavia and accused the ruling coalition of corruption. Without aligning themselves with the "Together for Yugoslavia", both the People's Socialist Party (NSS) and the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) remained in the pro-federation wing of Montenegrin politics. Last participants of the 2001 elections were the two ethnic minority parties, both in favor of Montenegrin independence (ICG Balkan Report, 2001; Lukic, 2002; Bieber, 2003).

The 2001 parliamentary elections, held in the absence of a middle ground, revealed a bipolar Montenegro. According to the official results, the "Victory for Montenegro" coalition won 42.04% of the votes, while the "Together for Yugoslavia" coalition gained 40.56% of the votes (OSCE Report, 2001). As the results indicated, the election centered on the question of the federal state's future unearthed a politically polarized Montenegro. This extreme polarization originated to a certain extent from the loss of middle-ground, growing division over statehood and identity, and ethnicization of political parties and voters, which brought Montenegro to a deadlock. While the pro-independence coalition's win by a narrow margin showed the considerable support for independence, the results also enabled the coalition "Together for Yugoslavia" to block an immediate secession.

The net effect of the 2001 parliamentary elections was the postponement of a potential referendum on independence. The DPS-led coalition's failure to have a satisfactory win led to the

formation of a minority government with the LSCG which participated in the coalition under the condition that the new government would make necessary arrangements to hold a referendum on independence. Despite the support of the SDP and LSCG, however, the existence of intra-coalition disagreements and the absence of an overwhelming majority in support of independence both in the parliament and in the opinion polls led the DPS to not take immediate action and to delay the call for a referendum (ICG Balkan Report, 2001; Bieber, 2003).

The idea of bringing the future of Montenegro to the public's will found its place in pro-Yugoslav coalition's agenda as well in the aftermath of the 2001 elections. Backed by a considerable support gained in the elections, the pro-federation camp declared its support for a referendum on independence under the condition that all parties should be allowed to fairly participate in the preparation of the campaign. Furthermore, the SNP-led coalition played a role in bringing two sides, Montenegrin and Serbian governing parties, to the negotiation talks regarding the future of FRY. Together with their Serbian counterparts, the pro-Yugoslav coalition proposed a 'platform' to the Montenegrin government representing the official standpoint of Serbia and pro-Yugoslav Montenegrin opposition (ICG Balkan Report, 2001; Lukic, 2002).

The platform proposed by the pro-federation bloc, almost an equivalent of the platforms submitted in late 2000 and in early 2001, advocated a strong federal state that has "a joint federal government and the president, a single army, a single currency" and that acts as a single actor in foreign affairs (Lukic, 2002, p. 13). In a stark contrast, the DPS-led coalition's position in all three joint platforms was in favor of Montenegro's independence. To sketch in two main points, the Djukanovic government put forward the establishment of independence for both states as a prerequisite for the negotiation talks on the formation of a union to start. Besides, both states should

be represented separately in international organizations (ICG Balkan Report, 2001; Lukic, 2002). Thus, both sides' firm positions made negotiations doomed to failure from the start.

Unsurprisingly, it was not the dialogue between the two federal states that made the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2002) possible. Rather, what prolonged the life of the common state and geared Montenegro's rapid move towards independence down, as analysts have claimed, was the European Union's 'forceful intervention' (Gallagher, 2003; Bieber, 2003; Dzankic, 2014a). The warning issued by the EU on Montenegro to not take unilateral action towards independence and to preserve the union with Serbia aimed to prevent separatist movements to revive and to maintain the status quo in the Balkans. For Montenegro, however, it only meant the delay of the inevitable. The union with Serbia and Montenegro took the form of a less-strict federation on March 2002 before it was entirely abolished in 2006.

**Road to independence: Montenegrin politics in the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.** The Belgrade Agreement, signed on 14 March 2002, marked the final destination of Serbian *megali idea*. From the Serbian point, the ideal of gathering all 'Serbs' under a single roof was given a last chance thanks to the EU's mediation efforts or 'forceful intervention'. For the Montenegrin side, however, it gave a pause to the inevitable and/or provided a fertile atmosphere for pre-independence preparations.

For the European Union, the agreement was of crucial importance to the preservation of the status quo and stability and was an indispensable step for the resolution of 'bigger problems' in the region, as Miodrag Vlahovic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro, stated in his interview with MINA news agency (Vlahovic, 2005a). To this end, as analysts have asserted, the EU put extreme pressure on 'unwilling partners', especially on Montenegro, to reach an agreement by using the EU membership card and financial benefits (Roberts, 2002; Meurs, 2003). The treaty

that announced the establishment of a loose federation was a middle ground or balance in the eyes of the EU between both sides' demands.

To summarize contracting parties' demands in a few main points, it needs to be stressed that the negotiations was grounded on the 'platform' Montenegrin side proposed in late 2000 and on the 'joint platform' submitted by the pro-Yugoslav bloc in early 2001. The primary concern of the Montenegrin side was the international recognition of both sides as independent states. In parallel with that, the Montenegrin government insisted on the condition that the two states should be independently represented in international organizations. With regards to the competencies of the joint state, the Djukanovic government envisioned a 'consensual decision-making mechanism' in which common foreign and security policies of the union, along with its international economic relations, would be consensually held by the union. The 2000 platform also projected the establishment of member state armies and of a president and a Federal Court elected and unseated by the unicameral assembly with prior approval of member states' assemblies, and the regulation of the Supreme Defense Council in a way that rules consensually by the three presidents. Last but not least, the right to hold a referendum on independence and future union with Serbia was at the center of the Montenegrin side's platform (Meurs, 2003). In Vlahovic's words, "to be independent and stay stronger with Serbia is practically the shortest definition or the best translation of our political projection forming of a Union of two independent states" (Vlahovic, 2005b).

Considering the 'joint platform' the pro-Yugoslav bloc proposed in early 2001, it would be safe to argue that it stood in stark contrast to the Montenegrin standpoint. The pro-unionist bloc's proposal emphasized the common past of the two peoples, their socio-cultural ties, and common economic interests, whereas the Montenegrin platform underlined the obstacles the union with Serbia created for Montenegro, the unequal representation of Montenegro in former

federations, and Montenegro's right to determine its own destiny. To put the stark contrast explicitly, the new joint state was imagined in the pro-Yugoslav platform as an internationally recognized federation with two federal units. These two federal units should be represented as one in the international arena. The president and the Federal Court ought to be elected by the bicameral Assembly. Furthermore, the federal state should have full control of foreign policy, national defense, and monetary and customs system. More importantly, instead of a referendum on independence, the platform submitted by the Prime Minister Zoran Dindic and the President Vojislav Kostunica offered only constitutional amendments (Meurs, 2003).

The agreement brought into being on March 2002 can be seen as a result of EU's efforts to find a balance between the two proposals, while reserving its top priority to be achieved. It established an internationally recognized state with two republics which would be represented jointly in international organizations. Even though the defense and foreign policies of member states was given under the authority of the federal state, both republics gained the right to have separate economies. The treaty also established a joint presidency and a unicameral Assembly. Most importantly for the topic of this study's concern, the Belgrade Agreement proclaimed a three-year moratorium on plebiscite on independence (Gallagher, 2003; Meurs, 2003; Dzankic, 2014a). As it has been interpreted by analysts, this was Montenegro's exit option.

Despite the support of the pro-independence bloc (except the Liberal Alliance) and the coalition "Together for Yugoslavia" for the signing of the treaty, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro did not come into existence as an outcome of a mutual desire. Especially, Montenegro was unwilling to come to an agreement unless the condition on independence was met. Instead, what made the establishment of the new state possible was the EU's extreme pressure on Montenegro. As Djukanovic made it clear, "the EU faced the differences of opinion of Serbia and

Montenegro on the subject [separately achieve international subjectivity], and insisted that we retain a single international personality for Serbia and Montenegro" (Djukanovic, 2003).

The new state did not meet the pro-independence bloc's chief demands either. Despite the fact that equal representation of both member-states and their right to have separate economies was guaranteed by the agreement, from the viewpoint of the Montenegrin side, it did not enable Montenegro, in practice, to enjoy equal rights in every respect. A prominent example can be found in Miodrag Vlahovic's interviews where he frequently accused Serbia of using the Foreign Ministry of the State Union as its own (Vlahovic 2005a; 2005b). Nor did it lead Montenegrin political elites to drop their independence claims. As the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated, "this model gives us an opportunity to stay with Serbia, which is the prime request of the minority, but significant political part of Montenegro … [requests] to become a sovereign state" (Vlahovic, 2005a). In a similar vein, Milo Djukanovic stated in his interview for the magazine CorD on April 2004 that "I remain convinced, today even more so, that prior to the signing of the Belgrade agreement, that independence for Montenegro, meaning independence for Serbia as well, is the most rational solution" (Djukanovic, 2004).

One of the most significant outcomes of the signing of the accord was that a domestic crisis occurred within the governing coalition. The LSCG and the SDP accused the DSP of acting unilaterally and of excluding its partners from the negotiations. The crisis deepened when the LSCG withdrew its support from the ruling coalition, which in turn caused the next parliamentary elections to be predated to 2002 (Bieber, 2003; Darmanovic, 2003). Only after the 2002 elections could the new government be formed and the domestic crisis be solved.

The formation of the loose federation provided only one positive consequence: it enabled the DPS-led coalition to consolidate its power following the 2002 presidential elections and gave

more time to prepare for secession. With regards to the pre-independence preparations, the years preceding the 2006 referendum on independence saw the implementation of a new Economic Reform Agenda. During this period, according to Luksic & Katnic (2016), the government embarked upon a great deal of economic and structural reforms aiming to achieve economic self-sufficiency. This period was also marked by the economic cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Along with the effective role it played in subsidizing the Economic Reform Agenda, the IMF funds helped Montenegro's macroeconomic stabilization. Thus, Montenegro's economic transition could be achieved to a certain extent in the pre-independence period.

Equally importantly, the Belgrade agreement provided a golden opportunity for the DPS to consolidate its power. Subsequent to the signing of the treaty, 23% of the population opposed the agreement, while 61.1% were in favor, as Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) reported (Caspersen, 2003). Following the withdrawal of LSCG's support for the coalition, the DPS succeeded in holding the SDP within the coalition and increased its votes in the 2002 elections. A considerable portion of LSCG's votes found its way into the DPS-led coalition. This was partly because of LSCG's decision take side with the "Together for Yugoslavia" coalition following the signing of the agreement. As Caspersen pointed out (2003), the Liberal Alliance's radical shift from the far pro-independence wing to the pro-Yugoslav camp proved the existence of elite competition within the governing coalition. It would also be safe to argue that the LSCG's shift proved the supremacy of political interests for elites than their ideological stance. In this context, the results of the election, 47.7% for the DPS-SDP coalition and 37.8% for the coalition "together for Yugoslavia", ended Djukanovic's need for the Liberal Alliance. Furthermore, regarding the use of the exit option, CEDEM's 2002 poll indicated that the support for

independence was ahead of the share of the population who against it, through by a low margin though (Caspersen, 2003).

In the light of these developments, the Montenegrin government decided to use the exit option and hold a plebiscite on the question of whether Montenegro wants to become an independent state. This indisputably most important decision of Montenegrin history was scheduled to be held on 21 May 2006, under the framework determined by the European Union. According to the official results, 55.5 percent of the population voted 'yes' while the 'no' votes remained limited to 44.5 percent (OSCE report, 2006). Therefore, Montenegrin independence was formally declared on 21 May, which will be called as the Independence Day, just above 0.5% above the EU's requirement for recognition. While the results marked the beginning of a new era in Montenegrin history, it also signaled the persistence of the strong dispute over statehood and identity. The reconstruction of Montenegrin identity has yet to come to an end.

**Montenegro in Post-Independence Era**

Up to this point, this study has attempted to exhibit that the formation of Montenegrin national identity and nationalism has been a century-long process, not a product of the 21$^{st}$ century that surfaced prior to the 2006 referendum on independence. We can trace the early formulations of a distinct Montenegrin national thought back to the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. What constituted the starting point of the contemporary dispute over Montenegrins' identity during this period was the way Montenegrin and Serbian states unified. It was in the interwar period, that these first attempts of a Montenegrin national idea were formulated by a group of political and literary elites who considered the establishment of the new Kingdom as the annexation of Montenegro and the termination of Montenegro's centuries-long tradition of independent statehood. Towards the end of the interwar period, their conception of Montenegrin

national thought was transformed from seeing Montenegro as a culturally and politically distinctive part of the Serbian people into seeing Montenegrins as a separate nation. However, until the communist period Montenegro was lacking in fundamental structural conditions for the development of nationalist movements. The absence of necessary political and economic preconditions at that time prevented this conception of Montenegrin identity to get a strong foothold in Montenegrin society.

What laid the groundwork for that to happen to a certain extent was the structure and workings of SFR Yugoslavia, and the radical social change stirred up by modernization and industrialization occurred in the Yugoslav century. The federal state, through the classification of republics each of which defined as the homeland of a specific ethnic group and the way citizenry carved up into a set of exhaustive and mutually exclusive ethnic nationalities, pervasively institutionalized ethnic/national identification and territorial nationhood. In addition to that, during the Yugoslav century Montenegro made the transition from an agrarian, rural, illiterate, and underdeveloped society to a somewhat urban, literate, modern, and industrialized society. In light of these developments, by the end of the Yugoslav twentieth century, the same group of elites (the Greens) envisioned a Montenegrin national idea that regarded Montenegrins as an ethnically, linguistically, and religiously separate nation from that of Serbs.

Again, it would not be safe to argue that the idea of a distinct Montenegrin nation did have a strong social base in the aftermath of the breakup of Yugoslavia. Despite its growing presence, the first decade of the post-Yugoslav era was a time when the Montenegrin and Serbian national identities were not completely mutually exclusive. People still had no obligation to be either Montenegrin or Serb. Apart from the Bosniak and Albanian minorities, ethnic voting was non-existent.

In line with Zuber & Dzankic (2017), the first section of this chapter has attempted to demonstrate that nationalization/regionalization and 'ethnicization' of the vote that took place in Montenegro during the period from the split of the DPS until 2006 evolutionized the conception of Montenegrin national thought, enabled it to gain a strong place in society, and made the independence dream possible.

With regards to the regionalization of the vote (the term used here refers to become less interconnected), the subchapter on the realignment of Montenegrin politics has shown that the principal determinant of the Montenegrin political scene in the aftermath of the DPS-split was the 'regime cleavage' over whether Montenegro should pursue a pro-Milosevic agenda. The elite competition over the control of the DPS between Bulatovic and Djukanovic divided the party into two blocs in 1997 and these opposing blocs set the agenda for the 1998 presidential elections. Voters went to the polls to determine the direction of Montenegro: to take a pro-Milosevic stand or to pursue a more progressive and democratic approach.

In the aftermath of the fall of Milosevic, the chief cleavage that regulated the parties' agendas and election campaigns underwent a radical change. Political parties in Montenegro began to identify themselves with two opposing visions over the issue of independence. This divided the political scene in Montenegro into two opposite blocs: pro-independence and pro-federation. However, this does not mean that the division over independence was non-existent prior to the 21st century. Rather, it was one of the main reasons why the DPS split apart. But, what the decline of Milosevic did was to help this division to surface and reshape Montenegrin politics. Particularly, the DPS, which abstained from holding a strong pro-independence stand during and after the 1998 elections, began gradually to demand greater autonomy based on an 'ethno-territorial cleavage' and to define itself as an advocate of Montenegrin independence and national identity after

Milosevic (Zuber & Dzankic, 2017). Briefly stated, the way political parties identified themselves showed a drastic change after Milosevic's removal from the office. The determinant of the political contest transformed from 'regime cleavage' into regionalization. Political parties became either pro-independence or pro-unionist. In this context, voters, in the 2001 and 2002 elections, made a choice between independence or the preservation of the close association with Serbia.

As far as the 'ethnicization' of the votes is concerned, it would be safe to argue that it was an outgrowth of the process of becoming less interconnected to Serbia and of the deepening division on Montenegrins' national identity. As a consequence of the increasing division over statehood and identity, the Montenegrin and Serbian national identities became mutually exclusive towards the end of the 20th century. Increasingly, individuals voted for the parties sharing the same ethnic/national attachments. According to the results of the elections held after the DPS-split, we see that parties advocating Serbian origins of Montenegrins gained better results in the elections than they used to have. A prominent example of this case is the Serbian People's Party (SNS) which increased the number of seats it had in the parliament from two to six within a year (Zuber & Dzankic, 2017).

To put it briefly, a less interconnected Montenegro to Serbia and the increasing division over the identity of Montenegrins made Serbian and Montenegrin national identities mutually exclusive, which in turn obliged individuals to decide on who they are and whom they should vote for. As analysts have claimed, Serbian ethnic/national identity came to be associated with the conservation of the close links between Serbia, whereas Montenegrin ethnic/national identity became associated with an independent Montenegrin nation state, democratization, western values and European integration (Jenne & Bieber, 2014; Dzankic, 2014b; Zuber & Dzankic, 2017). This is the reason why the two referendums held in 1992 and 2006 revealed quite different scenes and

why the two population censuses held in 1991 and 2003 presented a radical change in how inhabitants of Montenegro identified themselves.

**The Reformulation of What It Means to be a Montenegrin.** So far, analysis has focused on the three breaking moments in Montenegrin politics in the post-Yugoslav era and how each of these developments transformed Montenegrin political scene and shaped identity politics in Montenegro. It has also dwelled on the evolution of the intra-Montenegrin division over statehood and identity. In what follows this chapter examines how and through what means the meaning of being Montenegrin was reconstructed during and after the independence era.

Such examination will be mostly based on both Montenegrin political elites' interviews, public speeches, and press conferences, and newspaper articles published on the anniversary of Montenegrin independence. Along with the use of secondary sources, this section attempts to reveal the role of political elites in shaping and transforming the cognition of Montenegrin identity and nation. In doing so, borrowing from Dzankic (2014b), it will examine the issue at hand under two categories: political and ethno-cultural elements of the state's policies implemented to reconstruct the Montenegrin identity schema. Having done that, this chapter will conclude with an analysis of how Montenegrin identity and nation, through the use and reconstruction of historical narratives, was imagined by political elites.

*Political elements of the re-imagination of Montenegrin-ness.* In her influential study examining the reformulation of Montenegrin identity, Jelena Dzankic (2014b) specifies a set of political and ethno-cultural policies employed by the ruling political elites to underpin their vision of Montenegrin identity and nation. Through the implementation of such state policies, she argues, the elites shaped the discourse regarding the conception of the Montenegrin nation. The political elements she specifies are party identification, identification with the state, military service,

foreign policy, and national holidays. In addition to the political elements, Dzankic introduces the adoption of new state symbols, nationalization of language, and the use of religion as an identity marker as ethno-cultural elements used by political elites to reconstruct the Montenegrin identity schema.

For Dzankic, we can trace the reformulation of the Montenegrin schema back to the period called 'creeping independence'. As this chapter has highlighted, the primary concern of the ruling elites during this era was to strengthen the autonomous decision-making mechanism in Montenegro and to create a less interconnected Montenegro to the joint-state with Serbia. The policies employed by the government included introduction of the dual currency system, establishment of separate police and military forces, and disassociation from the federal state's monetary and banking system, customs regime, foreign trade and taxation policies. The establishment of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro in this regard deepened Montenegro's detachment from the federal state. Montenegro under the umbrella of the federal state may well be described as a de facto independent state.

This de facto independence, during the period following the formation of the loose federation, was intensified with further state policies aiming to associate independence with the conception of Montenegrin identity. In addition to that, Dzankic argues, the Montenegrin nation was represented as a civic nation in that period. By doing so, the elites aimed to steer individuals to associate themselves with the state, not with ethnic attachments. One of the underlying reasons of that policy was the absence of consensus among the Montenegrin population that Montenegrins are ethnically different from that of Serbs. This is partly because the term Montenegrin-ness still referred to a territorial attachment. As Brass (1991) remarks, the individuals' backgrounds can become constraining boundaries for elites. In Montenegrin case, the concept of Montenegrin-ness

and the common history experienced with the Serbian state constrained Montenegrin elites to pursue a clear ethno-cultural approach. One can go further and argue that this is because why Montenegrin secession was not accompanied by armed ethnic conflict.

However, by no means does this mean that the Montenegrin political elites did not initiate in ethno-cultural policies in order to separate Montenegrin identity from Serbian identity. As Dzankic pointed out, there are various attempts since 2001 undertaken by the governing elites intended to inject ethnic sentiments into the Montenegrin identity schema. These ethno-cultural elements of the re-imagination of Montenegrin-ness will be elaborated later on.

*Party identification.* The first political element Dzankic specifies concerns individuals' identification with political parties. It has been stressed in this chapter that the principal cleavage that structured political party programs underwent a fundamental change following the decline of Milosevic. The reformulation of Montenegrin identity, during the period from the decline of Milosevic until de jure independence, occurred in a political scene in which political parties were either pro-independence or pro-federation. Voters had no choice but to support or oppose of the idea of an independent Montenegro. In this political climate, those who identify themselves as Montenegrins, along with Bosniak and Albanian minorities, mostly supported the parties advocating independence, the DPS, whereas those who considered themselves as Serbs favored, to a certain extent, pro-federation parties, especially the SNP (Bieber, 2003; Imeri, 2016). Therefore, as Dzankic (2014b) pointed out, identification with pro-independence or pro-unionist parties came to be the characteristics of both Serbian and Montenegrin national thoughts. An additional affirmation of party identification can be seen by looking at the surveys conducted as a part of the project "Symbolic Nation-Building in the West Balkans" in 2011. The results of the surveys indicate that 68% of the interviewees identified themselves with a political party. 73%

percent of the interviewees who considered themselves as Montenegrins voted for the DPS, while 6% supported pro-unionist parties, namely the SNP and the New Serb Democracy Party (NSD). Conversely, interviewees who identified themselves as Serb substantially voted in favor of parties which used to represent the pro-federation bloc, namely the SNP and NSD. Accordingly, it is safe to argue that the governing political elites reformulated the identity schema so that individuals polarize around the question of independence and affiliate with the supporting or opposing political parties. The question of how individuals mobilized around the independence issue and how the support for independence was presented as a civic duty will be elaborated later on.

*Identification with the state.* Another political component decisive in the reformulation of Montenegrin identity Dzankic specifies (2014b) is identification with the state. For her, state identification came to mean two things in Montenegro: embracing the independence project and the view of the state as a multi-ethnic one. As far as the independence endeavor is concerned, in the aftermath of the DPS-split, support for independence was represented as support for the state by the ruling elites. According to the surveys conducted in 2011, 73% of the self-identified Montenegrins said they strongly identify themselves with the Montenegrin state. Furthermore, 94% of them declared that they regarded Montenegro as their homeland while only 5% considered some other country as their patria. On the other hand, the share of self-identified Serbs who felt affiliated with another country was 26%. Moreover, while only 5% of the self-identified Montenegrins said they were not proud of their country, this percentage rises to 26% among the self-identified Serb interviewees (Ipsos Report, 2011; Dzankic, 2014b).

With regards to the view of Montenegro as a multi-ethnic state, it has been highlighted elsewhere in this chapter that the governing party attempted to represent Montenegro as a civic nation after the establishment of the loose federation. This was a continuation of the policy

implemented after the DPS-split. To gain the support of minority parties, the Djukanovic-led fraction of the DPS fostered the idea of multi-ethnic Montenegro in the parliamentary elections held after the split. Even though the concept of multi-ethnicity in Montenegro meant tolerance for other ethnic identities instead of a true embracement of diversities, the representation of the state as a multi-cultural one became one of the fundamental elements of the Montenegrin identity schema. As in the cases of self-identified Montenegrin adherents of the DPS (73%), of the state (73%), 75% of the self-identified Montenegrin interviewees supported this view (Ipsos Report, 2011; Dzankic, 2014b).

*Military service as an instrument for identity construction.* Montenegrin officials' hesitation to take joint military action with Serbia first took place in the Croatian war of independence. Along with their initial reluctance to participate in the war, the governing elites not only withdrew Montenegrin forces in late-1991 from Croatia, but also took the side of the international community during the peace-talks held towards the end of the war. The Kosovo crisis in 1999 revitalized Montenegrin elites' unwillingness to get involved in another of Serbia's conflicts. In this regard, Montenegro's decision to pardon soldiers who declined the federal state's call for the Kosovo war in 1999 has been claimed by analysts as an act aiming at distancing the country from Serbia. However, Montenegrin authorities' attempts to separate Montenegro from Serbia under the light of military service were not limited to this. In the platform proposed in 2000, the Djukanovic government envisaged the establishment of member state armies (Meurs, 2003). In addition to that, the Belgrade Treaty, which allowed soldiers to serve in their own state, stressed the association between military service and the state. Before 2006, soldiers used to be deployed in the other unit of the joint-state – as a means to promote loyalty to the federal state. Following the declaration of independence, compulsory military duty was abolished in Montenegro. The

public's opinion about this policy was positive among 53% of the self-identified Montenegrins and 34% of the self-identified Serbs (Ipsos Report, 2011; Dzankic, 2014b).

Further attempts to estrange Montenegro from Serbia took place when Montenegro apologized for taking part in war crimes in Croatia. The support for that act was 45% among the self-identified Montenegrins, while only 13% of the self-identified Serbs said the government did the right thing. In a similar vein, interviewees' opinions regarding the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) reflect the divergence between Montenegrin and Serb identities. According to the Ipsos Report (2011), the support for the ICTY was 46% among self-identified Montenegrins, and was 13% among the population who considered themselves as Serb. Furthermore, in response to the question concerning the sentenced Montenegrin officials and soldiers by the ICTY, 20% of the self-identified Montenegrins regarded those as heroes not criminals. However, the ratio among the population who identified themselves as Serb was 46%. Even though all these attempts, which aimed to deepen the separation from Serbia, were not overwhelmingly embraced by the self-identified Montenegrins, they reveal a sharp divergence in opinions between the two major groups in Montenegrin society and show the high degree of 'groupism' developed in Montenegro (Ipsos Report, 2011; Dzankic, 2014b).

*Foreign Policy as an identity marker.* The Montenegrin government officially declared in the document entitled 'Foreign Policy Priorities of Montenegro (2007)' that the primary objective of domestic and foreign policy of Montenegro was European integration. Improvement of bilateral relations and cooperation with the leading EU members was listed as of critical importance to this end. In addition to that, one of the top priorities of Montenegro was announced as the enhancement of the relations with the United States. Moreover, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

membership, even if not openly stated in the document, was among the key foreign policy objectives of the country (Dzankic 2014a).

The importance attached to the EU and NATO, however, cannot only be attributed to the post-independence era. With the inauguration of Djukanovic in 1997, orientation towards the west had become one of the characteristics of the Montenegrin political scene. Especially during the creeping independence era, the financial support received from Western countries played an important role in Montenegrin government's stability. Closer ties with the west, however, brought significant side effects with it. Above all, it marked the increasing detachment from federal institutions and separation from Serbia. This, in turn, led pro-unionist parties and self-identified Serbs to distance themselves from the EU. The famous NATO bombing in 1999, in this context, caused the NATO and the US to lose their credibility once and for all in the eyes of the self-identified Serbs.

Therefore, under the light of EU and NATO integration projects, the foreign policy ambitions of Montenegro became an identity marker for Montenegrin citizens. As the survey results highlighted, citizens' attitudes toward the issues related to foreign policy differed. For instance, NATO membership was opposed by 42.8% of the Montenegrin citizens, while the share of the population who considered European integration as a bad thing was limited to 11.1%. The lack of support for NATO accession in comparison to EU integration may well be attributed to the incidents that occurred in 1999. Another question that the opinion of self-identified Montenegrins and Serbs varied on was related to the greatest foreign policy ally of Montenegro. While 40% of those self-identified Montenegrins considered the EU as the greatest ally, 53% of the self-identified Serbs stated Serbia. In addition to that, the support for the EU within this identity category was limited to 13% (Ipsos Report, 2011; Dzankic, 2014b).

*National Holidays.* The last political element decisive in the reformulation of Montenegrin identity Dzankic specifies (2014b) is national holidays. According to Ipsos Strategic Marketing's public opinion poll, we see a high degree of polarization among Montenegrin citizens on national holidays. While such polarization is at extreme levels as far as Independence Day (21 May) is concerned, Statehood Day (July 13) does not mean quite different things for both major ethnic groups of Montenegrin population. To be specific, Statehood Day refers to the recognition of Montenegro's independence by the great powers at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. In addition, it marks the onset of Montenegrin liberation war in the Second World War. For these reasons, Statehood Day was declared by both self-identified Montenegrins and Serbs as Montenegro's most important state holiday. However, attitudes of both groups towards the day of independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro was declared is quite different. While 79% of the self-identified Montenegrins stated that they celebrate Independence Day as a national holiday, only 23% of Serbs said they do so. Moreover, 39% of Montenegrins regarded Independence Day as the most significant state holiday, while the share of Serbs who supported this view is limited to 8%. Therefore, the results of the opinion polls indicate that national holidays are another significant point of division for the Montenegrin population. The use of Independence Day as a means of consolidating the elites' vision of Montenegrin identity will be elaborated later on.

**Ethno-cultural elements of the re-imagination of Montenegrin-ness.** The reformulation of the conception of Montenegrin identity was also promoted by a set of ethno-cultural state policies. Chief among them are the adoption of new state symbols, nationalization of language, and the policies related to religion. In an atmosphere marked by intense division over statehood and identity, Dzankic (2014b) argues, the political elites in Montenegro promulgated new rules

concerning significant changes related to these issues to strengthen the vision of distinct Montenegrin identity.

*State symbols.* The meaning ascribed to the symbols of a country such as its flag and national anthem is deeply associated to the nations' history. Since 2004, with the promulgation of the Law on State Symbol, Montenegrin flag, national anthem, and the coat of arms have become a contested issue for Montenegrin citizens. While the initial aim of the change in these symbols was to promote the drive towards independence (Dzankic, 2014b), after de jure independence they became significant components in the reformulation of the Montenegrin identity. With regards to the national flag, until 1910 Montenegro had two national flags: one with a white cross on a red background, and the other was a red flag with the symbol of the house of Petrovic. Prior to the WWI, however, a new national flag (red, blue, and white with a white eagle) was put into practice, almost identical to the Serbian one. This new flag, which aimed to give the impression that Montenegro and Serbia are two states but one nation (Morrison, 2009), became the 'traditional flag' for much of self-identified Serbs in Montenegro (Dzankic, 2014b). What precipitated the dispute among the self-identified Montenegrin and Serb population regarding the meaning ascribed to the state's national flag to surface was the replacement of this flag with the old one (the red flag with golden borders). The use of this new flag in the pre-referendum political campaigns, Dzankic argues, connected it directly to the Montenegrin identity schema.

As far as the national anthem is concerned, the change introduced by the 2004 Law on State Symbols created another controversy in Montenegrin society. While the old anthem contained references to the Serb mythology and territories, the superseding anthem placed more stress on the 'Mother Montenegro'. Additionally, the new anthem was Sekula Drljevic's (former leader of the Green movement and supporter of the distinct Montenegrin identity) version of the

old anthem written in late nineteenth century (Morrison, 2009). Thus, the 2004 Law on State Symbols brought harsh criticisms with it and led to a higher degree of polarization. As the results of the surveys indicate, Montenegrin population is still divided over these symbols of the state. While 90% of self-identified Montenegrin said they like the new official flag, 61% of Serbs opposed it. In a similar vein, 89% of Montenegrins stated that they like the new national anthem, while 58% of self-identified Serbs declared their opposition (Ipsos Report, 2001; Dzankic, 2014b).

*Language.* Nationalization of language in Montenegro is an elite-driven process started in the mid-1990s by a few linguists, intellectuals, and cultural organizations. Since 2004, with the Montenegrin Education Council's proposal to change the republic's official language from Serbian to Montenegrin, it has gained a considerable momentum and political dimension. Subsequent to the constitutional amendments in 2007, which declared the official language of Montenegro as Montenegrin, language became directly linked to the division over statehood and identity. Even though the Montenegrin government's attempts to nationalize language did not cause a radical change in the use of language as analysts have claimed, it did deepen the ethnic cleavages in the country (Morrison, 2009; Dzankic, 2014b; Nakazawa, 2015).

Until 1992, Serbo-Croatian was the language in official use in Montenegro. Subsequent to the dissolution of SFR Yugoslavia, Serbian became the official language and, unlike other former republics, remained so until 2007. Starting from the 1990s, however, Montenegro experienced efforts to make 'Montenegrin' as the official language of Montenegro. Chief among them was the Montenegrin PEN Center's initiative to replace Serbian by Montenegrin language. According to the document entitled "Declaration of the Montenegrin P.E.N. Center on Constitutional Position of the Montenegrin Language", the 'Montenegrin' was regarded as Montenegrins' national language and was offered to be the language in official use (Nakazawa, 2015). In a time of close

relations between Montenegro and Serbia and of extreme pressure exercised by Milosevic over Montenegrin authorities, it would be naïve to expect this attempt to succeed. Unsurprisingly, it failed in the absence of strong political support behind the organization.

With the inauguration of Djukanovic-led DPS fraction, the support for those organizations and attempts to standardize Montenegrin language has showed considerable increase. In particular, Montenegrin Education Council's proposal in 2004 is of crucial importance in this regard. The council's initiative met with harsh reaction by the self-identified Serb population and was considered as a government-driven attempt to marginalize facets of Serbian identity (Morrison, 2009). Thus, language gained a political dimension in the de facto independence period.

What made language another essential component in the reformulation of the Montenegrin identity schema was the decision by the government to replace Serbian by Montenegrin as the language in official use in 2007. Even though the constitution did not remove Serbian, Croatian, Albanian, and Bosnian languages from the official languages list, this symbolic change was radical enough to create a sharp contrast between the self-identified Serbs and Montenegrins. It is symbolic in the sense that the Montenegrin language is simply a modified version of Serbo-Croatian, and that for linguists and philologists it shows only minor differences from that of Serbian (Dulovic, 2013; Nakazawa, 2015)

Further divergence was precipitated by the ruling elites with the establishment of state-funded cultural institutions such as the Committee for the standardization of the Montenegrin language and the Institute for Montenegrin Language and Literature (Nakazawa, 2015). In addition to that, the government pushed forward a program on the gradual removal of Cyrillic script from practice. In this respect, since 2011 all official documents have been written in Latin script. For some analysts, this took place because the Latin script was seen as a global script which would

help Montenegro in the aim of integrating into the international community (Lazarevic, 2011; Nakazawa, 2015).

Even though the change in the official language of the country showed only minor differences with regards to the practical use, the surveys in 2011 show confirmation of the divergence, if not overwhelmingly, of the Montenegrin citizens on their native language. While 69% of the self-identified Montenegrin stated their mother-tongue as Montenegrin, 95% of Serbs considered Serbian as their native language (Ipsos Report, 2011; Dzankic, 2014b).

*Religion.* Another ethno-cultural component scholars specify in the reformulation of Montenegrin identity schema is religious identification. In the Montenegrin case, unlike other former republics of Yugoslavia, for religious affiliation to become an identity indicator emerged as an offshoot of politics (Dzankic, 2014b). The underlying reason for this was the absence of conflict between Montenegrin and Serbian branches of the Orthodox Church before the mid-1990s, or to put it explicitly, the absence of a rival branch against the Serbian Orthodox Church (SPC – Srpska pravoslavna crkva). Until the DPS-split, the SPC was the predominant religious authority in Montenegro. Conversely, the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (CPC – Crnogorska Pravoslavna Crkva), which was annihilated in 1918 and incorporated into the Serbian branch as an outgrowth of what was considered to be the annexation of Montenegro by Serbia, could only be restored in 1993 (Vukovic, 2015). Considering the close relationship between Serbia and Montenegro in the first decade of the post-Yugoslav era, the Montenegrin government's support for the SPC until the split of the DPS came as no surprise. However, the transfer of power that took place with the dismissal of pro-Milosevic political elites from the governance mechanism marked the initial phases of the end of the SPC's dominance in Montenegro. Following the inauguration of the

Djukanovic-led government, Dzankic argues (2014b), detachment from the Serbian branch of the Orthodox Church became the official program of the Montenegrin government.

With the independence project gaining momentum and importance, detachment from the SPC increased, due to the SPC's position towards Serbia and Montenegro's secession claims. To put it briefly, during the pre-independence era and even after that the SPC supported the preservation of the common state and of close links with Serbia. And, it had been one of the leading proponents of the Serb-ness of Montenegrins (Dzankic, 2014b). This role of the SPC has had considerable place in Milo Djukanovic's interviews and public speeches. For Djukanovic, since the end of WWI "the Serbian Orthodox Church has waged war against an independent Montenegrin state and it continues to do long after the citizens of the country made their choice… It has been a fierce opponent of our independence… It's remarkable that the Church persists even after the Serbian government has given up this stance" (Djukanovic, 2016a).

Dzankic claims (2014b) that the SPC's position resonated greatly with supporters of pro-federation camp who associated themselves with this branch of the Orthodox Church. The net effect of the reinstatement of the CPC was that it challenged the SPS's supremacy and served as a point of reference for the supporters of independence who identified themselves as religious but were not willing to associate themselves with a church whose name contained the phrase Serb. More importantly for the topic of our concern, the CPC's reinstatement, for some adherents of the independence project, legitimized the distinctiveness of Montenegrin identity (Dzankic, 2014b). According to the surveys conducted under the project "Symbolic Nation-Building in the West Balkans" in 2011, 47% of the self-identified Montenegrins pointed the CPC as the religious community that should be recognized as the official one in Montenegro, while 33% of those

preferred SPS. In contrast, while only 23% of the self-identified Serbs indicated that the CPC should be the official religious community in Montenegro, 68% of those favored SPS.

Overall, the 2011 survey data demonstrate that the ethno-cultural policies adopted by the government were not successful as much as the political elements were, but nevertheless played important role in deepening the polarization between the self-identified Serbs and Montenegrins. In this context, it would be safe to argue that Montenegrin political elites' endeavor of reformulating what it meant to be a "Montenegrin" – through the adoption of both political and ethno-cultural policies – succeeded to a certain extent. As the 2011 survey data indicate, those who identified themselves as Montenegrins mostly associate with the ruling DPS and the Montenegrin Church, speak Montenegrin, support the independence project, and favor European integration. The position of the self-identified Serbs, on the other side, is pretty much the opposite.

***Who are the Montenegrins?.*** For decades, scholars have been looking for answers to the origins and national identity of Montenegrins. Are they ethnic Serbs living in the territory called Montenegro? Or do they constitute a separate ethnic community? Still no agreement exists today in the literature about the issue of identity in Montenegro. This study is not an attempt to do so. Rather, it aims to unearth the role of political elites in reformulating or even manipulating the way citizens of Montenegro identify themselves. To this end, in what follows this subchapter briefly examines how political elites in Montenegro used and reproduced historical narratives in their attempts to change the citizens' imagining of the "Montenegrin nation".

Leading scholars of the study of nationalism have emphasized the fundamental role history plays in nationalist ideologies. When it has been used, reinterpreted, and sometimes fabricated, in nationalist ideologies, certain facts and events turn into points of reference for people in the way they identify themselves. Thus, those events become the basis of people's belonging to a certain

community and help demarcate that specific community from the rest. In this context, the way a nation is imagined is highly correlated with the use of its history.

In Montenegrin case, several attempts regarding the reinterpretation of history have been made by political elites in the reimagining of Montenegrin national identity. A prominent example of those attempts can be seen by looking at Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic's ceremony speech concerning the 10th anniversary of Montenegro's independence. His speech is also significant in the sense that it summarizes the major themes that characterize what considered to be the national identity of Montenegrins in the eyes of the governing elites.

The tenth anniversary of independence and international recognition of Montenegro is a major holiday in our country with millennial tradition and glorious history. We are filled with pride and satisfaction about the way we renewed our country on 21 May 2006…Awakened self-respect through rectifying injustice that we suffered in 1918, and renewed national and state dignity, were strong impetus of strengthening stability on the multi-ethnic and multi-religious foundations, and building a new institutional architecture by the European standards. Therefore, 21 May a decade ago was a milestone from which we measure the steps of our European future. First ten years of renewed independence during the turbulent acceleration of history…Nevertheless, this is an opportunity to remind ourselves of the dramatic temptations that then stood in front of Montenegro. The international community was not in favor of the idea of independence…The official Belgrade policy, at that time, did everything to keep Montenegro in the State Union…Montenegrin referendum was, in fact, the final act of a long and complex process of awakening and emancipation of Montenegrin politics and society as a whole…Confidence is awakened, libertarian and state-building tradition is strengthened,

patriotic emotions are ignited…I believe that historians […] shall recognize that the foundations of the restoration of independence are set in the years after deviation of open opposition to the nationalist and war policy of the top of the former common state. Montenegro has turned to itself, its national interests, bringing a bold decision to take responsibility for its future. With today's hindsight one can with certainty say that the year 1999 was crucial for the selection of the independent Montenegrin road. Such importance gave her strength to make a decision not to accept self-destructive conflict with the NATO Alliance […] and few months later on the introduction of the Deutsche Mark. Our nation has affirmed its size and the size of Montenegro when, under direct threat of war, received and protected over 120.000 refugees… In [those] complex times, therefore, we were able to articulate our national and state interests […] and to define the strategic vision of the European future of Montenegro…We believe that the process of ratification and accession of Montenegro to the Alliance will be completed in the short term. The size and importance of this historical and civilizational outreach does not diminish the awareness of the need for further improvement of our security, and the overall legal and political system, which NATO assumes and demands…The path of Montenegro is a European path of development…We established our national course in the European direction…21 May 2006 showed that all major Montenegrin victims throughout history have not been in vain. The foundations of the modern state are deeply rooted in the florious Battle of Mojkovac [the victory against the Austria-Hungary in 1916], 13 July uprising in 1941, …, as well as in the historic "No" in 1948 ["No" to Stalin in 1948]. Ladies and Gentlemen, …, our celebration of Independence Day and the celebration of the first decade of the restoration

of our state independence is actually a reminder that Montenegro's independence is our greatest obligation. May Montenegro live forever!

(Milo Dukanovic, 2016b)

Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic's speech at the 10th anniversary of Montenegro's independence is a perfect example of Montenegrin political elites' contemporary imagining of Montenegrin national identity. It unfolds the major themes Montenegrin identity was rebuilt on. In light of those themes, "Montenegrins" are imagined as freedom-loving, democratic, and civilized people. In addition, Montenegro is imagined as libertarian, patriotic, European values driven, and multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation which was exposed to injustice for decades but liberated in consequence of the society's glorious awakening. Last but not least, declaration of independence in 2006 is imagined as the restoration of independence accomplished in 1878 but interrupted in 1918.

As this chapter has pointed out, this contemporary notion of Montenegrin identity is a product of a process started in mid-1990s. It was the new ruling elites, who replaced the pro-Milosevic wing of the DPS, that began to reformulate what it means to be a Montenegrin since that time. The adoption of the Law on State and Other Holidays in 2007 was a milestone in their attempts in this regard. According to the paragraph IV:

Thirteenth of July as Statehood Day symbolizes the continuous yearning of Montenegro and its people for freedom and independence and represents the historical connection of its state identity – from 12 July 1878 and the Congress of Berlin, when it was internationally recognized for the first time, to 13 July 1941, when it rose up against fascism – to the contemporary importance of this date.

(as cited in Felberg, 2012, p. 103)

As Felberg highlights (2012), this new Law represents independence as an everlasting tradition recognized by the international community in the Treaty of Berlin (1878) and revived during the WWII, and connects it to the present time. It can also be deduced from the text that the common history with the Serbian state is de-emphasized and dissociated from Montenegro's independent state tradition. However, this was neither the first nor the last attempt to do so. In particular, representations of independence in state-owned media outlets on the anniversaries of 21 May can provide further confirmation for this claim. The following text published on the day before the first anniversary of independence from the longest-running pro-government printed media outlet illustrates the Independence Day as the restoration of the sovereign state.

> When it became clear just before midnight on 21 May 2006 that the majority of citizens of Montenegro had decided after eighty-eight years to restore independence to one of the smallest countries in the world, there was no question: that Sunday was definitely: a day more precious than a century!

(as cited in Felberg, 2012, p. 116)

Further construction of 21 May 2006 as the restoration of independence can be seen in Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic and President Filip Vujanovic's recent interviews. In one of his recent interviews, in reaction to the interviewer's statement emphasizing the democratic and bloodless way independence was gained, Djukanovic states that "Thank you for reminding us of how we restored our state in May 2006… For the first time in the long history of the Balkans, a country was established in a peaceful and democratic manner. And throughout our history, we have been recognized as warriors and freedom-loving people. Nowadays we are really proud of both sides of our history" (Djukanovic, 2015c). In a similar vein, Filip Vujanovic underlines in one of his recent interviews that "Montenegro managed to correct the historical injustice of the

loss of the state by restoring independence. In the anti-fascist movement Montenegro launched a renewal of its unjustly lost statehood and was given the status of a republic in the former common state, only to become sovereign and internationally recognized after the May referendum in 2006. This fulfilled the obligation to respect our history, because the loss of the state bore the brunt of great injustice and its restoration brought back national dignity" (Vujanovic, 2016).

Apart from the construction of 21 May 2006 as the restoration of independence and national dignity, the text from the daily newspaper Pobjeda and the interviews of the ruling elites reveal another important theme used in the reformulation of Montenegrin national identity: the historical injustice brought to Montenegro since 1918. That is to say, the last eighty-eight years preceding the declaration of independence in 2006 is constructed by the political elites as the time of unjustly lost statehood and independence. In doing so, like we saw in the early formulations of Montenegrin identity, contemporary formulations envision the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes as the annexation of Montenegro by Serbia. As the text below published in Pobjeda newspaper on the second anniversary of independence depicts, this 'historical injustice' could only be diminished with the glorious uprising against the fascist regime in 1941 and eliminated to the fullest extent on 21 May 2006. The time of joint state with Serbia under the leadership of Milosevic was also constructed as the continuation of the historical injustice and of the 88-years-long yearning of Montenegro. In this context, Montenegro is imagined as a victim of the injustice imposed upon her. Additionally, Montenegrin identity, Felberg claims (2012), by illustrating the common history with Serbia as forced and unjust, the ruling elites constructed Montenegrin identity in opposition to Serbian identity.

From the final collapse of the state and the Petrovic dynasty, Montenegro was systematically trampled in every way and only after the People's liberation war did it gain

back its elementary dignity as the smallest but (as much as was possible) an equal member of the community of "brotherly republics of nations and nationalities." After the harsh collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, by the end of April 1992, it entered into a federation with Serbia, thus constituting the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a country that, especially until the beginning of 1997, was ruled by the untouchable Slobodan Milosevic.

(as cited in Felberg, 2012, p. 116)

Another important theme emerging out of the contemporary reconstruction of Montenegrin national identity is the "us versus them" distinction. While "us" refers to the supporters of independence, "them" includes both external (Serbia) and internal (pro-unionist parties and the Serbian Orthodox Church) enemies of Montenegro. In his interview with RFL/RL (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty), Djukanovic details the opposition and its objectives as follows:

The opposition significantly contributed to the stalemate in the political scene, especially regarding the relations between the government and the opposition that have not changed in 20 years. It is the same opposition that tried to stop Montenegro from its dissociation from Milosevic's Serbia in 1996, 1997 and 1998, … that tried to expose Montenegro to NATO bombings in 1999, … that practically begged NATO and European officials not to accept Montenegrin applications for NATO and EU membership, and … that strongly and openly opposes Montenegrin Euro-Atlantic and European integration these days. So, the opposition is trying very hard to bring Montenegro back to the past… They are trying to keep Montenegro in the past – that is their main goal. They are not just the opposition to the government, but the opposition to Montenegro as a state, and that is their problem.

(Djukanovic, 2015b)

In his interview with Politico, Djukanovic goes further and accuses the SPS for being the "backbone of the opposition to NATO [accession]" and for waging war "against an independent Montenegrin state [since end of WWI]" (Djukanovic, 2016a). Regarding the pre-independence period, he indicates that "earlier, the Serbian state institutions actively supported anti-Montenegrin parties" (Djukanovic, 2016a). By doing so, Djukanovic portrays Serbia as a fierce opponent of Montenegrin independence and represents pro-unionist parties as anti-Montenegrin.

The last fundamental theme emerging out of political elites' construction of Montenegrin identity concerns the "European path" of Montenegro. Especially in elites' interviews, Montenegro is constructed as a European-values driven country. In addition to that, as Felberg remarks (2012), independence is imagined as leading to Euro-Atlantic integration.

This chapter has already highlighted that foreign policy ambitions of Montenegro became an identity marker for Montenegrin citizens. Since the realignment of the political scene in 1998, European integration project gained considerable importance, and after 2006 it was attached to the Montenegrin identity schema. The governing party's initiative in 2007 to declare it as the primary objective of domestic and foreign policy had considerable effect on this. Interrelatedly, NATO accession took its place among the top priorities of Montenegrin foreign policy since the declaration of independence. The primary aim of the Montenegrin government in both integration processes was declared as guaranteed stability, inviolable borders, economic and democratic development, military reforms, and permanent security (Djukanovic, 2016c; Vujanovic, 2016)

As far as the European integration is concerned, in the absence of critical regional conflicts, Montenegro made substantial progress in EU accession talks. Chronologically, the years 2006 and 2007 marked the recognition of Montenegrin independence by the EU Council and the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). In 2010, Montenegro attained official

candidate status, which was followed by the EU Commission's recommendation for the start of accession negotiations. Official accession talks began in 2012, and since that time Montenegro has managed to close twenty-seven chapters (Dzankic, 2014a).

With regards to the NATO membership, following independence, Montenegro decided to follow its interests under NATO umbrella. Chronologically, Montenegro joined the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in late 2006, and became a part of the Adriatic Charter (an association comprise of NATO aspirants and the United States) on December 2008. The following year Montenegro received the Intensified Dialogue invitation, and participated in Membership Action Plan in 2009 (Dzankic, 2014a). Subsequent to the fulfilment of requirements, the official invitation to join the Alliance was received in late 2015. On July 7 2017, Montenegro became the newest member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In the meantime, Montenegro contributed to some NATO operations, made military reforms, and established its professional army in line with NATO military capabilities.

Besides the steps taken in the direction of Euro-Atlantic integrations, ruling political elites have tirelessly emphasized the significance of these processes for Montenegro's national interests in their interviews, press conferences, and public speeches. In 2010, Djukanovic stated that "the future of the counties from this region is the EU; there is no alternative to this… NATO membership, in parallel with progress towards the EU, will give this region the necessary stability" (Djukanovic, 2010). In 2015, he further indicated that "[Montenegro] seeks membership in NATO and the European Union because we follow our interests" (Djukanovic, 2015a). The next year, "[by joining NATO], everything will change for the better in Montenegro" said Djukanovic to Italian ANSA News Agency (Djukanovic, October 7, 2016). In a similar vein, President Filip Vujanovic declared that "our constitutional preferences are European and Euro-Atlantic

integrations" (Vujanovic, 2016). As it has been elaborated before, the bloc which opposes these processes has been labeled as opposition to the government and to Montenegro as a state. For ruling elites, this is the same opposition which brought injustice to Montenegro in 1918, did everything to keep Montenegro in the common state with Serbia and to block independence in 2006. This is the same bloc which was backed by external enemies. Therefore, as in the case of independence, the ones who oppose Montenegro's accession to the EU and NATO has been constructed by contemporary political elites as anti-Montenegrin, attaching the Euro-Atlantic integrations to the Montenegrin identity schema.

**Conclusion**

Overall, this chapter revealed that what it means to be a "true Montenegrin" in the eyes of the governing party embodies several elements perpetually reformulated and shaped by political elites who have been ruling the country since the DPS-split. The implementation of political and ethno-cultural policies, the use and reinterpretation of historical narratives, and the active use of media outlets have played crucial role in their remaking of Montenegrin identity. Montenegro in this regard is imagined as a multi-cultural, independent, and European values driven country. Montenegrins, in line with that, are imagined as patriotic, democratic, and freedom-loving people who gloriously fought for liberation, ended eighty-eight years long historical injustice imposed on their country, and restored their independence in 2006.

## CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study has been threefold: first, to test the validity of the causal chain, theorized by Paul Brass, explaining the emergence of nationalisms; in doing so, second, to explain the rise of Montenegrin national identity and its transformation into nationalism; and third, to make sense of the ambiguity surrounding the contemporary debate over statehood and identity in Montenegro. To this end, by applying Brass' theory to the case of Montenegro, this thesis examined the historical development of national thought in Montenegro, with a specific focus on the role of elites in shaping and leading this process. In doing so, this study sought to unveil whether elite competition precipitates nationality-formation.

To recapitulate, Brass' causal chain can be outlined as follows. In cases, such as Montenegro in relation to Serbia, where religious differences between different ethnic groups do not exist, the fundamental ethnic differences are based on tribe, class or language. In such instances, if the native ruling class is not collaborationist, its elites may promote the linguistic and cultural aspects of the group. However, if the native aristocracy is collaborationist or has been made ineffective, the rise of ethnic consciousness will rely upon the emergence of new elites and social classes arising out of the modernization process. In cases where differences are based on tribe, they will become the basis of the disadvantaged elites' demands from their rivals in the dominant group. These demands are generally associated with attempts to mobilize the underprivileged ethnic community and to construct a new sense of identity among its fellow members. To this end, the disadvantaged tribal group's elites attempt to make the boundaries between the two groups sharper by either emphasizing their cultural distinctiveness, or

representing the rival group as descendants of foreign invaders, or trying to uncover lost or neglected treasures or fabricate them if necessary to demonstrate their greatness. However, in states where modernization has not significantly taken place, conflict among elites from different groups does not always lead to ethnic differentiation. If the state favors one group over another, during the early stages of modernization, this may create a huge imbalance between different groups, which can result in with the assimilation of the disadvantaged one to the culture and language of the dominant group. Nonetheless, as industrialization and modernization starts to significantly influence these areas, new elite groups emerge to mobilize the remnants of the group (Brass, 1991).

In essence, in multi-ethnic societies where religious, tribal, linguistic, or class differences exist between different groups, deteriorating economic or political conditions eventually lead to the emergence of new elites from the disadvantaged group. These new elites strive to mobilize the group by creating ethnic consciousness among its members. Whether or not the underprivileged group's boundaries are sharply demarcated or not in its pre-mobilization phase, it is at the core of the ethnic transformation process that boundaries are strictly drawn, that old materials and/or symbols obtain new subjective importance, and that efforts are made to create collective consciousness. During this process, elites select specific 'cultural markers' and use them as a foundation for demarcating one community from another, as a tool for strengthening solidarity, "as a claim for a social status, and, if the ethnic community become politicized, as justification for a demand for either group rights in an existing political system or for recognition as a separate sovereign nation" (Brass, 1991, p. 63).

However, for Brass, both the differences presented above and elite competition are only 'necessary, but not sufficient' conditions for ethnic transformation process to start. The sufficient

conditions are "the existence of the means to communicate […], of a socially mobilized population […], and the absence of intense class cleavage or other difficulties in communication between elites and other social groups and classes" (Brass, 1991, p. 63). Taken together with elite competition and religious, tribal, social, or linguistic differences, these conditions constitute the requirements for the emergence of a successful nationalist movement as well. Finally, the goals that are set and the success of nationalist movements in accomplishing them rely on political dynamics (Brass, 1991).

The question to what extent can this causal explanation fit the case of Montenegro and helps us to understand the rise of Montenegrin nationalism has led this study to examine the phenomenon at hand through historical periods each of which were marked by distinctive characteristics. In this respect, I have provided an overview of the alternative approaches seeking to explain the emergence of nationalist movements and summarized the main arguments of Paul Brass in the first chapter. Chapter two dealt with the pre-Yugoslav period in which fundamental conditions for a mass based nationalist movement to emerge was lacking. Chapter three took the Yugoslav era into account when Montenegro acquired a relatively equal status with other five constituent parts of the Yugoslav state and when industrialization and modernization processes began to significantly affect this area. Lastly, chapter four centered on the post-communist era in which Montenegrin political scene has primarily been shaped by identity politics and divided over the question of independence.

The central theme emerging out of the analysis in chapter two is the role of the unconditional unification of Montenegro into the first common South Slav state, which resulted in the loss of a tradition of independent statehood, in the development of native (Montenegrin) national thought. Until that time, what supplied the means for identification in Montenegro was

the tribes, not the state. Throughout the period preceding the proclamation of independence in 1878, the absence of unity among Montenegrin tribes and of a strong and centralized state caused tribal bonds to be the major source of identity. Having achieved the recognition of independence by the international community, the state embarked upon transforming this system of equality between tribes into a system of centralized governance and secular rule, which entailed resistance by the tribal leaders. Responsible for this tribal opposition was Prince Nikola's endeavor to consolidate the state apparatus and bring it under his control. The net outcome of this conflict between the central authority and the tribes was the polarization of the political landscape of Montenegro into two rival camps.

Even though both camps were supporters of the idea of unification with Serbia, they diverged on the issue of whether the Montenegrin (Petrovic) or the Serbian (Karadjordjevic) dynasty should claim the leadership in the common state. The political camp supporting Nikola's claims in the common state's throne introduced the notion of Montenegro's historical right in ruling the 'Serbian nation'. Through the use of the United Serbian Youth organization and the School Commission, Nikola embarked upon reformulating Montenegrin society along national lines to support his claim and, therefore, to win the power struggle against the Serbian dynasty. As far as the history of Montenegro is concerned, this enterprise can be classified as the first 'nationalist' approach. However, it needs to be noted that this was a 'Serbian' nationalist initiative. As the second chapter highlighted, the only national thought in Montenegro prior to the unification with Serbia in 1918 was Serbian. What Montenegrin-ness referred to was more of a territorial meaning. Therefore, Nikola's efforts gave rise to the 'Serbianization' of the country. By the advent of WWI, Montenegro turned out to be less Montenegrin.

The role of the unconditional incorporation of Montenegro into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in this regard was the event that triggered the development of divergent national thoughts in Montenegro, namely the native or Montenegrin tradition. Initially commenced by political and literary elites exiled following the collapse of the Kingdom of Montenegro, the Montenegrin national thought stressed the idea that either the process of unification of all Serbian lands and peoples should be directed by Montenegro or the centuries-long tradition of Montenegrin statehood ought to be preserved. However, along with the pressure from Serbia, the absence of a majority supporting this standpoint in the National Assembly resulted in the immediate incorporation of Montenegro into Serbia in 1918. The backlash of the National Assembly's decision was the widening polarization of the Montenegrin population. On one side stood the Whites who, consisting of elites and affluent and educated portions of the society, advocated the idea of 'one (Serbian) nation, one (Serbian) state'. On the other, the Greens, generally composed of lower classes. They propagandized that 'Montenegrin Serbs' had maintained a different tradition of statehood that ought to be preserved. Explicit within this analysis is that neither Serbian nor Montenegrin national ideas questioned the oneness of Serbian and Montenegrin peoples. Rather, they both acknowledged that Montenegrins are ethnic Serbs. The point they diverged on, however, was the way unification of the two states should actualize.

Therefore, early formulations of divergent national ideas in Montenegro emerged during the interwar period as an outgrowth of the way unification with Serbia took place. The two variants of national thought, namely native (Montenegrin) tradition and Serbian tradition, were predominantly Serbian at the beginning. Both considered Montenegrin people as a part of the Serbian nation. However, as the second chapter demonstrates, the native national thought gradually distanced itself from the Serbian tradition by claiming that Montenegrins had constituted a

centuries-old distinct political unity within the Serbian peoples and that tradition was terminated with the annexation of Montenegro by Serbia. In this respect, the assertion that the two Serbian peoples should unite under the Montenegrin dynasty was transformed by elites, who took side with dethroned King Nikola, to the idea that Montenegro ought to be part of a great Yugoslav state in which all constituent states enjoy equal treatment and preserve their traditions of statehood. In some instances, towards the end of the interwar period, a few literary elites went on to argue that Montenegrins constitute a separate nation descended from the Docleans.

The reason why the Montenegrin national thought did not transform into a mass based communal mobilization at that time was fourfold. First, as Brass suggested, the native ruling class in Montenegro during the rule of Serbian dynasty (1918-1945) was collaborationist or at least was imposed. Second, since the first common South Slav state favored the Serbian state over Montenegro, the occurrence of a huge imbalance was inevitable, which resulted in the assimilation of the disadvantaged to the culture of the dominant group. Third, a centuries-long common history and the absence of religious, linguistic, cultural, or 'ethnic' differences between the two groups restricted elites in their attempts to make boundaries sharper. And forth, the sufficient conditions for a successful communal mobilization to occur were non-existent.

The role of the communist rule in the rise of Montenegrin ethnic/national identity and its transformation into nationalism is of decisive importance. As chapter three highlighted, only during the communist rule did Montenegro experience a radical social change stirred up by modernization and industrialization. It is the Yugoslav twentieth century when Montenegro was transformed from an agrarian, rural, illiterate, and underdeveloped society to a somewhat urban, literate, modern, and industrialized society. In addition to that, what laid the groundwork for the Montenegrin national thought to get a stronger foothold in society was the structure and workings

of the Yugoslav state.  Under the federal umbrella, Montenegro enjoyed equal constitutive part status. Along with this, the communist regime's anti-nationalist but not anti-national approach – representing ethnic nationality and territorial nationhood as essential social categories – altered the political landscape in a way conducive to nationalism. The reflections of this change, precipitated by both the way citizenry carved up into a set of exhaustive and mutually exclusive ethnic nationalities and increasing industrialization and modernization, were specifically illustrated in growing demands for a separate Montenegrin language. Finally, elites' formulations of distinct national ideas increasingly diverged as an outgrowth of the institutionalization of national identities. By the end of the Yugoslav twentieth century, elites constructed a Montenegrin national idea that conceived Montenegrins as a separate nation ethnically, linguistically, and religiously distinguishable from that of Serbs. The census results mirror the transition from ethnic category to groupness.

However, as far as the census results are concerned, it needs to be rearticulated why this thesis argues that the gradual decline of the share of Montenegrins throughout the Yugoslav era signified the rise of Montenegrin national identity. How can a decline in the proportion of a self-identification category imply a rise in that specific group's ethnic/national attachment? First and foremost, the word Montenegrin-ness increasingly took on a new meaning during the Yugoslav period. Once mostly used to refer to the inhabitants of the area called Montenegro, Montenegrin-ness gradually came to mean the national identity of Montenegrins. This meant that it became difficult for individuals to self-identify as Montenegrin, Serb, Muslim, and Yugoslav at the same time. While one could be all these at once prior to the establishment of SFR Yugoslavia, the workings of the socialist state steered people to choose one. Hence, the Montenegrin category progressively but not completely excluded other ethnic/national categories. For instance, the

federal state's initiative in the 1960s to upgrade the 'Muslim' identity to the status of 'nation' (Jenne & Bieber, 2014) resulted in a statistical increase of the Muslim population by four times in the 1961 census and by two times in the 1971 census, while the share of Montenegrins decreased. Therefore, the gradual decline in the share of Montenegrins throughout the Yugoslav era does not signify a decline in Montenegrin consciousness. Rather, it only reflects the homogenization of the Montenegrin category. Considering a centuries-long tradition of representing Montenegrins as "the purest and the best of Serbs" (Lazarevic, 2011, p. 173), it may well be argued that the proportion of Montenegrins (61.9%) in the 1991 census mirrors the rise of a Montenegrin national identity.

In this respect, the question remains why the rise of Montenegrin national identity did not transform into ethnic nationalism during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, but rather took place long after that and even much later than in other former Yugoslav republics, such as Croatia and Slovenia? The first part of the explanation relies on five main reasons. Firstly, Serbian national thought was predominant among the ruling political elites of Montenegro until the emergence new elites in 1997. Secondly, the influence of ethnic Serbian nationalism, precipitated by Slobodan Milosevic, significantly impacted the Montenegrin population in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Moreover, unlike Slovenia and Croatia, Montenegro had a high degree of economic dependence on Serbia until the turn of the century. Fourthly, despite the increasing trend, Montenegrin and Serbian identities were not completely exclusive at the time of the breakup. Lastly, blurred lines of ethnic differences between Serbs and Montenegrins significantly limited the success of elites' efforts to represent Montenegrins as a separate nation from that of Serbs.

The second part of the explanation has been the focus of chapter four. As illustrated, three breaking moments in post-communist Montenegrin history radically transformed the Montenegrin

political landscape and shaped identity politics in a way conducive to nationalism. Specifically, the split in the Democratic Party of Socialists in 1997 marked the emergence of new elites, caused mainly by the deteriorating economic conditions, close to the native (Green) national thought. Backed by the growing opposition against Belgrade's ethno-nationalist policies, the new political elites, in the aftermath of the fall of Milosevic, embarked upon detaching Montenegro from federal institutions and thereby accelerating the process of creeping independence. The transformation of FR Yugoslavia into a less-strict federation in 2002 constituted another turning point in post-communist Montenegrin history. The signing of the Belgrade Agreement not only diminished Serbia's influence over Montenegrin politics, but also marked the achievement of de facto independence. Backed by the success of the Economic Reform Agenda, Montenegro decided to use the exit option granted by the Belgrade Agreement in 2006.

As Brass suggested, the century-long dilemma for Montenegrins once again surfaced with the emergence of new elites advocating the independence project. Their competition with the rival elite group, namely the pro-federation bloc, led to the nationalization/regionalization and 'ethnicization' of the vote throughout the period preceding de jure independence. With regards to the regionalization of the vote, competition among political elites led the political scene to revolve around the question of the future of Montenegro: in the 1998 elections, electorates were caught between pro-Milosevic and pro-reformist (less interconnected Montenegro to Serbia) agendas; in the 2001 and 2002 elections, their decision should have been either pro-unionist or pro-independence. On the other side, as far as the ethnicization of the vote is concerned, increasing division over statehood and identity, precipitated by elite competition, caused Montenegrin and Serbian national identities to become mutually exclusive. As election results revealed, the DPS-split electorates voted for the parties which shared the same ethnic/national attachments with them.

Chapter four has also demonstrated that this process went hand in hand with the ruling elites' ongoing project of reconstructing what it means to be a Montenegrin. Through both the implementation of political and ethno-cultural state policies and the use and reproduce of historical narratives, the elites reformulated the imagining of the Montenegrin nation. In this vision, Montenegro has been constructed as a multi-cultural, independent, and European values driven country. Montenegrins are imagined as patriotic, democratic, and freedom-loving people who ended eighty-eight years long historical injustice imposed on their country and restored their independence in 2006. Explicit within this argument is that the Montenegrin identity stands in stark contrast to the Serbian identity. In this vision, the common state experience with Serbia is represented as the unjustly lost centuries-long independent state tradition. The Karadjordjevic and Milosevic regimes and the Serbian Orthodox Church are constructed as fierce opponents of Montenegrin independence. In a similar vein, pro-unionist parties and opponents of the Euro-Atlantic integration process are labeled as anti-Montenegrin.

It needs to be highlighted once again that this is not the end of story for Montenegro. On the contrary, Montenegro's divide over statehood and identity still dominates the political scene. The society is still deeply polarized. The alleged coup attempt on 16 October 2016 and the ratification of Montenegro's accession to NATO without holding a referendum mirrors the internal division in the country. What is more, the existence of a strong opposition against the ruling party's political agenda, specifically with regards to NATO accession, raises the possibility of Russian intervention. Besides these, Montenegro has become the 29th member of NATO. As Prime Minister Dusko Markovic stated at a press conference on 9 June 2017, EU integration is now Montenegro's priority number 1, 2, and 3 (Government of Montenegro, 2017). For all these reasons, Montenegro deserves more scholarly attention.

Overall, this study sought to explain the emergence of Montenegrin nationalism by employing Paul Brass' theory of nationalism. In accordance with Brass' causal explanation, analysis suggests that the rise of Montenegrin national identity and its transformation into nationalism was precipitated by the competition among elites.

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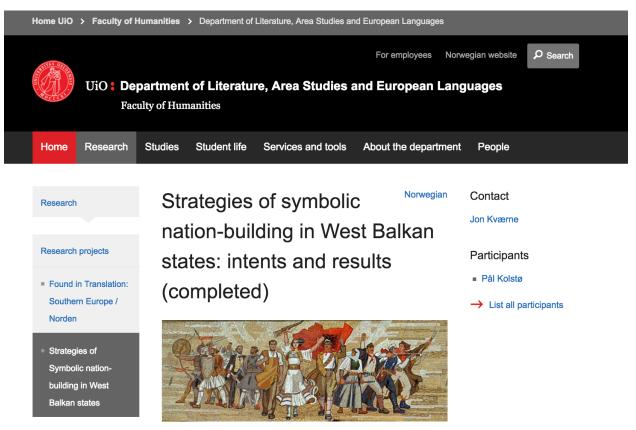
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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Copyright for the Use of the Survey Results

Research

Research projects

▪ Found in Translation: Southern Europe / Norden

▪ Strategies of Symbolic nation-building in West Balkan states

# Strategies of symbolic nation-building in West Balkan states: intents and results (completed)

Norwegian

Contact

Jon Kværne

Participants

▪ Pål Kolstø

→  List all participants

The National Museum, Tirana

## About the project

The creation of national identities in the Western Balkan states is still a "work in progress".  How, and to what extent, do the citizens of these states respond to their political leaderships' attempts to create, co-opt or stimulate symbolic interpretations of the past?

Below link to the fiiles in SAV-format:

*Albania*

*Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*Croatia*

*Kosovo*

*Macedonia*

*Montenegro*

*Serbia*

We encourage the use of the survey results! Please credit the project in all articles / writings.

A volume presenting the findings of the Project was published on Ashgate, and published in Albanian as: *Kombformimi simbolik në Evropën juglindore* (2013) Prishtinë: Qendra për Hulumtime dhe Politikë Gjinore.

To present the results of the project there was a **conference at the University of Rijeka 9-10 May 2014**. Scolars and graduate students were invited to submit papers (by 1 February 2014).