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## **SOCIO - POLITICAL CHANGES IN MONTENEGRO IN POST – SOCIALISM**

### **SOCIO-POLITIČKE PROMJENE U CRNOJ GORI U POST-SOCIJALIZMU**

APSTRAKT Crna Gora je zemlja koja prolazi fazu demokratske tranzicije više od dvije decenije. Put od socijalističke do demokratske države bio je opterećen brojnim preprekama koje ometaju demokratsku transformaciju njenog sistema. Brojni faktori nasleđeni iz prethodnog sistema usporavaju uspješnu i brzu transformaciju političkih institucija kroz parlamentarnu demokratiju, kao i ekonomskih institucija kroz transformaciju vlasničkih odnosa i prelazak na tržišnu ekonomiju. Naime, snažna uloga države, posebno u ekonomskoj sferi, kontrola vlasti nad političkim životom, dominacija autoritarne svesti, nerazvijeno civilno društvo, odsustvo inicijative za društvene promene itd., faktori su koji ne dozvoljavaju oživljavanje demokratskih i liberalnih vrijednosti koje su već formalno i pravno uspostavljene u institucijama novog društvenog sistema.

Ključne riječi: postsocijalizam, demokratija, tranzicija, autoritet, liberalizam.

ABSTRACT Montenegro is a country which has been going through the phase of democratic transition for more than two decades. Its path from a socialist to a democratic state has been burdened with numerous of obstacles which hinder the democratic transformation of its system. Numerous factors inherited from the previous system slow down a successful and fast transformation of the political institutions through parliamentary democracy, as well as of economic institutions through the transformation of ownership relations and transition to the market economy. Namely, the strong role of the state, especially in the economic sphere, the authorities' control over political life, domination of authoritarian awareness, underdeveloped civil society, absence of social change initiative etc., are the factors which do not allow a revival of democratic and liberal values which are already formally and legally established in the institutions of the new social system.

Key words: post-socialism, democracy, transition, authority, liberalism

### **Introduction**

Full understanding and explanation of a particular contemporary society, its direction and level of development, its acceptance of a certain form of socio-

political order, level of development of population awareness etc. in social sciences is only possible to achieve by studying the knowledge of the previous phases of the development of that society, i.e. its historical dimension. The Montenegrin society of the 21st century is a society which has been passing through a process of transition for more than two decades, from a system which has lost its legitimacy, towards the system which is, viewed within the wider global community, considered to be the best modern form of a socio-political organization, i.e. a democratic society. Transformation towards a democratic organisation is just one of the many changes that Montenegrin society has undergone during its long history.

For a long time, Montenegro was a tribal society with strictly defined hierarchical relations within its community. Also, its history was marked by frequent wars, as a consequence of which Montenegro was established as a warrior society ready for constant and tough battles with the enslaver. The tribal and warlike organization are the elements of a social structure whose goal was to protect the country from the enemy, but in that way Montenegro also “protected” itself from the influence of many foreign cultures that very slowly and with difficulty penetrated the Montenegrin organic community. For this reason, the values and customs of the Montenegrin community have long been guarded and slowly changed, so that traditionalism has been one of the essential features of this society during the most significant part of its history. Writing on the political culture of contemporary Montenegro, P. B. Jovanovic and M. Marjanovic note that the majority of the changes in Montenegrin society prior to the 20th century were nevertheless caused by the members of the community itself. The identity of an individual in the Montenegrin community has been built according to the local, family and tribal frameworks. “Tied to the ground and ancestors, the Montenegrins have a very strong and definite identity, which they experience as something objective and changeable” (Jovanović, Marjanović, 2002: 16). These socio-historical and cultural characteristics of the Montenegrin community determined partly the direction and the rate of social changes in Montenegrin society during the XX and XXI centuries.

Also, the period of transition in Montenegro which began at the end of the XX century has been accompanied by the traces of the earlier historical epochs, especially those within whose end they begin, and that is the period of Montenegro as a part of the SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia). After the end of the Second World War, Montenegro was included in the Yugoslav federation in which “the whole power is concentrated in the representative body elected by the people - the Assembly” (Popović, Obradović, Šuković, Pavićević, 2002:147). The organization of the power through the Assembly was aimed at involving the people in the decision – making processes and control of the authorities. Such an organization was regarded as a form of direct democracy, which in a way was the ideal of the modern liberal democracies, however, did not fully come to life, primarily because of the strengthening the executive over

the legislative authority. While in the political sphere, the Assembly represented the highest authority, in the economic sphere, from the state ownership and state management of the economy, it was turned to predominantly social ownership over the means of production.

The foundations of the socialist system in the SFRY, occasionally weakened by economic crises, were irreversibly shaken in the early 1990s when the socio – economic crisis moved into the unexpected war conflicts. The researchers who study the causes of these events agree that the causes were rather complex, but that they certainly lie primarily in the organization of the socialist system itself, both in the SFRY and in other former socialist countries. In his book *Changes and Resistance*, Mladen Lazic (2005) explains that the causes of destruction of the Yugoslav state were based on the combination of several factors, two of which are particularly distinguished. The first of these is the socialist system of relations “organized as totalitarian in a way to eliminate differences between political, economic and other subsystems” (Lazić, Cvejić, 2004: 46), and the second is the collective – ownership class that appears in the state as a ruling group. Namely, when it comes to the second factor, Lazic points out that the intensification of the Yugoslav state crisis was influenced by the conflicts between the ruling oligarchs from all the republics. The conflicts existed even before, but they remained latent or were ended with fractions, so that in the second half of the 80s, thanks to the widespread mobilization of the subordinate layers of the population, they had more serious social impact and took a form of open conflict.

Trying to explain the disintegration of Yugoslavia and its socio – political system, Vesna Stankovic – Pejnovic talks about the existence of a multitude of causes. “The disintegration of Yugoslavia is the result of several reasons and it is impossible to reduce it to any of the stated ones, yet all the reasons need to be seen as a whole through the perception of political actors, their beliefs, and the interpretation of reality, the past and the future” (Pejnović, 2010: 602). Each of the factors, therefore, had its role in destroying of the previous system, but it cannot be said that they were crucial for its breakdown. So, for example, the economic factor, i.e. the economic crisis in the late 1980s, cannot be considered a sufficient condition, because at the time of the breakdown of the states, SFRY was just getting out of a crisis, says this author. One of the most highlighted factors of its disintegration among theoreticians is the awakening of nationalism which spread through the territory of the former Yugoslavia in a very short time. The reasons for such a rapid invasion lie in the concealed present nationalist ideology which, despite the official value orientation of the so-called “Fraternity and Unity”, persisted in a smaller amount so that at the beginning of the 90’s it would be awakened by those on top of the social hierarchy by the “mobilizing agitation of the (quasi)intellectual, journalistic, ecclesiastical and similar circles” (Lazić, Cvejić, 2004: 48).

Cultural factors, first of all an insufficient activity in maintaining the idea of Yugoslavhood, the lack of a unified education system, etc., are also important factors of the state breakdown. Also, the Yugoslav Constitution facilitated the disintegration of the country by strengthening the sovereignty of the individual republics by giving people the right for self – determination, which resulted in the reduction of the federal jurisdiction and undermined the functioning of federal agencies, considers Stankovic – Pejnovic (2010).

The causes that led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia are also recognized in the functioning and organization of the political system itself. Such opinion is stated by a Montenegrin sociologist Risto Kilibarda, according to whom the Yugoslav single-party rule had a flaw in the system. Namely, Kilibarda believes that the Yugoslav political system essentially functioned more like a moral system. It acted by the power of moral authority instead of the power of authority. Such characteristics were devastating at the moment when it was necessary to act in a political way (Kilibarda, 1999).

The unsustainability of the socialist ideology under the conditions of a relentless development of the global society and economy was one of the reasons for abandonment of this system and acceptance of the liberal – democratic one. For Ratko R. Bozovic, another prominent Montenegrin sociologist, socialism represents a failed system that built a false awareness and developed a misapprehension about a historical struggle for higher goals in the future, while in fact it functioned as a totalitarian society with an authoritarian rule. Therefore, Bozovic ascertains that “the ideological over – tension of the system was not able to resist the temptations of the current time so it began to decompose, both from its roots and from the outside” (Božović, 1995: 35).

### **Transformation of Yugoslav and Montenegrin society**

The almost total disappearance of socialism from the world, particularly from the European socio – political scene, opened up a space for the domination of, by then a competitive form of society and production of social life, i.e. the capitalist society- a democratic society of liberal market orientation. The rivalry of these two types of society has ended so that the countries of the former socialist bloc have completely turned in their further development to the previous competitor, clutching onto until then criticized form of social order. Such an unexpected outcome overthrows the thesis of socialism as a system whose determining basis is made of political relations. On the contrary, it supports the thesis about the weakness of its political foundations, political actors and the entire command and control system, which at the very beginning of systemic changes showed the inability to maintain the existing form of society regulation (Lazić, 1994b).

The decision of the former socialist countries, as well as the countries of

the former Yugoslav community, to accept capitalism, , , according to Mladen Lazić whose analytical findings in this direction are very fruitful, “does not mean automatic entry onto the stable path of capitalist development, or even its (rapid) involvement in the “avant-garde” of that movement” (Lazić, 1994a: 24). Considering the economic underdevelopment and systemic unwillingness for the implementation of political and economic novelties, the transition countries have all the conditions to stay on the periphery of the newly adopted social forms and development. After the fall of communism, the transitional changes in the countries of the former Eastern bloc and Yugoslavia were interpreted as expected and as the only possible directions under the new circumstances. This represents an evolutionary approach to social changes. In this regard, these countries have been encouraged to adapt their system to the new socio-economic demands as soon as possible: both by the European Union, which takes care of all the requirements necessary for the entry into that community and from the rest of the Western world, among which the US efforts are particularly emphasized. The basic transitional demands are connected with the process of democratization of these countries, that is, the establishment of the free market as a basic regulatory mechanism in the economy which replaces the authoritarian one, and representative parliamentary democracy that would replace the one – party system (Dahl, 1998; Diamond, 1997; Inglehart, Welzel, 2009; Tilly, 2007; Lijphart, 1999).

The transition of Yugoslav society presupposes and requires a transformation in all spheres of society, culture, education, media, etc., not only in the political sense which entails the inclusion of parliamentary democracy or economic sphere, transformation of ownership and transition to a market economy. The implementation of these changes is a long-term process during which it is necessary to provide the essential prerequisites and build necessary democratic institutions. This issue arose the interest in a significant number of Montenegrin scientists most of whom came to very similar conclusions. Thus, for example, recognizing the importance of understanding the time perspective in achieving the process of social transformation, Djukanovic and Besic (Đukanović, Bešić, 2000) represent the generally accepted opinion that, in order to function properly, the new society needs to provide the following conditions: establish private property, free market as a main form of economic activity, provide the financial base for the capital accumulation, liberate the economy from the constraints of the state, establish a parliamentary democracy, achieve depolitization of the society, create free citizens and establish free and independent media (Ibid.).

Development and provision of these conditions turned out to be much more difficult than it was supposed to be. Namely, after the fall of the old system, the transition process seemed to be very simple. In accordance with the existing liberal social model, it was necessary to develop a market economy and implement

parliamentary democracy. But, it turned out that only leaving the command and control model of the society was not enough to establish immediately a new social system. Theoretical analysis, as well as the practice itself, showed very soon that the initial conditions for the development and realization of the necessary changes in many areas of social life, those that were inherited from the previous system, were not a sufficiently strong, and generally adequate basis for it. So, for example, the command economy was conceptualized in such a way that it cannot provide the conditions for creating groups with a private and entrepreneurial initiative. Then, the monopoly of government was preventing the organization of political interests of different social strata/classes, while ideological domination disabled the development of alternative models of social life in the field of culture. The multi – party parliamentary system was established very quickly, but immediately „it saw the consequences of the fact that this formal side was not built on its “natural” basis, in a differentiated society, in which political parties represent the special interests of different groups” (Lazić, 1994b: 9).

When it comes to economic transformation, the suspension of social property as well as its privatization proved to be very complex processes, despite a number of laws which tried to regulate ownership transformation and to reduce the expected resistance toward the process of privatization (Vratuša, 2012). Difficulties in finding the appropriate model of ownership transformation have also raised one very important issue, the question of basic actors of social change. Social analysis in this case has shown that there are no social groups that are “structurally” predetermined “to act in the direction of preserving and changing the new system of relations” (Lazić, 1994a:11).

Also, one of the necessary conditions for the success of transition processes and consolidation of democracy in the countries of the former SFRY is the support of citizens of the new system. If the citizens themselves do not show support to the new system, or a certain kind of resistance in case they do not accept the values of that system or give it a legitimacy, then it is difficult to expect rapid guided social changes, regardless of the efforts by the authorities. When it comes to citizens as participants of the transition, Srećko Mihailović (Mihailović, 2006), considers that their role in the transition process is neglected or most often reduced to the position of a passive object of transition. Transformation of the citizens in terms of changes in their value orientations, building of a democratic political culture, accepting the market form of business etc., is a condition for the establishment and maintenance of the democratic system, but it is completely marginalized in comparison to the transformations that are being carried out in the field of political and economic system. Citizens are a part of a civil society and without them, it is difficult to establish a consolidated democracy. In addition, citizens are one of the key verifiers of transition, but on the other hand, also those who bear responsibility for the results of transition, its dynamics and consequences. Citizens of Montenegro

generally accept the idea of democracy. The highest percentage of them and that is 90.6% estimate that it is important or extremely important to live in a country with democratic management<sup>33</sup> (Table 1). This data shows that, when it comes to the citizens of Montenegro, democracy has their full support.

Table 1  
*How much it is important for you to live in a country with democratic management?*

	Frequency	Percent
Not important at all	13	1.4
Not important	14	1.5
I am not sure	61	6.5
Important	144	15.4
Extremely important	705	75.2
Total	937	100

The establishment of the parliamentary system, i.e. the appearance of several parties on the political scene, organized political elections, transformation of the property, initiation of the privatization process indicate that the former socialist countries are on the right track to build a new socio – political system. However, the estimates of individual theoreticians show certain doubts about the quality of these changes and willingness to bring them to a completion. They think that this is actually a fictitious entry into capitalism. Most of the changes are cosmetic, while in effect everything remains almost unchanged. Such is the opinion of Piero Maldini. According to him, transitional societies make changes which are inconsistent with the proclaimed democratic transformation. The political practice of these societies is to a significant degree still characterised by non – democratic political processes and relations, regardless of more than two decades of transformation. This suggests that a “normative – institutional democratic constitution is not sufficient to make the political system democratic” (Maldini, 2006: 88). Therefore, it is not surprising that the process of transformation is very slow, so this makes the following assessment of Mihailovic’s quite appropriate: “It is obvious that a **long journey to capitalism** is ahead of us!” (Mihailovic, 2006: 52).

Evidently, the obstacles to the development of the free market, liberal and democratic society derive from the still existent elements of a socialist society that are showing resistance (Živković, 2018). During the period of the Montenegrin transition, the most visible changes were made in the political system, through the organization of multiparty elections and the development of parliamentarism. “A necessary but by no means sufficient condition for the completion of a democratic

33 This data are comes from the doctoral thesis that relies on the research carried by the doctoral candidate during the 2013. Krivokapic, Natasa. (2016) „Sociological research of place and the role of printed media on democratization of Montenegrin society“ (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy, Niksic, Montenegro.

transition is holding of free and contested elections” (Linz, Stepan, 2001).

The first multiparty elections in Montenegro were organized in 1990, with a great interest on the part of the citizens, whose turnout rate was over 80%. The triumph of the socialist parties, in almost all spheres, has revealed the underdevelopment of democratic sensibility in citizens, especially because the victorious parties set themselves up as the bearers of the new authority, winning also in all subsequent elections. Such results of the elections are most often explained by the thesis on the overcoming of the “authoritarian mentality” among citizens, but also by the thesis of “real interest”, according to which the citizens when choosing the party, were rather guided by material rather than political interests, preferring the promises related to economic benefits over those which offered greater political freedoms (Antonić, 2000; Ćeranić, 2018).

The predominant orientation toward authority, even in the new social circumstances, indicates a strong presence of the political culture of the previous social system, i.e. the attitudes, beliefs and feelings that were characteristic of the previous system. Therefore, the political culture is predominantly patriarchal and burdened with the past and tradition (Lučić, 2018). Political culture where opinions on important political issues, relations with the basic social institutions, understanding of the role of the state in the areas of social life, the role of citizens in society and the like, is such that it is still followed by inherited patterns and that shows that the countries of the former socialism are not really a suitable ground for the sustainable development of a democratically organized society. The dominant political and cultural characteristics and values in the territory of the former state were such that were far from the characteristics of a democratic political culture. Democratic political culture is characterized by participative, open, tolerant political behaviour “the dominant acceptance of the values of freedom, individualism, modernism and moderate (in)equality” (Stojiljković, 1997: 37).

Although the former state was burdened with traditionalism and patriarchal social patterns, which to a certain extent supported the adopted collectivist ideology during its development, the former state still sought to engage in the current modernization processes and to adopt modern standards by allowing certain changes within every day and family life, applying a more tolerant attitude towards the free market by ensuring respect of human rights, and so on. Opening to the world has produced changes in various social spheres and areas such as economy, culture, family, education. Exactly these modernization changes represented a kind of counterbalance to traditionalism and “resulted in the emergence of the initial elements of civil society and democratic political culture in most republics of the common state” (Vujadinović, 2006: 184). This was expressed in the form of social movements, dissident activities, manifestations of civil disobedience and so on. However, in spite of all these changes, in the



conditions which lack a strong social base, as well as democratic deficit in terms of institutional solutions and the underdevelopment of civil society, a more visible change and development of political culture at the time was not possible, says Vujadinovic. The economic crises during the 1980s, followed by the war related events a decade later, led to the alteration of political symbols and values, but they also made the political culture “fragmentary and divided into, in many ways conflicting, political subcultures” (Stojiljković, 1997:38), so it is not a rare case that supporters of democracy and freedoms are at the same time protectors of the authoritarianism.

Montenegrin citizens, as well as the citizens of the former SFRY, to a large degree relied on the state that protected every citizen, provided them with free education and health care, took care of the socially vulnerable people, the elderly people and the helpless, so that the citizens expected such social care in the new organization of the state. As Steven Fish notes, “the dependence of the individual on the state in production, employment, and consumption was far more extensive under Communist Party regimes than under authoritarian regimes of other types” (Fish, 1999: 808).

That turned out to be another obstacle to the social transformation. The employment and work security, housing and other gratuitous (šta je ovdje originalna riječ) activities were some of the privileges of the Yugoslav state that do not go in favour of accepting the principles of the liberal state. That can be confirmed by the data which shows that Montenegrin resist giving up those privileges. Namely, the majority of Montenegrin citizens agree or strongly agree (74.1%) that life in Yugoslavia was better than today<sup>34</sup> (Table 2).

Table 2

*In Yugoslavia the living was better than today*

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	37	3.9
Disagree	36	3.8
Neither agree nor disagree	90	9.6
Agree	217	23.2
Strongly agree	476	50.8
Don't know	81	8.7
Total	937	100

Mikloš Biro states that in communist countries the whole economic system functioned “on the principle of gaining, not earning” (Biro, 2006: 16). A comfortable system that frees people of responsibility, as Biro believes, is rather

<sup>34</sup> Krivokapic, Natasa. (2016) „Sociological research of place and the role of printed media on democratization of Montenegrin society“ (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philosophy, Niksic, Montenegro.

un-stimulating and demoralizing for the individual. Reduced sense of one's own activity, ambition and need to make progress, are features that do not stimulate citizens to set up their own business, that is, to stimulate the development of a free market oriented society. Therefore, Montenegrin citizens are still struggling to keep their jobs in the state – owned enterprises, fighting against privatization and private ownership. The attitude that “factories belong to workers”, still present in the workers' minds, has led to an absurd situation that the workers, who are not even stockholders, actively interfere in the company's policy and protest against the companies' sale. The workers often demand for the origin of the capital that enters the company to be determined, replacement of management by the new owner, etc. (Lazić, 2005). These habits, which are an additional obstacle to the changes, represent a kind of resistance towards the new legal norms and values, and keep the old value patterns persistent.

Obviously, there are many systemic characteristics of Yugoslav and Montenegrin society that appear in the light of the new order as its biggest obstacles and weaknesses. All this confirms the viewpoint of Philip Roeder, that communist countries “created one of the most unfavourable cultural environments for democracy” (Roeder, 1999: 750).

In such a context of inherited values, the former Yugoslav republics had before them a very complex task of delegitimizing the institutions of the old system and adapting them to the new model. In the field of politics, economy, culture, etc., this entails the creation of such preconditions in which the new form of social organization could function easier. The basic changes of Montenegrin society must involve the acceptance of liberalism “a doctrine devoted to protecting the individual to life, property, and the pursuit of happiness” (Plattner, 2001: 79).

Liberalism should be accepted in all spheres of social life, both in politics and economy, as well as in the social, cultural, moral and other spheres. This means a necessary acceptance of the basic principle of liberalism, freedom of an individual which is reflected in the sphere of economics as the absence of restrictions in economic activities, that is, respect of the free market laws whose aim is the economic prosperity and benefit. In the sphere of policies, the individual's freedom refers to the possibility of free choice of its representatives in the parliamentary form of democracy. Within the framework of civil society, “freedom implies the freedom of association and social activity of individuals, and that the state must not restrict” (Đukanović and Bešić, 2000: 59). Freedom in the field of culture presupposes the possibility of free thinking, expression, creation, or spiritual life without major limitations.

The liberal principle of freedom excludes the state and its interventionism as a form of social regulation, since its interference can only disturb the mechanism of a liberal society which, based on this principle, regulates itself. The belief in the individual and his social responsibility is emphasized, and one of the ideals is the

creation of such social conditions in which each individual could fully develop and realize his potentials. Unlike social awareness in socialism characterised by domination and subordination to the collective, in capitalism social awareness is paradigmatically non – authoritarian. An individual denies the elements of authoritarian awareness, such as rigidity and intolerance, and instead “develops a sense of other individualities and respects a request for formation of interpersonal relations based on equality, not domination” (Ibid. 185). Liberal focus on diversity is closely related to tolerance, which is interpreted as “restraint, readiness to allow people to think, speak and act in a way that we do not approve of” (Hejvud, 2005: 38).

If, on the other hand, we take a look at the ideology of socialism, we will see that its ethics is diametrically opposed to the capitalist, and that it has completely different conceptual bases, such as the construction of a classless society, working class as the bearer of society, the idea of equality, the idea of the society without conflicts, the idea of abolishing the state, etc. Socialism is seen as a society dominated by politics. Although the SFRY’s official policy renounced its domination in society and built up institutional barriers to its domination (Kilibarda, 1999; Šarović, 2010), this idea was not successfully implemented despite all of the efforts. Also, a socialist society is seen as a closed society in which almost organic bonding prevails, that is, a close connection inside the community, but on the other hand, it produces distrust towards people outside of it. The resistance to changes is present, not only in the ideological sphere, but also in the economic one, where the very idea of economic growth has a static character. Inertness and tightness are also reflected in the acceptance of only one political option, the one that is dominant. This is exactly what Yugoslav society succumbed to, which was considered as “more open in a political sense, smoother and more flexible” (Pavlović, 2009: 128) in comparison to other socialist societies.

### **Realized changes**

The transitional changes Montenegrin society is undergoing, given the great systemic differences of the two social models, are such that the given society is changing almost from the roots. Although SFRY was considered a socialist self – governing democracy, the possibility of direct participation of citizens in the election of political representatives in the Yugoslav republics was reduced. This was particularly evident during the 70’s of the 20th century with the introduction of a delegate, or indirect system, in which the candidate’s choice was not free, but under a strong influence of the highest party organizations. It was similar with business enterprises in which the self – governing model emphasized the role of management and workers in the organization of enterprises. By strengthening the position of party structures in enterprises, the role of management and workers

weakens (Antonić, 2000), while on the other hand, it intensively weakens the private sector by abolishing the enterprises of a group of citizens and by decreasing the number of craft shops. Research of the Finnish politologist Vanhanen<sup>35</sup> on the social assumptions of democracy (as reported by Antonic) shows that Yugoslavia was ready for democracy since the late 1950s. Vanhanen believes that democracy depends on the equal distribution of the main sources of power<sup>36</sup>, so in order to measure the degree of democracy in a country, he established an index of basic sources of power, and tested it in 147 countries. According to this index, all Yugoslav republics, including Montenegro, were ready for democracy since the late 1950s, and were also “able to preserve a democratic political order despite the serious ethnic conflicts” (Antonić, 2000:75).

However, only in 1992, by the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Montenegro, Montenegro was defined as a democratic state. Being a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Montenegro had a certain degree of sovereignty which was primarily related to its citizens. With its new constitution, Montenegro has reorganized the government by dividing it into legislative, judicial and executive parts, and committed itself to respect all democratic principles. “The constitutionally established form of organization and realization of the authority of the Republic of Montenegro is based on the principles that are at the heart of the parliamentary system and have the key features of that system” (Obradović Popović, Šuković and Pavićević, 2002: 173). Montenegro’s parliamentary model in theory is treated as a “soft”, which means that it is not of a “cabinet type”, that is, there is cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities to the extent which will not undermine the principle of the division of power (Ibid.).

The process of transition in Montenegro, which implies, first, ownership and managerial transformation, is developing rather slowly for the reasons already mentioned. In addition, Montenegro is different because of the traditionalism characteristic of all the social strata, which suggests that changes, especially when it comes to the values and orientations, are more difficult to take place. The acquired habits are reluctantly changed regardless of whether they are related to parties, the ruling class or the citizens. “It turned out that in the initial stages of the development of the parliamentary life, the party which truly and organizationally could be considered as the successor of the SK (the League of Communists) got the advantage” (Đukanović and Bešić, 2000: 197). The first multi – party elections were more aimed at conquering political power than preparing a state for democracy and a democratic organisation. “The winning

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35 The reference that Antonić uses is: Tatu Vanhanen, *Prospects of Democracy: A Study of 172 Countries*. (London and New York, 1997).

36 In the basic sources of power, Vanhanen included: 1. Degree of distribution of non-agricultural means; 2. Percentage of total agricultural land owned by family farms; 3. Percentage of the population studying at universities; 4. Percentage of population in the cities; 5. Percentage of the literate population; 6. Percentage of population not employed in agriculture.

parties, or coalitions, openly express their intention to directly control the overall political life” (Kilibarda, 2013: 42).

When it comes to Montenegrin citizens and their right to participate in the political movements of the state, expressed primarily through electoral behaviour, the influence of the “communist” awareness can be noticed. Thus, Miklos Biro notes that “the post-communist man at the beginning of his political behaviour was not choosing the political option” (Biro, 2006: 89), but he was looking for the leader. Emotionally tied to Tito as the supreme leader, voters sought for the successor who will protect them, especially at the times of “blind” transition to a different system, to whom they could believe and whose ideas they would follow. Being aware of the needs of the voters, the parties were trying to accentuate their representatives by “offering” the voters potential leaders. Another matter is also noteworthy when it comes to the electoral will of voters. Risto Kilibarda (Kilibarda, 2013) notes that in the elections in Montenegro between 1990 and 2008, one party won in all the elections. The reasons for the winning of the same party in the multi – party elections this author sees in activity of the four causes: 1. The Montenegrin man sees the changes as a risk he does not want to expose himself to; 2. The tendency to social inertia, that is, to live in a well – established routine and in a habitual way, even when life is unpleasant and difficult; 3. The tendency to change the government not peacefully, but in a violent way, as it is evident in our tradition; 4. A special attitude towards the authorities, i.e. the preference of the authoritarian rule.

Regardless of not very good predispositions of Montenegrin society, changes in the political sphere are supported equally by all political subjects, who are firmly oriented towards the building of a parliamentary democracy. The ruling party has taken a decisive reform and a progressive course, both in the field of politics and economy, and in all the spheres of social life, leading society through re – traditionalization and modernization. Confirmation of the progress in the transformational development can be found in the research on the political culture in Montenegro, carried out in 2001. (Jovanović, Marjanović, 2002). This research shows a change in the awareness of citizens and their value orientations. Among other things, this reveals the perception of the importance of the role of certain actors in the political life. Respondents show almost general consensus regarding the desirable influence of citizens on the political life of the country, the influence of non – governmental organizations and trade unions and the influence of the Government, the Parliament and the President of the Republic.

The same research according to Jovanovic and Marjanovic (2002) shows that positive changes are also visible in terms of accepting the importance of respecting the law, that is, the functioning of a state governed by the law, which among other things, is recognized in the citizens’ need for legal certainty. Respect of the legal norms by citizens, i.e. the existence of legal awareness

implies that citizens have awareness on the obligation to respect valid positive norms. They realise that neither political nor other authority can be above legal norms, not even the parliament that establishes them. However, when it comes to Montenegrin society, these elements of legal awareness have no tradition in our collective awareness and they are not even rooted in” ‘demos’ awareness, nor in the awareness of political or intellectual elites” (Kilibarda, 2013: 94). This certainly does not mean that they, owing to the current efforts of legal entities and institutions, although gradually, are not changing.

When it comes to the changes in the economic sphere, it can be said that besides those that have been achieved in the field of political life, these changes are the most evident. The process of economic transformation, its effects and the so far realized results are, however, differently observed and interpreted. For example, Vera Vratuša sees the economic transition in the socialist countries as a completion of the restoration of capitalist relations that brings some negative changes with them, such as, among other things, an increase of social inequality. Besides that, in the newly created market democracies, economic transition produces an external transformations related to the transformation of products from usable value into goods, but also “the internal transformation of social relations of production and property in which the producer himself or his labour power become goods” (Vratuša, 2012: 79). As we have already mentioned, the economic transition in Montenegro takes place without the shaping social actor. However, this does not mean that it has been doomed to failure. In order to more efficiently carry out the process of ownership transformation, two institutions were established in Montenegro: the Development Fund of Montenegro and the Agency of Montenegro for Economic Restructuring and Foreign Investments.

In Montenegro, all of the companies are covered by the privatization plan, but the process itself had been successfully implemented only in few of them. The process of privatization often encounters certain difficulties, including those concerning the problem of determining the real value of social capital, transfer of a large proportion of capital to various funds, over – indebtedness of enterprises, vaguely defined positions and interests of key stakeholders (the Government, the Union, the Bank, the Chamber), lack of interested investors, i.e. lack of capital, etc. (Lojpur, 1995). Also, one of the important problems is the abuse of position, that is, the illegal and semi – legal transfer of social ownership into the private one (Lazić, 1994a), often personal property. These abuses were present especially during the years of inflation in the 90s and the rapid decline of standard, when “the mechanisms of control within the companies themselves were slacking, and in proportion with this, risks and abuses were increased and multiplied” (Lalić, 1995:52).

In addition to these factors, the process of restructuring and privatization of enterprises is slowed down because many companies continued to be in some form of collective ownership, and that is a significant obstacle to economic changes. This

is especially characteristic of enterprises with a large number of workers, for which the state still lays out certain social benefits, thereby creating an illusion “about the possibility of long – term preservation of the old normative system, which also facilitates the retention of old value patterns” (Lazić, 2005: 33).

This author believes that the economic growth in a country depends to a large extent on high – quality economic elite. The roots of the weak and slow economic growth in the former Yugoslav countries, including Montenegro, lie partly in the inability and irresponsibility of the political elite which still cannot achieve consensus on the political – economic transformation. Due to these factors, the privatization failed to reach all branches of the economy. The obstacle for economic transformation is therefore in the managerial and entrepreneurial structure. It comes from the inability of the economic elite, created from the former higher management layers. Namely, the capital accumulated in the initial period was rather a result of the “successful conversion of earlier governing positions into private wealth than the entrepreneurial ability of that part of the elite” (Ibid., 135). The other part of the economic elite, whose number is increasing, is also not made up of those who have achieved wealth thanks to their entrepreneurial talent, but through the activities of grey economy, or illegal activities, mostly during the international sanctions, as well as through direct or indirect ties with the government. On the other hand, groups that took over the power after the fall of the socialist system, also took over a dominant economic role, which lead them to the same position of the prior command class. The continuous economic crisis, characterised by the lack of foreign investments and other conditions necessary for economic transformation, enables the ruling group to still maintain the state control over the most important economic resources. This does not create the conditions necessary for economic transformation, but for the preservation of the previous state of affairs. All this shows that in spite of the fact that certain trends slow down Montenegro’s progress to democracy, and in spite of all of its struggles, like many new democracies, Montenegro is still on that path. This is confirmed by Larry Diamond’s statement that even if post-communist democracies have serious flaws, “they appear highly likely to remain democratic, and they also stand a good chance of becoming more liberal, accountable, and institutionally settled as their economies grow and new generations acquire more democratic experience” (Diamond, 2008: 206).

### **Conclusion**

The democratic transition of Montenegrin society has gone on for more than a quarter of a century. During this period, some major changes have been made in all the areas of social life. Montenegrin society, during the transitional period, achieved a certain institutional and social progress that could lead to the strengthening and stabilization of the democratic regime to the level

of consolidation. However, the achieved changes are not enough to place Montenegrin society amongst the consolidated democracies or countries in which democracy is „the only game in town“.

Democratic transformation of Montenegrin society started with political transformation and the acceptance of a multiparty parliamentary political system and organization of the first multiparty elections in 1990. Organization of political elections represents democracy in the lowest degree possible. The first step in the political reform was an introduction to the new reforms necessary for strengthening the democratic order. Primarily it was the property transformation and affirmation of the market economy, which, however, demonstrated the complexity of the transitional process. The transition to the market economy, at first understood more as a technical issue, pointed to the deeper difficulties arising from the resistance of the socialist social order, that is, the legitimacy and mechanism of social changes in general and the character of a socialist society. The difficulties of the transition period which affect the realization of the market democracy largely stem from the fact that in Montenegro there are no carriers of democratic changes, that is, there is no social group whose actions are expected to produce a change in the existing system of relations, or lead to the creation of a new one.

In addition to these, transition difficulties have also appeared in the sphere of the values. In addition to these, transition difficulties have also appeared in the sphere of the values. While socialism was built on the traditional forms of values which were compatible with the ones that he developed, like collectivism and authoritarian subordination to the leader, the value patterns of the new democratic system are in complete opposition to those of socialism. Liberal values on which democracy is based, such as individualism and pluralism, market orientation and parliamentarism, regardless of the formal – legal basis in the institutions of the new social system, encounter resistance on the part of the collectivist principles. This produces value confusion which represents another hurdle in the process of democratization of Montenegrin society.

The slow democratic progress in these conditions was largely a result of the socio – historical characteristics of Montenegrin community. It gave the new social system the burden of economic and political conditions, completely incompatible and inadequate for the development of the Western democracy models. Political inertness of Montenegrin citizens and their strong attachment to the state on the one hand and their dependence on its protective measures on the other proved to be a very negative basis for the development of civic activism and democratic political culture. This is the reason why Montenegrin citizens, to some extent, show even some kind of resistance towards the new democratic system.

If we know that the process of democratization in the countries of the



developed Western democracy was not completed in just a few decades, having in mind the nature and type of the change, in this case of the whole social system, it is quite unrealistic to expect that Montenegrin society reaches the level of a consolidated democracy in such a short period. This should be kept in mind whenever scepticism appears concerning the changes and their assessment as being only cosmetic. In the course of the transition period, however, Montenegrin society has made some progress, which further leads to the strengthening and stabilization of the democratic regime to the level of consolidation. The state has taken a progressive and reform oriented attitude in the field of politics and economics and, despite all the difficulties, it seeks to retain it. By means of the changes to the constitution, the authority was divided into the legislative, judicial and executive parts, and the obligation of respecting all democratic principles was established. In the field of economy, the privatization process is in progress, which in certain cases has yielded positive results. Together with this sort of attitude, there is a growing consensus amongst the citizens who increasingly realize the importance of their own influence on the political life of the country, as well as the importance of the rule of law and a law – abiding society.

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