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ESSAYS

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Introduction: (De)democratisation in Slovenia and Montenegro: Comparing the Quality of Democracy

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Abstract: *This paper creates a framework for the comparison of two similar and yet different democratisation cases – Slovenia and Montenegro. The two countries have obvious similarities: their geography and small population, as well as their common socialist Yugoslav heritage and common aspirations to join international organisations, most importantly the European Union. However, while Slovenia went through the democratisation process rather smoothly, Montenegro took the longer road, struggling for more than a decade to regain its independence and complete its transition. We take into account different internal and external factors in these two cases such as the year of independence and of joining NATO, the political and electoral system, ethnic homogeneity, the viability of civil society, EU integration status, economic development and the presence of war in each territory in order to identify and describe those factors that contributed to the success of democratisation in different areas: the party system, the interest groups system, the defence system, Europeanisation and social policy. We find that the democratisation process in these countries produced different results in terms of quality. Various objective measures of the quality of democracy score Slovenia higher compared to Montenegro, while public opinion data shows, in general, greater satisfaction with the political system and greater trust in political institutions in Montenegro than in Slovenia.*

Keywords: ***democratisation, democratic backsliding, post-socialism, quality of democracy***

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Introduction

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, its successor states initiated democratization process. However, democratization occurred at a different pace in each country, depending on both the internal and the external context (Beetham 2004).

Slovenia went through the process of democratisation rather successfully (Rizman, 2006) due to a number of factors. First of all, it took advantage of its significantly better economic position compared to the other Yugoslav republics. The advantage of Slovenia especially in its economic situation was already evident in the1990s and continues to be the case today. Croatia, which was the second ex-Yugoslav country to join the European Union (EU) still lags behind Slovenia on most economic indexes. This better economic position contributed to the easier transformation to free market economy and a smoother process of democratic transition. Its border position with Western Europe (having frontiers with both Austria and Italy) broadened the perspective of its citizens and their ambition to change the political system. Moreover, with its rather homogeneous population, Slovenia was spared internal disputes over key strategic goals. As the result its accession to the international organisation community followed immediately after independence and occurred simultaneously with its democratic transition. Slovenia entered international organisations rather quickly, joining the United Nations in 1992, the Council of Europe in 1993, the European Union and NATO in 2004 and the OECD in 2010.

On the other hand, Montenegro, the smallest of the former Yugoslav republics, is one of the youngest independent countries in Europe. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, it did not seek full independence until 2006. In the 1990s, it chose to followed Milosevic's politics and stay in various different associations with Serbia. Due to its heterogeneous population and ethnic based political cleavage, it did not resolve its statehood status before 2006. Even after independence, the cleavage has persisted in driving the political dynamic now disguised in other issues (for and against NATO, for and against the EU, for and against the independence of Kosovo, for and against the controversial law on the freedom of religion, and so on). In 2006, Montenegro joined United Nations, in 2007 it joined to the Council of Europe, and ten years later, in 2017 Montenegro became a member of NATO. In 2012 Montenegro started the process of accession negotiations with the EU and currently has the status of an EU candidate country. Unlike Slovenia, its only external border was with communist Albania, a country that also experienced political change and began its democratic transition in 1991. The economic situation of Montenegro was much less positive than it was in Slovenia. However, both GDP and the Human Development Index have been slowly increasing since 2000 and are the highest after Slovenia and Croatia among the former Yugoslav republics

(Human Development Report 2019). Additionally, Montenegro is yet to experience a change in government. The ruling party which originated in the former Montenegrin Communist party has been in power ever since. Bearing in mind Huntington's 'two turnover test' (Huntington 1991), one could even argue that democracy in Montenegro is yet to consolidate.

However, even after a successful democratic transition and consolidation, the process is never fully complete, as it continues towards establishing a higher degree of quality of democracies and increasing the legitimacy of adopted policies (Högström 2011). Nowadays many European countries face democratic deficits, as is evident from voter turnout in elections, party membership, and trust in political institutions and parties (Maloney 2009). Furthermore, researchers have shown that established democracies are facing democratic backsliding or de-democratisation processes (Bermeo 2016; Bieber Solska – Taleski 2018; Günay – Dzihic 2016; Levitsky – Way 2010; Öktem – Akkoyunlu 2016; Zakaria 1997). The examples of democratic deficit and possible backslidings need to be taken even more into account in young democracies such as Slovenia and Montenegro. This article and special issue will thus focus on the case studies of Slovenia and Montenegro in order to see how the heritage and legacy of different democratisation processes reacts to contemporary de-democratisation challenges. Montenegro and Slovenia have many common characteristics which enables us to "isolate" the effects of different processes and dynamics of democratisation and evaluate how resistant the newly built systems are to current democratic backsliding treats.

The two countries share a recent socialist past and a specific Yugoslav soft self-governance system. They are both small in terms of population and area, and they both went through the process of political change in the 1990s that ended up in independence. In Slovenia, this process was completed rather swiftly while Montenegro took a longer path. In addition, both countries are parliamentary democracies with proportional representation.

Beyond these common characteristics, within the framework of this special issue, we intended to identify the factors that have contributed to the current level and quality of democracy in Slovenia and Montenegro and compare the level of quality of democracy in different areas. In this introductory article to the special issue, we will present the existing empirical evidence with regards to the current quality of democracy in the two countries and the authors of the papers which follow will then look in more detail at the factors that have contributed to the quality of democracy in different areas, as well as at the resilience of the exiting political culture and structures when faced with current de-democratisation challenges.

How do we define the quality of democracy?

During the 1990s, the majority of Central and Eastern Europe, which had experienced communist rule, went through the process of democratic transition and changes to the political system. Today, the majority of Europe consists of democratic countries that are either currently viewed as consolidated democracies (Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia), semi-consolidated democracies (Poland, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania) or transitional governments/hybrid regimes (Hungary, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo and North Macedonia) (Nations in Transit, 2020). Some of the countries exhibited change of the status in the last two years. Poland went from consolidated democracy to semi-consolidated democracy, Hungary, Serbia and Montenegro from semi-consolidated to transitional/hybrid regime (Nations in Transit, 2020). At the same time, the quality of democracy is being questioned in older "established" democracies as well. Trust in political institutions and especially political parties is dropping. The same can be said for levels of satisfaction with democracy, especially as a result of recent economic crises (Eurobarometer 2019). Scholars are thus no longer only interested in explaining regime transition and measuring the success of various democratic transitions, but also in evaluating and explaining the quality of democracy.

Measuring the quality of democracy could also be useful for political actors and civil society actors. After all, deepening democracy is perceived as being of vital importance to increasing the legitimacy of political and policy decisions (Diamond – Morlino 2004a). Low levels in relation to the quality of democracy, on the other hand, might indicate a serious democratic problem (Högström 2011). As such, it is no surprise that we can come across various measures of quality of democracy (Fuchs – Roller 2018). However, this does not mean that the definition of the quality of democracy is universal. In fact, researchers in this field have not yet agreed on a single definition (Högström 2011). One of the most straightforward definitions is: *"The term "quality" refers to the degree to which a system meets such democratic norms as representativeness, accountability, equality and participation."* (Lijphart 1993: 14).

While researchers agree that the quality of democracy is composed of measure that consists of multiple dimensions, they have not all used the same dimensions and indicators of democracy. As we noted, the quality of democracy is affected by different factors and dimensions, and some of them are closely dependent on the satisfaction and interests of citizens. Predominantly these includes the following dimensions:

1) Freedom, which includes political, civil and social rights such as the right to political participation, human rights and socioeconomic rights;
2) The rule of law, "*the legal system* [that] *defends the political rights and procedures of democracy, upholds everyone's civil rights, and reinforces the authority of*

other agencies of horizontal accountability that ensure the legality and propriety of official actions" (Diamond – Morlino 2004b: 23).

3) Vertical accountability, where politicians need to justify their decisions before voters;
4) Responsiveness, the satisfaction of citizens with democracy as well as the implementation of policies that citizens support;
5) Equality, being the legal equality of all citizens regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, political orientation and so on;
6) Participation, where every citizen has the right to participate politically and is able to use this right. This includes not only voting but also the right to organize, assemble, protest, monitor, demanding accountability and lobby for your own interests;
7) Competition, being regular, free and fair multiparty electoral competition;
8) Horizontal accountability, where politicians are also answerable to other officials and institutions;
9) Transparency and
10) Effectiveness of representation (Diamond – Morlino 2004b).

This is of course not necessarily an exhaustive list of dimensions. Moreover, the above listed dimensions often overlap and depend upon one another. This means that improvements in one dimension thus not lead only to improvements in the quality of democracy in general but also in other dimensions, causing a multiplying effect in the improvement of the quality of democracy. Likewise, the regression of one dimension may lead also to regression in the other dimensions. At the same time, there are also some trade-offs between different dimensions, which means that it is impossible to maximise all dimensions at once, for example in the opposition between freedom and responsiveness. Consequently, there is no single best state of democracy that each country should reach (Diamond – Morlino 2004b).

Additionally, a government may achieve high scores on all dimensions while the constituency may still not be satisfied with the outcomes, since it is impossible for the government to take in consideration all possible interests (Diamond – Morlino 2004b). It is thus possible that objective measures of individual dimensions score highly while the subjective measures show low scores or *vice-versa* (Fuchs – Roller 2018). Indexes of the quality of democracy are predominantly based on objective measures and there are several: these include the indices provided by Freedom House, Polity IV, the Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy, the Democracy Barometer, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project and so on. (Fuchs – Roller 2018; Högström 2011). Fuchs and Roller (2018) argue that in order to understand the quality of democracy, subjective measures, including the opinions of citizens, should be taken in consideration. In some cases, the indexes on the quality of democracy also include subjective

measures such as citizens' confidence in the legal system. However, the scores of subjective measures and objective measures can vary substantially (Fuchs – Roller 2018). The stability and functioning of democracy in the end depend on citizens' support for democracy, which is composed of their support for democratic values and principles, democratic regimes and political authorities (Fuchs and Roller 2018).

The quality of democracy in Slovenia and Montenegro: "Objective" measures

In the next section, we will compare the quality of democracy in Slovenia and Montenegro by making an overview of some of the most commonly used indexes that measure quality of democracy (see Table 1). The *Nations in Transit index* measures how democratic those states that went through transition in the 1990s are. Their democracy score is composed of seven different dimensions (Nations in Transit 2020):

1) National democratic governance, operationalised with a democratic and stable governmental system; an independent, effective and accountable legislature and executive branch and military and security services that are subject to democratic oversight.
2) The electoral process, expressed in regular, free and fair elections, fair electoral laws and equal campaigning opportunities; the absence of barriers to political organization and registration; a multiparty electoral system with opposition parties; public engagement in political life; openness to minority groups in political participation; opportunities for the effective rotation of power; free choice and free and fair judgment of both the presidential and legislative elections.
3) Civil society; seen in the protection of the rights of an independent civil society; a vibrant civil society; the absence of excessive influence from extremist and intolerant organisations; a legal and regulatory environment free of excessive state pressures and bureaucracy; sufficient organizational capacity to work; financially viable with opportunities for fundraising and work; respect from the government for policy advocacy and from the media; the right to form and join free trade unions and an education system free of political influence and propaganda.
4) An independent media, operationalised with legal protection for press freedoms, where journalists are protected from persecution; opposition to onerous libel laws which are free from interference from the government or private owners; a diverse selection of sources of information; privately owned media; the financial viability of private media subject only to market forces; the distribution of newspapers being privately controlled; a professional associations of journalists and free access to and use of the internet.

5) Local democratic governance, where principles are enshrined in law and respected in practice; local leaders are selected via free and fair elections; meaningful participation of citizens in local government decision-making; the free and autonomous exercise of power; adequate resources and capacity as needed by local authorities to fulfil their responsibilities and operate with transparency and accountability to citizens.
6) The judicial framework and independence, by protection for fundamental political, civil and human rights; respect for fundamental rights in practice; independence and impartiality in the interpretation and enforcement of the constitution; equality before the law; effective reform of criminal law; suspects and prisoners being protected in practice against arbitrary arrest, detention without trial, searches without warrants, torture, abuse and excessive delays in the criminal justice system; judges being appointed in fair and unbiased manner, judges ruling fairly and impartially and courts free of political control and influence, where authorities comply with judicial decisions.
7) Corruption being prevented through the implementation of effective anticorruption initiatives; a country's economy free of excessive state involvement; a government free from excessive bureaucratic regulation, registration requirements and other barriers that increase opportunities for corruption; significant limitations on the participation of government officials in economic life; adequate laws requiring financial disclosure and preventing any conflict of interest; government advertisements for jobs and contracts; a state which enforces effective legislative and administrative process to prevent, investigate and prosecute corruption on the part of government officials and civil servants; whistle-blowers, anticorruption activists, investigators, and journalists enjoying legal protections; any allegations of corruption are given wide and extensive airing in the media and the public displays a high intolerance for official corruption.

Each dimension is measured by set of yes and no questions. The ratings are prepared by Freedom House, academic advisers and country experts. Democracy scores show the average of the ratings for all seven dimensions. The values range from one to seven, where 1 represents the lowest level of democratic progress and 7 the highest (Nations in Transit 2020).

Slovenia scores better than Montenegro on all dimensions and overall, although both countries received the lowest scores in the domain of corruption. The democratic score for Slovenia is 5.93 which ranks it among *consolidated democracies* that closely embody the best policies and practices of liberal democracies, but which face challenges with corruption. It scores highest at the dimension of the electoral process and local democratic governance and lowest on the dimension of corruption. The highest scores in Montenegro is awarded

to the dimension of civil society, while as already said, the lowest is for corruption. Overall, in 2019, the value of democratic score was 3.86, which classifies Montenegro as *transitional/hybrid regime*, being those electoral democracies that meet only minimum standards for the selection of national leaders and in which the democratic institutions are fragile, with substantial challenges to the protection of political rights and civil liberties (Nations in Transit 2020).

V-Dem project measures democracy using a liberal democracy index that includes liberal and electoral aspects of democracy, an electoral democracy index that includes indicators on suffrage, elected officials, clean elections, freedom of association, freedom of expression and alternative sources of information, a liberal component index that includes indicators on equality before the law as well as an individual liberty index, a judicial constraints on the executive index and a legislative constraints on the executive index. Besides the electoral and liberal principles of democracy, the V-Dem project also measures the participatory, deliberative and egalitarian principles of democracy. The egalitarian component index includes indicators on equal protection, equal access and equal distribution of resources. The participatory component index includes data on civil society participation, the direct popular vote, local government and regional government. The deliberative component index includes information on reasoned justification, common good, respect for counterarguments, range of consultation and an engaged society. Approximately half of the data is obtained from factual information available in official documents: constitutions and government records. The other half is based on the subjective assessments of country experts. Slovenia is among the top 10–20% of countries in the liberal democracy index, which classifies it as liberal democracy with some shortcomings. Montenegro is in the range of 40–50% of the analysed countries, along with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and North Macedonia, and is classified as an electoral autocracy. On the other five principles of democracy, Slovenia also scores better than Montenegro. Slovenia scores highest on the participatory component index where it ranks 4th and lowest on the electoral democracy index where it ranks 29th. Montenegro also scores highest on participatory component index being ranked 46th and lowest on the electoral component index, where it was ranked 107th (Lührmann et al. 2019).

The Polity IV project forms a composite index of regime types and monitors changes to regimes. It measures key qualities of executive recruitment, constraints on executive authority and political competition and changes in the institutionalized qualities of governing authority. However, the data includes information only on the institutions of the central government and the political groups within the authority. Polity IV looks at the same time at the qualities of democracy and autocratic authority in governing institutions. This forms an index of governing authority that spans from fully institutionalized autocracies through mixed and incoherent authority regimes to fully institutionalized

democracies. Index ranges from –10 – a hereditary monarchy to +10 – a consolidated democracy. The regime of the country is defined based on the score of the index: 10 is a full democracy, 6 to 9 a democracy, 1 to 5 an open anocracy, 0 to –5 a closed anocracy and –6 to –10 an autocracy (Polity IV 2018). Both Slovenia and Montenegro are evaluated as democracies. Slovenia scores 10 as a full democracy while Montenegro scores 9.

The *Democracy Index* by the Economist Intelligence Unit measures the state of democracy in a composed index of weighted averages, based on the answers to 60 indicators in five different categories: the electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties. Most answers to the indicators are provided by experts, with some taken from public opinion surveys. The answers are standardised on a scale from 0 to 1. The democracy index scores are calculated from the average values of the five category indices and rounded to two decimal places. Economic living standards are not included as one of the indicators of the democracy index. Based on their ranking, countries are categorised in one of four regime types: 1) full democracies, where civil liberties and basic political freedoms are reinforced by the political culture, the country has a valid system of governmental checks and balances, an independent judiciary, an adequately functioning government and a diverse and independent media; 2) flawed democracies; where elections are free and fair and basic civil liberties are respected with a few issues, but which have an underdeveloped political culture, low levels of political participation and issues in the functioning of governance; 3) hybrid regimes, where irregularities are present in elections, government puts pressure on political opponents, and which feature non-independent judiciaries, widespread corruption, the harassment of media, anaemic rule of law processes, an underdeveloped political culture, low levels of political participation and issues in the functioning of government and 4) authoritarian regimes, where political pluralism has almost vanished, infringements and abuses of civil liberties are common, there is an absence of free and fair elections, the media is state-owned, the judiciary is not independent, and there is censorship and suppression of government criticism (Economist Intelligence Unit 2019). Slovenia scores 7.50 on the democracy index which classifies it as a flawed democracy. It scores the lowest on the index of political culture and highest on the index of the electoral process and pluralism (9.58). Montenegro scores 5.74 and is classified as a hybrid regime. It also scores lowest on the index of political culture and highest on the index of civil liberties (6.76).

The Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) measures two indexes: a Status index that ranks countries according to the quality of their democracy under the rule of law and social market economic practices and a Governance index that ranks countries according to the quality of the leadership's political management performance. Country experts evaluate the extent to which differ-

ent criteria have been met by responding to a set of questions in a qualitative way that is later standardised into numerical ratings from one, the lowest value to ten, the highest. The Status index is composed of two indexes: 1) the state of political transformation which is assessed based on 5 criteria: a) stateness – the state's monopoly on the use of force and the basic administrative structure, state identity and non-interference of religious dogmas, b) political participation expressed in free and fair elections, effective power to govern, rights of association and freedom of expression, c) the rule of law including the separation of powers, an independent judiciary, civil rights and the prosecution of abuse of office, d) stability: the performance and commitment of democratic institutions and e) political and social integration which includes the party system and interest groups but also measures social capital and the approval of democratic norms and procedures, and 2) the state of economic transformation index measured in 7 criteria: a) the level of socioeconomic development, b) the organization of the market and competition including market-based competition, anti-monopoly policies and the liberalization of foreign trade and banking system, c) currency and price stability, d) private property including property rights and private enterprise, e) a welfare regime which includes social safety nets and equality of opportunity, f) economic performance and g) sustainability expressed in terms of the environmental and education policies. The Governance index is measured by five additional criteria: a) the level of difficulty calculated from three qualitative and three quantitative indicators of structural constraints, difficult conditions and scarcity of resources, b) the steering capability measured in prioritization, implementation and policy learning, c) resource efficiency expressed in the wise and effective use of resources, d) consensus building by building the broadest possible consensus and e) international cooperation seen as reliable work with external supporters and neighbouring states. Aside from the answers of country expert, a second country expert reviews the scores (BTI 2018). Slovenia ranks sixth on the Status index and tenth on the Governance index, while Montenegro scores 20th on the Status index and 17th on the Governance index.

Regardless of which index we use, we may notice that they include various dimensions and sub-dimensions. The composition of indexes is thus complex and the effect of one individual sub-dimension on the whole index is fairly minimal. Montenegro scores below Slovenia on all indexes, but usually on the sub-dimensions of indexes which demonstrate higher levels of quality of democracy, the same applies to Slovenia. Similarly, on those indexes where Slovenia demonstrates lower levels of quality of democracy the same could be said for Montenegro. It seems that the same trends apply to both Slovenia and Montenegro, except that Montenegro needs more time to improve its level of democracy on separate dimensions. At the same time, we may also notice that some indexes evaluate both Slovenia and Montenegro quite high, leaving little

space for improvement (e.g. the Polity IV index) while others rank both countries quite low, where it seems both will have to further work on improving the quality of their democracy (e.g. the V-Dem project index).

Table 1: Overview of different indexes of the quality of democracy[2]

Index	Slovenia	Montenegro
Nations in transit, 2020; values from 1 to 7, with 1 representing the lowest level of democratic progress and 7 the highest		
National Democratic Governance	5.75	3.25
Electoral Process	6.50	4.25
Civil Society	6.00	5.25
Independent Media	5.50	3.25
Local Democratic Governance	6.50	4.50
Judicial Framework and Independence	6.00	3.50
Corruption	5.25	3.00
Democracy Score	**5.93**	**3.86**
V-Dem project, 2019; rank and score from 0 to 1, with 1 representing higher quality		
Liberal Democracy Index	**19/ 0.773**	**97/ 0.349**
Electoral Democracy Index	29/ 0.824	107/ 0.456
Liberal Component Index	7/ 0.975	82/ 0.699
Egalitarian Component Index	17/ 0.899	58/ 0.731
Participatory Component Index	4/ 0.748	46/ 0.605
Deliberative Component Index	27/ 0.900	98/0.663
Polity IV, 2014; scores between -10 to 10, where 10 is full democracy, 6 to 9 democracy, 1 to 5 open anocracy, -5 to 0 closed anocracy and -10 to -6 autocracy		
Authority trends	10, since 1991	9, since 2006

2 One additional index of the quality of democracy is the *Democracy Barometer Index* which is built upon liberal and participatory ideas of democracy. It is based on three fundamental principles: freedom, equality and control. The Democracy Barometer, unlike Freedom House, the V-Dem project, the Polity Project and the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, does not rely heavily on expert opinion and rather uses factual data and aggregated survey data (Merkel et al. 2018). Unfortunately, not all indicators are available for all countries. For Montenegro, we only have available data for the principle of equality where Montenegro scores behind Slovenia. For this reason, we did not include the Democracy Barometer Index in the analysis.

The Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy index, 2018; rank and scores between 0 to 10, where 0 to 4 are authoritarian regimes, 4.01 to 6 hybrid regimes, 6.01 to 8 flawed democracies and 8.01 to 10 full democracies		
Electoral process and pluralism	9.58	6.08
Functioning of government	6.79	5.36
Political participation	6.67	6.11
Political culture	6.25	4.38
Civil liberties	8.24	6.76
Regime type	**36/ 7.50**	**81/ 5.74**
Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, 2018, rank and score between 1 and 10 where 10 is the highest value		
Status Index	**6/9.18**	**20/7.35**
Political Transformation	6/9.25	26/7.55
Economic Transformation	4/9.11	23/7.14
Governance Index	**10/6.78**	**17/6.49**

Source: BTI 2018; Economic Intelligence Unit 2019; Lührmann et al. 2019; Nations in Transit 2020; Polity IV 2018.

Various indexes that measure the quality of democracy show higher scores and better ratings for Slovenia. Regardless of which index we take into account or on which dimension of quality of democracy we focus, Slovenia seem to reach higher levels of quality of democracy.

The quality of democracy in Slovenia and Montenegro: "Subjective" measures

Since most of the composed indexes of the quality of democracy are predominantly based on objective factors, we also looked at public opinion data on satisfaction with democracy, the government and certain other areas (see Table 2). Here the results are not so straight forward. Slovenians trusted their political parties and parliament more compared to Montenegro only in 2008. In 2018, the situation was reversed. Citizens of Montenegro had a higher level of trust in parliament, political parties and trade unions and greater confidence in their government, parliament and political parties. They also had greater trust in the European Parliament and confidence in the European Union in 2018. On the other hand, Slovenians had greater confidence in environmental organisations and the social security system in 2008, as well as in 2018. Trust in the armed forces dropped between 2008 and 2018 in Slovenia, while in Montenegro, trust in the armed forces increased. With the economic and financial crises

from 2008 onwards, Slovenia also experienced political crises with a string of early elections in 2011, 2014 and 2018 and new political parties that repeatedly disappointed the voters. This is apparently reflected in dropping trust and confidence in political institutions not only at the national, but also at the EU level. By contrast, in Montenegro where the ruling party since independence is a successor party to the former Montenegrin Communist Party, trust levels in political institutions are higher than in Slovenia.

Slovenians are on the other hand more satisfied with the state of their democracy, find their country to be more democratically governed and are more satisfied with the way democracy works in Slovenia. However, the differences are only minor. At the same time, it seems that for the citizens of Montenegro in general democracy as a political system has a better image. In their view, the democratic system for governing their country is doing better than the system in Slovenia in the opinion of the Slovenians, and Montenegrins are more satisfied with how their political system functions, believing to a greater extent that their political system allows people like them to have an influence on politics.

It seems as though we have some contradictory results. The objective measures of the quality of democracy rate Slovenia higher compared to Montenegro. In addition, according to public opinion, Slovenians express greater satisfaction with democracy in general. But when evaluating the performance of the political system and individual institutions, Montenegrins are more satisfied. This difference between Montenegro and Slovenia was not present only in 2008, which we could explain in terms of Montenegrin satisfaction as a result of enthusiasm over the change of political system and recently won independence. The difference is even more obvious in 2018, more than 10 years after the emergence of an independent Montenegro.

This shows us that by only considering the various indexes of the quality of democracy we may not have an in-depth view in the real state of democracy. While various indexes on the quality of democracy are good for ranking countries and for monitoring progress they do not give us information on where the shortcomings of the quality of democracy are or why they exist. For this reason, we believe case studies on particular policy areas such as the party system, the composition of government, social and defence policy, interest groups and Europeanisation processes should give us a better view of where the differences in the quality of democracy lie in specific areas and perhaps also which processes and factors have contributed to these differences.

Table 2: Subjective measures of the quality of democracy

	Subjective measures of dimensions of the quality of democracy, EVS, 2008 and 2018; mean values		
Variable	Year	Slovenia	Montenegro
How good is it to have a democratic political system to govern this country? (1- very good, 4- very bad)	2008	1.81	1.72
	2018	1.65	1.60
Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government (1- agree strongly, 4- disagree strongly)	2008	1.92	1.76
How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? (1- not at all important, 10- absolutely important)	2018	8.12	8.05
How satisfied are you with democracy? (1- very satisfied, 4- not at all satisfied)	2008	2.55	2.73
And how democratically is this country being governed today? (1- not at all democratic, 10- completely democratic)	2018	5.38	5.18
On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country? (00- extremely dissatisfied, 10 – extremely satisfied)	2018	4.30	4.16
People have different view about the system for governing this country. How well things are going? (1- very bad, 10- very good)	2008	4.73	5.25
How satisfied are you with how the political system is functioning in your country these days? (1- not satisfied at all, 10- completely satisfied)	2018	4.13	5.05
How much would you say that the political system in your country allows people like you to have an influence on politics? (1- not at all, 5- a great deal)	2018	1.89	2.03
Confidence in government (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.70	2.77
	2018	3.10	2.79
Confidence in: parliament (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.60	2.80
	2018	3.07	2.80
Trust in national parliament (00- no trust at all, 10- complete trust)	2018	3.58	4.16
Confidence in: political parties (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.90	3.19
	2018	3.38	2.93
Trust in political parties (00- no trust at all, 10- complete trust)	2018	2.70	3.07
Confidence in: European union (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.30	2.62
	2018	2.84	2.46
Trust in the European Parliament (00- no trust at all, 10- complete trust)	2018	3.84	4.80
Confidence in trade unions (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.51	2.97
	2018	3.03	2.95

	Subjective measures of dimensions of the quality of democracy, EVS, 2008 and 2018; mean values		
Variable	Year	Slovenia	Montenegro
Confidence in environmental organizations (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.22	2.68
	2018	2.49	2.72
Confidence in: social security system (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.49	2.55
	2018	2.61	2.74
Confidence in: the armed forces (1- a great deal, 4- none at all)	2008	2.33	2.75
	2018	2.53	2.40

Source: EVS 2016; EVS 2018; ESS 2018.

Methodology and content of the special issue

Despite the common history of Slovenia and Montenegro between 1945 and 1991 and the fact that both are fairly small countries, the quality of democracy in both countries differs today. There may be several reasons for the different paths and speeds of development and transition in both countries. The factors that have influenced successful democratic transition probably also have an effect on the current quality of democracy these countries have achieved.

This special issue on (de)democratisation in Slovenia and Montenegro answers questions about the quality of democracy in these two countries by looking at the specific areas and factors that were on the one hand influenced by the respective processes of democratic transition and on the other, which still contribute to the current state of democracy in both countries.

We will point out a few differences, recognised in the literature, that might have contributed to the changes in the quality of democracy that are still noticeable today. Some of the factors that might have had an impact on the level of the quality of democracy include socio-economic variables, differences in ethnic structure, the strength of civil society, the characteristics of the transition processes, constitutional choices, the electoral system and external factors (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009).

Year of independence. While Slovenia decided to seek full independence in the early 1990s, Montenegro established, together with Serbia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and gained its independence only in 2006 (see Table 3). The process of transition did not start before 1997 which meant a delay in transitional elections and democratisation (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009). We consider this factor in all the articles of the special issue, because the total period since independence allowed more time for development in Slovenia.

Political system. Democratic transitions are less successful in presidential systems and fragmented party system (Przeworski et al. 1996). Although Slovenia and Montenegro both have a parliamentary system, it is characteristic of Montenegro that it has a predominant party system. The former Montenegrin Communist Party renamed itself as the Democratic Party of Socialist and has continued to win national elections since independence. It has control over access to public resources and decision-making and has reinforced a hierarchical political culture in the country and a top-down approach to decision making (Komar – Živković 2016). Elena Nacevska and Nemanja Stankov (2020) fill the gap regarding the differences in the democratization processes between Slovenia and Montenegro *with a focus on party system development* and changes from the 'old ruling elite' to the establishment of a multi-party system. With special emphasis on electoral rules and party system developments, they outline the patterns of party competition and party system development, between two different political contexts and link these processes to stages of democratisation.

Ethnic structure. A more homogenous ethnic structure contributes to a more successful transition (Gasiorovski – Power 1998) although ethnic heterogeneity does not necessarily prevent a peaceful transition (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009). Slovenia is more ethnically homogeneous, while in Montenegro more ethnicities coexist, currently without major conflicts. While Montenegrins are the largest ethnic community they do not represent an absolute majority. Alenka Krašovec and Nemanja Batričević (2020) consider the dynamics of government formation in Slovenia and Montenegro since their formal introduction of multiparty systems (1990–2018) in order to identify numerous factors that contribute to the formation and durability of governments, with a special focus on the effect of party cleavages and party systems characteristics in general.

Civil Society. A vibrant civil society and interest group system that is involved in policymaking is an important internal factor supporting democracy (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009; Linz – Stepan 1996). Slovenia has very vibrant civil society and interest group system which actually started to develop in the 1980s (Kolarič et al. 2002; Vandor et al. 2017). Unlike in Slovenia, Montenegro entered the era of pluralism without being able to develop a participative culture beforehand. Its civil society and interest group system is fairly young and dependent on external funding. There was no opposition civil society that could challenge the old elites at the first multi-party elections (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009). Olivera Komar and Meta Novak (2020) are in particularly interested in the effects of the democratic transition on the organizational development of the interest group system and their characteristics in Slovenia and Montenegro. They compare the frequency of contacts between interest groups and decision-makers as an indicator of the openness of the political system and the inclusion of members in the internal decision-making of interest groups and argue that established links between interest groups and decision-makers and

the inclusion of members in interest groups activities contribute to the quality of democracy. In the analyses they use comparative data gathered through a comparative interest groups survey in Slovenia and Montenegro that uses the same research instrument and a similar sampling process, so as to provide comparative data.

External effects. International circumstances have an impact on the development and maintenance of democracy (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009; Przeworski et al. 1996). Slovenia's earlier independence and better economic position also facilitated their membership of the European Union. Slovenia has been an EU member since 2004 while Montenegro has been a candidate country since 2010. Since 2010, Montenegro has been called many times "a leader" in the EU accession negotiations when is compared to the rest of the region that has not yet joined the EU. It is also true that Slovenia received its status as a candidate country six years after gaining independence (in 1997) while Montenegro was made a candidate country after four years of independence. Gordana Djurović and Damjan Lajh (2020) describe the relationship between Slovenia and Montenegro on the one hand, and the European Union on the other. Both countries held a special status and relationship with the European Communities earlier than most other socialist countries. Economic and social interactions with the EU and its member-states were thus part of Slovenian and Montenegrin life even prior to their independence. Europeanization as a "practical" integration with the EU was closely linked in these two countries to the processes of liberalisation in the economy, society and politics as well as to the processes of democratic transition. The authors investigate the evolution of the relationship between these two countries and the EU.

The economic situation. The economic situation was already different in these two countries while they were both part of Yugoslavia. Slovenia was economically the most developed of all the former Yugoslav republics so its starting point for the democratic transition was better. After all, economic stagnation and a weak economy do not contribute to democratisation (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009; Przeworski et al. 1996). Even today, GDP per capita is much higher in Slovenia. However, economic development does not generate democracies in and of itself. Other factors need to be present as well (Przeworski 2002). In this special issue, we focus in particular on the effects of the economic situation on social policy. Maša Filipovič Hrast, Uglješa Janković and Tatjana Rakar (2020) examine the diverse developments in the field of social policy over the last three decades. They describe the position and main challenges of the transition of the two countries in the 1990s in relation to developments and changes in the field of social policy, by analysing the main policy changes in the core fields of social policy, such as the labour market and social assistance, family policy and old age policy. In their analysis, they also include a discussion of the structural pressures on social policy, in particular the economic and social situation of

the two countries, and compare the effects of GDP growth, social stratification, the risk of poverty, social protection expenditure and the unemployment rate.

The presence of war. Peace supports democratic developments and is a necessary condition for a successful transition to democracy (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009). Neither of these two countries experienced a long war within their territory in the 1990s. Slovenia only experienced a ten-day war. Montenegro was indirectly involved in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Neighbouring countries. Slovenia's geographical position, bordering two more established democracies in Italy and Austria, influenced the culture and their view on free market economies. Having a border with a democratic country has a positive effect on democratic developments (Gasiorowski – Power 1998). The level of democracy in one country interacts with the level of democracy in each neighbouring country (Huntington 1993: 7). On the other hand, Montenegro bordered mostly on the other republics of Yugoslavia. Its only external border was with communist Albania. Iztok Prezelj, Olivera Ignjac and Anja Kolak (2020) explain how democratization of the field of national defence was extremely important since national defence represented one of the cornerstones of the old socialist and communist regimes. The newly independent countries needed to establish themselves in relation towards neighbouring countries by building their own independent system of defence. For Slovenia, the national defence system was challenged already during the first, 10-day long, war of independence. The national defence systems of both countries were a result of their socialist past, but then gradual democratization led to drastic improvements in the quality of democracy in the field of national defence. A more democratic national defence system enabled membership of NATO, the appointment of civilian defence ministers and the inclusion of civilian defence experts, a reduction in the total number of soldiers and the defence budget, the establishment of professional armed forces with a high representation of women and the opportunity to act as a security provider in foreign missions.

The present differences between Slovenia and Montenegro could have contributed to the currently different levels of the quality of democracy in both countries. At the same time, it is also possible that some of the differences are not the cause but rather a consequence of the different levels of the quality of democracy in these two countries.

In this special issue the articles follow the same framework methodology of comparative research. Each article compares the situation in Slovenia and Montenegro by comparing arguments, and the development and characteristics of both countries. In general, the time frame of the analysis extends from the 1980s to the modern day. In their respective articles, the authors present an overview of the development of the particular area and its current situation. The analysis is predominantly descriptive because at the current stage we argue it is necessary to first present the scope of development and the contribution

Table 3: Factors explaining the differences in the quality of democracy in Slovenia and Montenegro

Factors	Slovenia	Montenegro
Year of independence	1991	2006
Political system	Parliamentary system	Predominant party system
Electoral system	Proportional system	Proportional system, closed lists
Ethnic homogeneity of population.	83.1% Slovenes, 2% Serbs, 1.8% Croats, 1.6% Bosniaks, 0.3% Italians, 2.2% Other,, 8.9% Unspecified (in 2002)	44.5% Montenegrins; 28.7% Serbs 8.6% Bosniaks, 4.9% Albanians, 0.9% Croats, 13.6% Others (in 2011)
Number of active CSOs / 1000 citizens	3.62	1.69
EU membership status	Member country since 2004	Candidate country since 2010
Economic development (GDP per capita 2018)	€20,170	€6,230
Presence of domestic war	10 days	indirect
External neighbouring countries (outside Yugoslavia)	Italy, Austria, Hungary	Albania
Membership of NATO	2004	2017

Source: MONSTAT, 2011, SURS, 2002; More-Hollerweger et al. 2019; Eurostat, 2019.

to the quality of democracy from different areas. Although some areas are rich in comparative studies, in other we still lack analysis, especially when we want to compare two small countries with a similar history that took rather different paths towards transition. Where available, the authors also used empirical, comparable data. However, the data is largely comparable in one area but not available to compare it further across different areas. In this special issue, we want to achieve three major goals:

1. To provide an overview of the process of democratic transition in a particular area.
    a. In particular, how did the changes arrived at during the process of democratic transition affect the development in the specific area?
2. To evaluate the current quality of democracy in particular areas.
    a. What is the current quality of democracy in specific areas and how did it change?
    b. Do we currently witness a better quality of democracy or are we starting to notice a process of (de)democratization?
3. To compare the process of democratic transition and the quality of democracy in particular areas in Slovenia and Montenegro

a. In what ways were the effects of the democratic transition on a specific area similar in Slovenia and Montenegro and in what ways were they different?
b. How different or equal is the quality of democracy in a specific area in Slovenia and Montenegro?

The results produced by these three major goals will produce the first comparative study of the process of democratic transition and democracy in Slovenia and Montenegro.

Conclusion

This article has examined the definition and different indexes of the quality of democracy and presented their values for Slovenia and Montenegro. We can conclude that scholars have developed a number of composed indexes that include various dimensions of the quality of democracy. Although high scores on one dimension normally also contribute to higher scores on other dimensions there are also some limits to this. It is almost impossible to score the highest values for all dimensions. Nevertheless, Slovenia scores higher in comparison to Montenegro on all indices of the quality of democracy. Although all the objective indexes show a higher level of quality of democracy for Slovenia than for Montenegro, we can also find some similarities in the quality of democracy between the two countries. Slovenia and Montenegro in the majority of cases performed better (or worse) on the same components of the indexes. It seems like that the same trends apply to Slovenia and Montenegro, but that Montenegro needs more time to improve its level of democracy. While the composed indexes that include various dimensions and indicators are very useful for ranking the countries and monitoring their progress they do not tell us much about which the weak points of the quality of democracy are and why these exist.

By also compering the level of satisfaction with democracy in public opinion data we show that subjective measures of quality of democracy are not necessarily dependent on objective measures. All, the indexes of the quality of democracy, regardless of how they are composed, have limitations and do not always tell us the whole story. While objectively the government can propose policies and processes of high democratic quality, citizens may still object to these policies and approaches. Although Slovenians are more satisfied with the state of their democracy, find their country to be more democratically governed and are more satisfied with the way democracy works in Slovenia, Montenegrins in comparison to Slovenians believe that the democratic system for governing their country is doing better, are more satisfied with how the political system is functioning and believe to a greater extent that their political system allows people like them to have an influence on politics. The enthusiasm for the new political system in

Montenegro has still not decreased after more than 10 years of independence. The level of confidence in political institutions has even increased over the ten years of independence. On the other hand, various political crises in Slovenia are reflected in the low levels of trust in institutions and greater dissatisfaction with the political system.

In this special issue, we will thus offer a case study approach to the assessment of quality of democracy and limit ourselves in each article to a specific area relevant to the quality of democracy such as the party system, government composition, the interest groups system, Europeanisation processes, and social and national defence policies.

The findings are compared between Slovenia and Montenegro, two former Yugoslav republics whose processes of democratic transition have been and remain different. In the future, a similar approach might be used to study the quality of democracy by including other areas, countries or entire regions (e.g. Western Europe) in the analysis. We encourage other scholars to continue to investigate these processes and issues by expending the scope to include other new democracies and geographical areas.

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Cleavages and Government in Slovenia and Montenegro

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Abstract: *In this article we identify the factors that contribute to the formation and especially the durability/stability of governments in both Slovenia and Montenegro after they formally introduced multiparty systems and following their democratic transition, with a focus on the effect of cleavages and party system characteristics generally. Although these two polities share several important similarities (small size, common institutional setting during Yugoslav era, aspirations for membership in international organisations etc.), the nature of governments' durability/stability in the democratic era entails distinct differences. While Montenegro stands out in post-socialist Europe as the only case where the ruling party has not been overthrown, Slovenia has been led by many governments composed of different political parties. While it seems that in neither country are the ideological characteristics of the governments able to explain their duration/stability to any important extent, it is obvious that the cleavage structure in the two countries has varied, as has the importance of particular cleavages.*

Keywords: ***cleavage, government, duration, political party, democratisation***

Introduction

In a typical modern representative democracy, the government is a branch of power. Discussions about governments often raise issues involving the formation of governments as well as their duration/survival. Government formation lies at the heart of representative politics because it provides the essential connections between ordinary individuals' preferences and the ambitions of politicians, between elections and party competition, and between legislative

politics, policymaking and governance of the country. Here, the forming of a government is the focal point at which all of these aspects come together in a parliamentary democracy (Laver – Shepsle 1996: 4). Still, the duration or survival of a certain government influences its effectiveness, policy performance and political stability (Browne et al. 1984; Huber 1998; Müller–Rommel 2005).

As Keman (2006: 160) notes, governments in all representative democracies are crucially made up by political parties, and party-based government is the irreducible core of any representative democracy. In the last few decades, scholars have developed theories and models to explain variations in government formation and duration (Warwick 1994; Laver – Shepsle 1996), involving various groups of determinants.

This article aims to explain similarities and/or variations in government formation, highlighting the issue of duration, following the democratic transition of two countries in the area of former Yugoslavia – Slovenia and Montenegro. Both countries share many important characteristics (e.g. a common institutional setting during the Yugoslavia era, a 'triple transition' (political/economic/socio-territorial), EU and NATO membership aspirations), and have seen similarities in government durability, but differences in their patterns of government formation. Although many country and party characteristics potentially determine the formation and duration of government, this article concentrates on cleavages closely connected to the ideology of parties, and their positions along the left–right ideological spectrum. Unlike many studies of government formation and especially duration (e.g. Grofman 1989; Warwick 1994; Laver – Shepsle 1996; Müller – Strøm eds. 2000; Somer-Topcu – Williams 2008; Conrad – Golder 2010), we will not conduct a robust statistical analysis since we are only investigating a relatively short time period (a maximum of three decades) and just two countries; instead, a simpler analytical and more descriptive approach is used.

Determinants of the Duration of Governments

As noted, discussions about governments frequently concern questions of government formation, often viewed as a process, but even more of governments' duration or survival in various political and social contexts. When discussing the duration of governments, it is obviously first necessary to know when a new government commenced. It is widely accepted in the literature that a new government emerges with every change in prime minister, the party composition of a government, or legislative period (Browne et al. 1984; Warwick 1994; Müller – Strøm eds. 2000; Blondel et al. 2007). Warwick (1994: 3) warned that while governments indeed change frequently according to these criteria and can thus exhibit a shorter duration or lower stability, different governments can in fact be composed of (largely) the same parties and the same individuals.

Early studies on government duration primarily explored how different types of electoral systems impact the size and number of parties, while in the 1970s the structural attributes approach flourished, emphasising more the various attributes of parties and governments. Taking the above-mentioned aspects into account, in their review article Grofman and Roozendaal (1997) referred to the findings of many scholars showing that one-party governments last longer than coalition governments and majority governments are more durable than minority ones, while duration also increases with minimal winning coalitions. Saalfeld (2008) added that the number of parties in a government also has a plausible link with its duration; the more parties in government, the greater the scope for interparty disagreement. Still, other research reveals that more ideologically heterogeneous governments are less durable than ideologically more homogeneous ones. However, for decades researchers have continued to disagree on the role played by the ideology of parties or their policy in government duration. As Warwick (1994: 6) stated, although Sartori's analysis of party systems clearly showed that ideological diversity among parties in government is crucial for government duration, its empirical link with government survival was rarely investigated before the mid-1990s, largely due to the difficulty of accurately measuring the ideological positions held by parties.

Browne et al. (1984) seriously contested the structural-attributes approach with the event-thesis approach, accompanied by Ciofi-Revilla's (1984) work. Browne et al. (1984; 1986) pointed to the importance of 'events' (like political scandals, international crises, wars, economic changes or illness/death of the prime minister…) which may affect the duration of governments, and called for a shift of scholarly attention from considering the question of how long governments may be expected to endure to questions of when and why they will fall (Browne et al. 1988: 937). Warwick (1994: 10–11) stressed that future progress in this area would require some means of combining the two perspectives, while King et al. (1990) made the first attempt to unify the 'events' approach with the classical (structural-attributes) approach. Later, several unified models were developed that combine the structural-attributes and 'events' approaches (Saalfeld 2008).

Following the democratic transition, studies on government formation and duration have also slowly emerged in Europe's post-socialist countries and generally confirmed much of the evidence from Western Europe, albeit with certain significant differences being identified among the regions, especially in terms of the duration of governments (Blondel et al. 2007; Somer-Topcu – Williams 2008; Tzelgov 2011), also because the political context in CEE is sometimes described as being more complex than in Western Europe (Baylis 2007; Grotz – Weber 2012). The structure of cleavages in countries can thus be treated as (part of) the relevant political context, often also with an important impact on the formation of a government and its durability.

Cleavages, Ideology, Left–Right Ideological Spectrum, and Duration of Governments

Saalfeld (2008: 348) described how more recent spatial models of government duration had placed considerable emphasis on the relevant parties' policy preferences as predictors of government duration, especially in conjunction with certain features of the party system.

When talking about policy preferences, the researcher cannot overlook the discussion of party ideology and the fact that ideology is driven by cleavages (Pettitt 2014: 60), or that ideology, through configuration of the national party system, is significantly affected by cleavages (Kriesi et al. 2012). Also closely connected to ideology are the generally used notion of the left–right political or ideological spectrum and the concern with party families (chiefly based on ideology), which all helps politicians, the media and voters understand where different parties are located both in relation to each other and to the position of the observer (Freire in Pettitt 2014).

With respect to cleavages, the best known and most referred to approach is Lipset – Rokkan's work from 1967. They argue that religious, cultural, regional and class struggles in society have been translated into deep, long-lasting political divides, and that the ideology of different parties is shaped by these divides or cleavages manifesting as a party system since parties have an expressive function (parties develop rhetorical language to translate the contrasts in the social and cultural structure into demands/pressures or action/inaction) (Lipset – Rokkan 1967). Cleavages have been developed by national and industrial revolutions leading to four cleavages; centre–periphery, State–Church, rural–urban and owner–worker. Lipset – Rokkan (1967) regard these cleavages as being more or less permanent. This means the ideology of today's parties can also be explained by these four cleavages; while parties have come and gone, cleavages have tended to persist through time and generations (Mair 2006). They might even overlap, although it is not necessary that all four cleavages can be found in all countries. This approach tends to neglect a dynamic perspective and has therefore also attracted scepticism about whether we can indeed talk about another, new materialist–postmaterialist or global–local cleavage. Deegan-Krause (2013: 37) notes that these are not the only cleavages possible, yet potential new entrants must clear extremely high barriers if they are to enter the academic literature.

In many empirical analyses, variables capturing the ideological properties of the party system as a whole are shown to have a statistically significant impact on the durability of governments, although interpretations of these findings vary widely (Saalfeld 2008: 348). Yet other studies point to the factor of the ideological or party-family diversity of/within the government. Warwick (1994: 67) contended that his research findings considerably justify the acceptance of lower or minor ideological diversity as a factor contributing to government

survival. Saalfeld (2008) also reported that in many studies the criterion of ideologically connected parties explained the longer government durability, but there were also some surprising results revealing certain significant risks for the duration of ideologically connected governments.

However, researchers have raised the difficulty of reliably measuring ideological diversity and/or homogeneity. Warwick (1994: 7) explained that it is also possible that the fact researchers continue to disagree on the role played by ideology or policy in government duration may simply be attributed to the difficulties of accurately measuring the ideological positions held by parties.

The left–right ideological positions of parties and ideological diversity/homogeneity within governments is typically measured via expert judgements of party positions, judgements of the public, the positions of party supporters, coding party programmes/manifestos, analysis of political statements and speeches, or legislators' voting patterns (Benoit – Laver 2006). Still, there is also the question of dimensions of this left–right ideological spectrum. While up until the mid-1950s many scholars believed that the ideological spectrum could be organised along the single dimension of left–right policy, the dimension-structured politics in post-revolutionary France, it had become obvious that politics was being organised multidimensionally and that this could also importantly add to the analytical complexity (Warwick 1994; Laver – Shepsle 1996). One question arises: how many dimensions of policy should be used to adequately describe the ideological or policy position of a given political party? One could traditionally talk of at least two ideological or policy dimensions – the economic and cultural/social values dimension – yet some might also ask if, for instance, European integration or national self-determination etc. dimensions can be added? We must also keep in mind that the ideological/policy positions of parties are fixed at a certain point in time, but may subsequently change (Benoit – Laver 2006: 57).

Also in CEE post-socialist countries one can detect most of the above-mentioned cleavages, although some are less and others more important or exposed than in the more established European democracies, as shown by Deegan-Krause (2013: 45–56). Despite some peculiarities, economic and cultural/social values dimensions can also be applied in the analysis of the ideological left–right positioning of parties, yet studies reveal that attitudes to the communist regime is another important dimension of the cleavage structure in CEE countries (Kitschelt et al. 1999; Casal Bertoa 2014). But the extent and nature of all these cleavages have been varying across CEE countries, as warn Kitschelt (1995) and Whitefield (2002).

Cleavages in Slovenia

Several scholars (e.g. Vehovar 1996; Fink-Hafner 2001; Zajc – Boh 2004; Prunk 2012) showed in their analyses that during the democratic transition and its con-

solidation in Slovenia it is generally speaking possible (but not necessarily all at the same time nor for the whole time) to detect the main cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan (centre–periphery, State–Church, rural–urban, owner–worker) which in the area of Slovenia were indeed already present before World War II.

More importantly, some or the majority of these cleavages overlap, creating strong polarisation in both the political arena and society (Fink-Hafner 2001). Vehovar (1996) was convinced that the overlapping of the cleavages amounts to a single, all-encompassing cleavage; namely, the traditional–modern[1] cleavage which may be labelled a cultural cleavage as well. Yet there have also been ideas that one can, in line with pan-European terminology, talk of a libertarian–authoritarian cleavage. Whether it is called a traditional–modern, libertarian–authoritarian, cultural or ideological cleavage, the fact is that this cleavage has continually and vigorously structured the competition among parties in Slovenia and established sharp divisions, even extreme polarisation in society. Such polarisation that would fit with the Roman Catholic Priest Mahnič's pre-World War II notion of the "division of spirits" as a metaphor for the all-embracing conflict[2] between liberalism and conservatism in politics and society.

In addition and typically for European post-socialist countries, the communism–anticommunism cleavage is also visible, and in Slovenia and it is closely connected with developments during World War II (e.g. Partisans versus the Home Guard or opponents of the occupation forces vs. their collaborators). The resilience and intensity of the cleavage connected with World War II is quite specific in the context of other post-socialist countries since greater attention has been paid to it in former Yugoslavia (Krašovec – Ramet 2017).

Still, for one decade after the democratic transition the cleavage concerning economic issues was less prominent. The country's gradual approach to the economic transition, quite different from many other post-socialist Central and Eastern European countries, and the population's clear demand to preserve the welfare state meant that all parliamentary parties advocated similar social-democratic socioeconomic policies up until the 2004 elections (Fink-Hafner 2006; Stanojević – Krašovec 2011; Kolarič 2012; Johannsen – Krašovec 2017).[3] Yet, the situation changed at the 2004 elections when the economic-based cleavage became more salient as the electoral winner, the Slovenian Demo-

1 On the other hand, the modern–postmodern cleavage was especially visible at the start of the democratic transition when the parliamentary Green Party successfully represented it in the political arena, but with many divisions in the party the cleavage has lost its prominence. It has regained it lately, mostly due to certain attempts by new entrants in the arena (Fink-Hafner – Novak – Knep 2017).

2 As historically estimated by Prunk (2012) and Vehovar (2012), Slovenian political culture has usually been of a non-consensual variety.

3 In Slovenian society, the population's inclination towards egalitarianism and 'small social/economic differences' has been obvious ever since the democratic transition, although at the end of the 1980s the potential for non-egalitarian inclinations was clearly detected in public opinion polls (Vehovar 1991; Malnar 2012).

cratic Party, fully entered the conservative camp even though it was originally established as the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia. Several years later, the New Slovenia-Christian Democrats, as a new party with a clear connection to the Slovene Christian Democrats from the 1990s, also started to firmly commit itself to economic liberalism. In the contexts of the economic and fiscal crisis Slovenia faced in the 2009–2014 period and the external pressure of the European Union (EU), European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the early 2010s, almost all parties (regardless of their ideological positions) have accepted more (neo)liberal-oriented socioeconomic reforms. Paradoxically, this means the economic cleavage in the system has again lost its prominence, although the direction of tendencies was then radically different compared with the 1990s. The only obvious exception from this line of recent development is the United Left coalition, later called The Left, first entering the parliamentary arena at the 2014 elections, which has managed to place the conflict between social democratic vs. (neo)liberal socioeconomic policies on the agenda, thereby again raising the profile of the economic cleavage.

However, given that the importance of cleavages can vary over time, the ideological positions held by parties and lines of inter-party competition can also change over time, including due to mergers and/or splits of parties.

While the competition communism–anticommunism line was evident at the first multi-party and democratic elections held in 1990 (Vehovar 1996; Fink-Hafner – Krašovec 2006) and in the bipolar inter-party competition structure, this was soon replaced by a tripolar ideological structure – conservative, liberal, social democratic (Fink-Hafner 2012; Prunk 2012) – and more recently again with a bipolar structure, with all occurring without significant changes to the electoral system or other institutions. Based on many studies, it is obvious that the social democratic pillar was mainly represented by the reformed League of Communists of Slovenia (today's Social Democrats) and the conservative pillar was largely formed by newly established parties more closely connected to more rural areas and Christian values (the Slovenian People's Party and the Slovene Christian Democrats), but more ambiguous for scholars was the position of the newly established Social Democratic Party of Slovenia (today's Slovenian Democratic Party), at least at the start of the 1990s. While some authors claimed that in the early 1990s it was easy to see the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia was a social democratic party, especially with respect to socio-economic issues (Krašovec 1996; Prunk 2012), Pikalo (2000) believes the party always had a strong connection with the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, one can detect more unified stances on the party's position after the mid-1990s (led by Janez Janša – currently still the party's leader), the party first *de facto* started to turn towards the conservative camp (Zver 2004; Krašovec 2013) to also formally become a member of the conservative party family at the turn of the century. The liberal pillar was represented by the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (the

reformed League of Socialist Youth of Slovenia) that grew in prominence in the circumstances of quite a big ideological distance between the two other pillars (Fink-Hafner 2012: 204).[4] With the demise of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia soon after the turn of the century, a more or less bipolar ideological structure has mostly returned to Slovenia, although several new successful, but short-lived, parties since 2008 have sought to occupy this position (e.g. Zares – New Politics, List of Zoran Janković – Positive Slovenia, Citizens' List – Party of Gregor Virant, Party of Miro Cerar, Party of Alenka Bratušek, List of Marjan Šarec).

While considering the cultural/social values dimension, one can talk about several main points/issues of differentiation between the parties; the role of the Catholic Church in Slovenian society and politics, abortion, religious instruction in state schools, denationalisation whereby (also) the Catholic Church was entitled to the restitution of expropriated property (including feudal property), the rights of ethnic, sexual and national minorities, and conflicts concerning developments during and also after World War II (Vehovar 1996; Fink-Hafner 2001; Zajc – Boh 2004; Prunk 2012).

On the other hand, the parties' main points/issues of differentiation in the economic dimension up until 1992 was the question of the appropriate form of privatisation and, after the turn of the millennium, state intervention in the economy, the scope of privatisation and questions concerned with the privatisation of the public health, school etc. systems as well as the type of welfare state (Kolarič 2012; Prunk 2012).

In many European countries, EU members or aspirants for membership, a transnational cleavage has also emerged, connected to the stances held by parties, the public and elites on the (development of the) EU. Some researchers say that the old centre–periphery cleavage has indeed been packaged in a new (transnational) form, while others believe this is a genuinely new cleavage that may be expressed differently in various countries, but mainly in the form of Euroscepticism. As found by Lewis – Mansfeldova eds. (2006), Szczerbiak – Taggart eds. (2008), Haughton ed. (2009), Lewis – Markowski eds. (2011), Hloušek – Kaniok eds. (2020), Euroscepticism has been present in different forms and different scopes in all post-socialist CEE countries. Slovenia is among the countries where attitude to the EU (or Euroscepticism) has constituted neither an important cleavage nor a line of inter-party competition.

When speaking about party-based Euroscepticism in Slovenia, it should be noted that the entire EU accession period was generally marked by quite a broad consensus within the political elite on the process of joining the EU (Fink-Hafner – Lajh 2003). This broad informal consensus among Slovenian

4 According to Prunk (2012), after 1992 the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia was in economic terms trying to introduce a liberal-market economy while simultaneously preserving the welfare state as well as social cohesion and, on the other hand, it was exposing libertarian values.

parties on EU membership was visible until the mid-1990s. However, in the context of growing public Euroscepticism since the mid-1990s, under the leadership of the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia, the leading governmental party, in 1997 parliamentary parties decided to deal with the emerging public Euroscepticism, overcome their other differences and conflicts, and sign an Agreement on Co-operation in the EU Accession Process. Only the Slovenian National Party did not sign it. For years, especially at elections, some Euroscepticism was occasionally evident among small and/or marginal parties, yet they were unable to benefit electorally from politicising the topic (Krašovec – Lajh – Kustec Lipicer 2006; Krašovec – Lajh 2009). It was only with the eurozone and the subsequent migration crisis that the selective politicisation of EU issues, principally the EU's policies on austerity and migration, also emerged among certain mainstream parties (Haughton – Krašovec 2014; Krašovec – Lajh, 2020). But, generally speaking, one can say that the EU has not been important issue of the inter-party competition line/cleavage in Slovenia.

Parties' ideological positions and the salience of cleavages – public opinion poll data

As noted, the ideological positions held by parties along the left–right spectrum and thus the ideological diversity/homogeneity within governments are most commonly measured via expert judgements of party positions or judgements made by the public/voters in public opinion polls.

As Table 1 shows, in the selected years (years of parliamentary elections or a year after/before the elections – dependent on the availability of public opinion poll data) certain parties were continually perceived by the public/voters to be centre-left (for example, the Social Democrats, and the Democratic Party of Retired Persons of Slovenia) and others as centre-right (for example, the Slovenian People's Party and New Slovenia). The Liberal Democracy of Slovenia was generally perceived as a centre-oriented party with moderate left leanings, while the Slovenian Democratic Party was in the 1990s mostly seen as centre-right, but since the new millennium more as a right-oriented party. The Slovenian National Party has for much of the time represented an eclectic combination policy of left[5] and right political values (Krašovec – Haughton 2011: 201), which probably led the public to try to find a balance between left and right positioning of the party. Successful, but generally short-lived new parties have mostly been evaluated by voters as centre-left parties – Zares, Positive Slovenia, Alliance of Alenka Bratušek, Party of Miro Cerar, and the List of Marjan Šarec, while due to the liberal economic policies it had tried to expose the most, the Citizens'

5 In particular, the party's stance on Church–State relations and its evaluation of the role of the partisans in World War II are associated with the left side of the ideological spectrum.

List has been seen as more of a centre-right party. The (United) Left has been perceived by the public/voters as the most left party of all parliamentary parties (Haughton – Krašovec 2013; 2018; Krašovec – Haughton 2014).

Table 1: Position of political parties along the left-right ideological spectrum in selected years (perception of the public/voters) in %

	extreme left*	left*	centre*	right*	extreme right*	Do not know/ no answer
1996						
DeSUS	3.5	9.9	17.9	4.5	2.6	61.6
LDS	8.3	13.3	19.7	4.1	1.9	52.7
SD	13.7	12.9	13.6	3.5	1.8	54.5
SDS	1.6	4.9	19.2	10.4	7.7	56.2
SNS	5.5	5.6	13.2	8.3	11.0	56.4
2000						
DeSUS	12.8	18.6	24.3	3.2	1.6	39.5
LDS	17.2	18.1	18.9	4.3	3.7	37.8
NSi	2.5	4.5	13.1	15.2	23.8	52.9
SD	15.1	21.4	18.4	3.7	1.6	39.9
SDS	1.9	6.3	16.7	17.2	16.3	41.6
SNS	10.0	11.8	21.9	7.0	6.3	43.0
2005						
DeSUS	4.8	11.5	26.0	7.1	2.1	45.5
LDS	15.0	18.3	16.5	3.5	1.8	44.9
NSi	1.7	6.2	11.9	13.5	19.9	46.8
SD	12.6	15.7	18.8	5.4	1.4	46.1
SDS	0.9	3.1	17.7	16.8	15.4	46.1
SNS	3.8	6.8	24.1	9.6	6.4	49.3

	extreme left*	left*	centre*	right*	extreme right*	Do not know/ no answer
2009						
DeSUS	9.0	14.4	33.3	4.8	1.9	36.6
LDS	21.5	20.4	17.4	3.2	2.1	32.4
NSi	5.3	6.8	13.5	14.7	23.0	49.3
SD	19.4	19.7	18.8	4.3	2.6	35.2
SDS	3.0	5.1	19.7	19.2	16.7	36.3
SNS	5.2	7.4	32.2	9.0	9.7	36.5
2012						
DeSUS	4.2	8.8	39.7	4.5	2.5	40.3
NSi	2.0	4.5	14.1	10.8	26.8	41.8
SD	18.6	23.6	14.8	3.7	1.4	37.9
SDS	1.8	1.9	15.3	16.0	27.1	37.9
SNS	4.7	7.4	26.7	6.1	6.7	48.4

* Position of parties was assessed on eleven-item scale from 0 to 10. Combined values of 0 and 1 are treated as 'extreme left', combined values of 2 and 3 are treated as 'left', combined values of 4, 5 and 6 are treated as 'centre', combined values of 7 and 8 are treated as 'right', and combined values of 9 and 10 are treated as 'extreme right'.

Source: Slovenian Public Opinion Polls (Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana)

Public opinion polls conducted by the Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research Centre at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana show that the cleavage concerned with developments both during World War II (Partisans vs. the Home Guard or opponents of the occupation forces vs. their collaborators) and the post-war regime has constantly been regarded by the public/voters as one of the most important conflicts, closely followed by the State–Church cleavage. Given the importance of the cleavage, the importance of a conflict between politically left- and right-oriented people also does not come as a surprise; however, it is possible to see that the conflict has intensified considerably; while in 2005 15% of respondents saw this conflict as very sharp, in 2013 this share had risen to even 40%. It seems there are at least two reasons for this development: a) after Janez Drnovšek there has not been any political leader able to act as a link in the metric centre of the parties (Fink-Hafner 2012:

203); and b) the newer bipolarity in the economic dimension (social democratic vs. neoliberal policies) has been overlapping with the traditionally strong libertarian–authoritarian cleavage (Fink-Hafner 2012: 208).

Governments in Slovenia

Given the PR electoral system, it is no surprise that all governments in Slovenia have entailed coalitions of several parties.

Table 2: Governments in Slovenia (1990–2020)

Prime Minister	Parties in Governments	Start – End of Governments	Ideological Characteristics of Governments (Perception of Parties by the Public)	Characteristics of Governments in Relation to the Main Cleavage
Alojz Peterle	SKD, SKZ, ZS, SDSS, SDZ, LS	16.5.1990 – 14.5.1992	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Janez Drnovšek	LDS, SDSS, ZS, SSS, DS	14.5.1992 – 25.1.1993	homogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Janez Drnovšek	LDS, SKD, ZLSD, SDSS	25.1.1993 – 29.3.1994	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Janez Drnovšek	LDS (+ Z-ESS, DS, SSS)*, SKD, ZLSD	29.3.1994 – 31.1.1996	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Janez Drnovšek	LDS (+ Z-ESS, DS, SSS)*, SKD	31.1.1996 – 27.2.1997	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Janez Drnovšek	LDS, SLS, DeSUS	27.2.1997 – 7.6.2000	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Andrej Bajuk	SLS + SKD, SDS	7.6.2000 – 30.11.2000	homogeneous	
Janez Drnovšek	LDS, ZLSD, SLS + SKD, DeSUS, SMS	30.11.2000 – 19.12.2002	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Anton Rop	LDS, ZLSD, SLS + SKD, DeSUS, SMS	19.12.2002 – 4.4.2004	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Anton Rop	LDS, ZLSD, DeSUS, SMS	4.4.2004 – 3.12.2004	homogeneous	homogeneous
Janez Janša	SDS, NSi, SLS, DeSUS	3.12.2004 – 21.11.2008	homogeneous	homogeneous
Borut Pahor	SD, Zares, LDS, DeSUS	21.11.2008 – 9.5.2011	homogeneous	homogeneous
Borut Pahor	SD, Zares, LDS	9.5.2011 – 27.6.2011	homogeneous	homogeneous
Borut Pahor	SD, LDS	27.6.2011 – 10.2.2012	homogeneous	homogeneous
Janez Janša	SDS, NSi, SLS, DeSUS, DL	10.2.2012 – 23.1.2013	homogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Janez Janša	SDS, NSi, SLS, DeSUS	23 1.2013 – 20.3.2013	homogeneous	homogeneous

Alenka Bratušek	PS (ZaAB), DeSUS, DL, SD	20.3.2013 – 18.9.2014	homogeneous	homogeneous
Miro Cerar	SMC, SD, DeSUS	18.9.2014 – 13.9.2018	homogeneous	homogeneous
Marjan Šarec	LMŠ, SD, SMC, SAB, DeSUS	13.9.2018 – 13.3.2020	homogeneous	homogeneous
Janez Janša	SDS, SMC, NSi, DeSUS	13.3.2020–	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous

Source: Krašovec – Krpič (2019a: 237) and own analysis of authors

Abbreviations of party names: SKD = Slovenski krščanski demokrati/Slovene Christian Democrats; SLS (SKZ) = Slovenska ljudska stranka/Slovene People's Party; SLS + SKD = Slovenska ljudska stranka in Slovenski krščanski demokrati/ Slovene People's Party+Slovene Christian Democrats (parties merged in April 2000, but several months later the party changed its name to SLS) ZS = Zeleni Slovenije/Greens of Slovenia; SDZ = Slovenska demokratična zveza/Slovene Democratic Union; LS = Liberalna stranka/Liberal Party; DS = Demokratična stranka/Democratic Party; SSS = Socialistična stranka Slovenije/Socialist Party of Slovenia; LDS = Liberalno demokratska stranka/Liberal Democratic Party, since 1994 Liberal Democracy of Slovenia; SDS(S) = Socialdemokratska stranka Slovenije/Social Democratic Party of Slovenia, since 2003 Slovenian Democratic Party; Z-ESS = Zeleni – Ekološko-socialna stranka/Greens – Ecological-Social Party; DeSUS = Demokratična stranka upokojencev Slovenije/Democratic Party of Retired Persons of Slovenia; ZL(SD) = Združena lista (socialnih demokratov)/United List (of Social Democrats), since 2005 Socialni demokrati/Social Democrats (SD); SMS = Stranka mladih Slovenije/Youth Party of Slovenia; NSi = Nova Slovenija/New Slovenia; Zares – Nova politika/For Real – New Politics; DL = Državljanska lista/ Citizens' List; PS = Pozitivna Slovenija/Positive Slovenia; ZaAB = Zavezništvo Alenke Bratušek/Alliance of Alenka Bratušek, later Party of Alenka Bratušek (SAB); SMC = Stranka Mira Cerarja/Party of Miro Cerar, since 2015 Party of Modern Centre; LMŠ = Lista Marjana Šarca/List of Marjan Šarec

Governments that concluded their term due to regular elections are shown in bold.

* In March 1994, LDS merged with Z-ESS and parts of DS and SSS.

Ideologically speaking, one can talk about two patterns of coalition formation: ideologically mixed or homogenous (Zajc 2009; Krašovec – Krpič 2019b). The first type of coalition occurred under PM Drnovšek and the LDS-leadership from 1992 to 2004. After the 1992 elections, PM Drnovšek formed an ideologically heterogeneous coalition of centre-left and centre-right parties (namely, the old (transformed) and newly established parties) for two reasons. First, he aimed to overcome the well-known ideological bipolarisation in Slovenia already observable in the pre-war period (Zajc 2009; Fink-Hafner 2012). Second, he included a newly established centre-right oriented party (SKD) in his second government to ensure its greater legitimacy abroad (Prunk 2006: 253). Further, the very small and also newly established SDS was only included in the coalition because the SKD needed an excuse for its voters as to why it had cooperated with the transformed parties (Krašovec – Krpič 2019b). Later, Drnovšek followed the pattern of ideologically mixed governments, also because the opposition then remained ideologically diverse as well, and he could frequently rely on *de facto* support from the opposition.

Since the 2004 elections, the governmental coalitions were much more ideologically homogenous and alternation between ideologically more coherent

coalitions (centre-left or centre-right) has become the rule, and this development has probably also been a result of the more bipolar structure of Slovenian politics, that is, instead of a three-polar structure, like it used to be after the mid-1990s (Fink-Hafner 2012; Krašovec – Krpič 2019b).

Three more points must be made while considering the ideological characteristics of governments in Slovenia. First, the Demos coalition is generally described as a homogeneous one. This is mostly because the newly established parties formed it, but Demos was indeed ideologically very heterogeneous, similar to several other broad coalitions, new movement parties or anti-communist umbrella organisations in CEE countries at the start of the democratic transition (Ágh 1998; Prunk 1992, 2012; Zajc 2004). Still, Demos cannot be simply classified as an ideologically heterogeneous coalition. It is more appropriate to describe it as a pro-independence/transitional coalition where the newly established parties formally joined forces to accelerate the democratic transition and the process of gaining independence (Krašovec –Krpič 2019b). Second, it is obvious that DeSUS holds the greatest coalition potential, but it is largely seen as an interest-group or a single-issue party. What is important is that over time, the party's position in the formation of governments has changed from a supplementary role to a more decisive one in forming both centre-left and centre-right coalitions (Krašovec – Krpič 2019b: 490), despite the public/voters having mainly evaluated it as a centre-left party. Third, in terms of ideological properties of governments, one cannot escape a certain level of simplification, e.g. governments led by Janša (2004–2008 and 2012–2013) are characterised as ideological homogeneous since only the quite small centre-left DeSUS participated in those governments.

If we try to link the findings concerning the ideological properties of Slovenian governments and cleavage structure with their duration/stability, it is hard to detect any obvious connection between these two characteristics since all Slovenian governments, whether ideologically mixed or homogenous, except for Janša's first government, experienced such internal turmoil that they were unable to complete the normal 4-year legislative period. However, while in the 1990s ideologically mixed and unstable governments operated until the new regular elections, recently under more ideologically homogeneous (centre-left) governments early elections were held (e.g. governments led by Pahor, Bratušek and Cerar).

Cleavages in Montenegro

The decisive triumph of the League of Communists of Montenegro at the first democratic election held in December 1990 marked the start of the long reign of its renamed successor – the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS). Today, Montenegro remains the only post-socialist country in Europe to be ruled by

the same party since the introduction of political pluralism. This unmatched government stability even during remarkably turbulent times requires a deeper analysis of the role played by cleavages in government formation. While the three-decades-long dominance of a single party can only be explained by a range of social factors, a consensus has emerged in the literature that successful monopolisation of the statehood/nationhood issue, around which the dominant cleavage has emerged, represents a *necessary* condition for the longevity of the DPS (see Bieber 2013; Džankić 2013; Vuković 2015; Komar – Živković 2016).

Whereas Slovenia is recognised as an early 'regional success', the Montenegrin transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system was neither short nor smooth. The incapacity of former communist elites to resolve important political and economic issues has diverted society towards the constant production of enemies defined in ethnic terms and successfully impeded the development of one of the most defining characteristics of democratic regimes – ideology-based linkages between the citizens and the parties (Kitschelt 2000). If one relies on Lipset – Rokkan (1967) to classify the emergence of the dominant cleavage in Montenegro, it would most reasonably be seen, in a wider sense, as the centre–periphery cleavage. Namely, although designations of "centre" and "periphery" have changed depending on the state formation at hand, the issues of self-determination, nation-building and reaction to the intense cultural standardisation of ethnically distinct groups are essential for understanding Montenegrin politics over the last 30 years.

While Montenegro represents a classical example of a predominant party system in Sartori's (2005) classification, the landscape of the party space has varied over time. Without significant changes to the electoral system, the Montenegrin multiparty system has shifted from being extremely fragmented to extremely polarised, and back (see Vuković – Batrićević 2020). These shifts, however, appear to have nothing to do with ideological diversification of the political space as ideology remains a poor predictor of the behaviour of both parties and voters. In simple terms, one can hardly find a single example of a successful coalition that may be considered principled from an ideological standpoint. Instead, Montenegro's long transition has been marked by patterns of political competition that crystallised voter alignment (Bartolini – Mair 2007) in reference to the historical dilemma of whether Montenegrins constitute a distinct nation and have the right to decide the faith of their own state. In 1918, the overwhelming consensus among people in Montenegro to enter a shared South Slavic state was overshadowed by a dispute over the manner in which the unification should be carried out. Contrary to the wishes of the Montenegrin dynasty in exile, which sought to unite with other constituent nations on an equal footing, the proponents of unconditional unification with Serbia held

an illegitimate Podgorica Assembly whose main decisions were to abolish the Montenegrin state and assimilate its people[6].

The Montenegrin transition to a democracy started with an intra-elite coup ("anti-bureaucratic revolution") in 1989 that intended to secure the continuation of Communist Party rule with strong nationalist overtones (Darmanović 2003). The new elite replaced ideology as the main pillar of the ruling party with the mere desire for political survival and obscured the lack of policy solutions by adhering to the ethno-religious mobilisation[7] that had emerged across region (Džankić 2013). Running on aggressive stance against ethnic minorities (Albanians, Bosniaks, Muslims), the DPS won an absolute majority of seats in all three parliamentary elections between 1990 and 1996. During this period, Montenegrin cabinets essentially functioned as one-party governments[8], thereby making the opposition the more competitive side of the party system. The first attempt to create a coalition across the national divide came in 1996 when the pro-Montenegrin Liberal Alliance of Montenegro (LAM) and pro-Serbian national-conservative People's Party (PP) decided to 'freeze their programmatic differences' and attempt to inflict the first electoral defeat on the DPS. However, despite the relationship between parties being decent, the cooperation failed to produce the increase in electoral support needed to overthrow the DPS (Goati 2013).

To the extent ideology was at all relevant to voters unused to a 'market of ideas', DPS could have been classified as the centre-left (social-democratic) party. The ruling party's thin ideological content favoured private over state ownership, despite strong references to social redistribution in favour of the most vulnerable. On the opposition side, the conservative PP and liberal LAM were significantly more reserved towards 'big government'. Notwithstanding the principal adherence to democratisation and a market-based economy, each party generally mobilised its voters along identity lines (Darmanović 2007: 85–88). The desire to maintain the support of the Orthodox majority required DPS to leave the politically sensitive national question unresolved and embrace a "policy of ambiguity" under which Montenegrins existed as a "national homo duplex" (Darmanović 1992; Morisson 2009). In a similar fashion, PP did not

6 The Assembly ended with the vice-president's famous remark: "I urge you, gentleman, to set aside the history of Montenegro. Its political history, however, is divided in two parts: until yesterday, and since yesterday. We are no longer Montenegrins, but Serbs" (Popović 2011: 145).

7 Despite adopting nationalist rhetoric from Belgrade, DPS opted for proportional representation as the mode for the multiparty election, with a medium electoral threshold (3%–4%). This quite inclusive electoral formula remains the most constant feature of the Montenegrin electoral system to date. Insistence on proportional representation is clearly rooted in the specific demographic composition of Montenegro and the country's ethnically heterogeneous structure (Pavićević et al. 2007).

8 Although DPS created a wider "government of national unity" during wartime (1993–1996) with three opposition parties (LAM, SDP, PP), the overwhelming domination of DPS made this coalition function effectively as a one-party cabinet (Goati – Darmanović, 2015).

negate the existence of the Montenegrin nation, while strongly advocating for the development of a "Serbian consciousness". The third largest party in the Montenegrin parliament at the time, LAM, was a truly liberal party advocating a liberal democracy, a free market and respect for the human rights of all citizens, regardless of their ethnic and religious background. However, together with the Social-democratic Party (SDP), the party was best known for its fierce support for the independent Montenegrin state (Goati – Darmanović 2015) as it believed the 'third Yugoslavia' was nothing more than a 'Greater Serbia' with extended sovereignty over Montenegro.

The defining moment in development of the Montenegrin party system was the 1997 party split that occurred in the DPS. An open conflict escalated during the presidential election between the party's president and the conservative Milošević-loyalist Momir Bulatović and the "pro-Western reformist" vice-president Milo Đukanović. These, arguably, the first truly competitive elections, marked the beginning of a short period in which the existing ethno-religious cleavage was overshadowed by the divide over the question of support for the regime of Slobodan Milošević[9] (Džankić 2013). Once a faction loyal to Belgrade had formed the Socialist People's Party (SPP), political unity within the Orthodox population was a matter of the past. This divide, however, was functional in nature as the initial clash between Belgrade and Podgorica arose from the economic consequences of the international sanctions and later intensified amidst the growing debate on Montenegrin independence (Vuković 2015). A reformist coalition brought together DPS, SDP, LAM and PP, and steered the DPS in the direction of economic and political reforms (Beiber 2013). The increasingly dysfunctional state union (culminating in 1999 in the Kosovo war), disadvantageous economic position of Montenegro, distinctive transnational priorities as well as the lack of recognition of cultural/identity specificities started to force the response of 'peripheral' Montenegro to the pressures of the centralising machinery of Belgrade[10].

However, it was only after the fall of Milošević (2000) that a window of opportunity opened for a full resurfacing of the ethnic cleavage between groups holding a distinct understanding of Montenegrin national identity (Darmanović 2006: 91–94). The newly emerged conflict over statehood conditioned the restructuring of the entire system of party alignments (Lipset – Rokkan 1967: 41). The shift in paradigm from democratisation to statehood/nationhood made PP

9 Interestingly, unlike in other ex-Yugoslav republics, explicitly anti-communist parties were less prominent in Montenegro. While some parties (LAM and SDP) were critical of DPS as a successor to the League of Communists, this attitude was not directed at former communist elites. The most prominent anti-communist stance was held by the national-conservative PP (Beiber 2013).

10 The freshly elected Montenegrin elites in 1998 were openly belittled by the selection of Momir Bulatović, loser of the presidential election, as the prime minister of the Federal Government. Continued marginalisation within the federal structure fuelled secessionist tendencies in Montenegro and legitimised the pursuit of statehood/nationhood by the otherwise ambivalent DPS.

leave the government and join the freshly formed unionist camp with SPP and the Serbian People's Party (SNS). On the other side, DPS solidified its coalition with the pro-independence SDP and secured 'outside' support from LAM[11]. The restructuring of political forces led Pavlović (2003:94) to conclude that the political atmosphere after 2000 "greatly resembled that of 1918 when the issue of unification of Montenegro with Serbia was a hot political topic". In 2001, DPS officially declared it would pursue a renewal of Montenegro's independence, demanding a reconstruction of the meaning of "Montenegrin" and "Serb" categories as distinct and intrinsically tied to independence and unionist camps, respectively (Džankić 2013).

For an entire decade (1996–2006) the patterns of political competition in Montenegro closely resembled a two-party system. Party lists organised around DPS and SPP managed to marginalise other political actors and win 93% of the seats in 1998 and 92% in 2002. Still, during this period the vast majority of governments were extensively large and involved more political parties than necessary in order to build a wider consensus and provide stability in the face of the upcoming referendum on independence. Nonetheless, despite the relatively wide and heterogeneous nature of governments an invitation to join in the government was never issued to parties which had rejected the idea of Montenegrin independence.

Post-referendum Montenegro

Regardless of the narrow margin (just 0.5% above the required threshold) in the 2006 independence vote, many assumed that once the statehood issue had been "taken of the table", the socio-economic cleavage would emerge (Goati 2008) and parties would have to "adapt to new circumstances after the resolution of the statehood issue" (Džankić 2013: 415). Yet, the short-sightedness of this presumption became apparent when DPS achieved landslide victories in the three elections following the referendum (2006, 2009, and 2012). Electoral wins even in the face of a significant worsening of the economic conditions would hardly be explainable had the socio-economic cleavage emerged as a substitute for the ethnic one. Instead, 14 years since the statehood issue has been formally resolved, the main political parties continue to legitimise their political decisions with strong reference to pre-referendum stances.

The ruling party, DPS, takes on the role of the 'protector' of Montenegrin sovereignty and actively engages in creating unambiguous nation-building policies like the adoption of new state symbols, the proclamation of Montenegrin as the country's official language, as well as the recent attempt to re-establish

11 At the 2001 elections a DPS-led coalition won, but did not secure an absolute majority of seats. The coalition was then supported by LAM, which rejected the offer to officially enter the coalition. This remains the sole example of a 'minority government' in Montenegrin politics (Goati – Darmanović 2015).

the Montenegrin Orthodox Church (Vuković – Batrićević, 2020). On the other hand, pro-Serbian opposition parties led by the Democratic Front (DF)[12] deny the legality of the referendum, negate the historical legitimacy of national symbols, and continue to suggest that the independent Montenegro is nothing more than an *intermezzo* between two shared states with Serbia[13]. In that sense, the persistence of the identity cleavage may be seen as a direct product of resistance to the central authority's intense nation-building by the ethnically/culturally distinct segments of populations which seek to 'preserve the traditional identity of Montenegro'. The fact that the Serbian national minority is geographically concentrated in less economically developed, more conservative and rural areas means this cleavage is further reinforced by other dimensions of conflict. The overlapping of multiple potential cleavages fosters the pro-Serbian opposition's interpretation of the cleavage as a struggle between advanced areas of the 'centre' and the backward 'periphery'.

With respect to government formation, despite the high levels of fragmentation[14] the statehood cleavage has not made the Montenegrin party system dysfunctional (Goati – Darmanović 2015). It divides parties into two blocs and fosters easier coalition-building by reducing the 'degrees of freedom' as it 'prohibits' cross-cleavage interaction and absorbs potentially cross-cutting issues. Two of the most important political issues since the last parliamentary election – the country's accession to NATO (see Banović 2016) and the attempt to change the status of the Montenegrin Orthodox Church – have also led to homogenisation around statehood/nationhood. Under the narrative of the 'prolonged referendum', both the NATO accession and the reclaiming of church properties confiscated after the 1918 Serbian annexation of Montenegro, have been viewed as another step towards securing the state's sovereignty (Pavlović 2008). The legislative coalition in support of these policies is practically indistinguishable from the former independence movement.

12 Democratic Front is not a party itself, but a permanent alliance between New Serbian Democracy (NSD) and Movement for Change (MC) that were created leading up to the 2012 parliamentary election. Following its electoral success in 2012 (22.8%), the alliance has been expanded to include other parties, most notably the Democratic People's Party (DPP).

13 The most notable negation of state symbols includes MPs from the pro-Serbian Democratic Front refusing to stand during intonation of the national anthem.

14 At the 2016 election, a total of 17 parties entered, gaining seats from 10 party lists. The Montenegrin party system experienced significant fragmentation between the 2012 and 2016 elections. After the breakup of the almost 20-year-long coalition between DPS and SDP in 2015, a faction of SDP led by its vice-president Ivan Brajović defected by creating a new party – Socialdemocrats (SD). Intra-party conflicts within SPP led to two new parties – the Democrats (DEM) and the Democratic People's Party (DPP) – while the former leader of DF parted ways with the alliance and established Demos. Soon afterwards, a faction of Demos led by its vice-president Goran Danilović left the newly established party to create a separate political organisation – United Montenegro (UCG). Finally, a number of senior officials from the pro-Montenegrin party Positive Montenegro defected to form a new political organisation in 2015 – United Reformist Action (URA) (see Stankov 2019).

Parties' ideological positions and the salience of cleavages in Montenegro – public opinion poll data

Empirical evidence supports the claim that government formation, as well as the citizen–party linkage, in contemporary Montenegro do not occur along "classic" left–right lines. The survey data allow us to compare the distance between parties and voters on a 'traditional' left–right versus identity scale (pro-Montenegrin – pro-Serbian).

Table 3: Position of political parties and voters in Montenegro along the left–right ideological and national identity spectrum (0–10)

	Left–right scale			***National identity scale***		
	Voters	*Party*	*Diff.*	*Voters*	*Party*	*Diff.*
Democratic Party of Socialists	5	7	2	2	2	0
Democratic Front	6	7	1	7	9	2
Democrats of Montenegro	5	4	1	5	5	0
United Reformist Action	3	4	1	4	4	0
Socialdemocratic Party	5	4	1	2	0	2
Socialist People's Party	5	4	1	7	8	1
Socialdemocrats	4	7	3	1	1	0
Average Deviation	4.71 0.95	5.29 1.6	1.43 0.79	4.00 2.45	4.14 3.44	0.71 0.95

Source: Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) 2016

The data clearly show there is no significant difference in ideology among the voters, who mostly concentrate in the centre-left. Although nominally social-democratic, DPS has been evaluated as being on the right due to its support for privatisation and the free market. There is almost no ideological distance between voters of the ruling DPS and the two largest opposition parties/coalitions (Democrats and Democratic Front), consistent with experts assessing DPS and DF to be perfectly ideologically congruent. On the other hand, the largest ideological distance is observed between the 18-year-long-coalition partners (DPS and SDP) that are located on opposite sides of the ideological spectrum. The biggest discrepancy between voters and the party of choice is seen in the case of SD, a defected faction of SDP. Based on expert judgements, this party is located on the right while its voters, on average, remain in the ideological positions of the former party, suggesting that the party split was not driven by ideology.

In contrast, we observe significant deviation among parties with respect to the issue of national identity. Ten years after the referendum, there was still an extremely wide gap between the parties that once led the independence movement (DPS and SDP/SD) and parties which represented the backbone of

Table 4: Governments in Montenegro (2006–2020)

Prime Minister	Parties in Governments	Start – End of Governments	Ideological Characteristics of Governments (Public Perception)	Characteristics of Governments in Relation to the Main Cleavage
Željko Šturanović*	DPS,SDP,**DUA**	22.10.2007 – 31.01.2008	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Milo Đukanović	DPS,SDP,**DUA**	31.01.2008 – 29.02.2009	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Milo Đukanović	DPS,SDP,**DUA,BS**	29.02.2009 – 23.12.2010	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Igor Lukšić	DPS,SDP,**DUA**,**BS**	23.12.2010 – 14.10.2012	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Milo Đukanović	DPS,SDP,**HGI**,**BS**	14.10.2012 – 02.06.2015	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Milo Đukanović	DPS,SDP,SD,**HGI**,**BS**	02.06.2015 – 17.02.2016	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Milo Đukanović	DPS,SD,**HGI**,**BS**	17.02.2016 – 17.06.2016	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous
Milo Đukanović**	DPS,SD,**HGI**,**BS,** DEMOS	17.06.2016 – 17.10.2016	mix/ heterogeneous	mix/ heterogeneous
Duško Marković	DPS,SD,**DUA,HGI,BS**	28.11.2016 –	mix/ heterogeneous	homogeneous

Source: Casal Bértoa, Fernando (2020): Database on WHO GOVERNS in Europe and beyond, PSGo
Abbreviations of party names: DPS = Demokratska partija socijalista/Democratic Party of Socialists; SDP = Socijaldemokratska partija/Socialdemocratic Party; SD = Socijaldemokrate/ Socialdemocrats; BS = Bošnjačka stranka/ Bosniak Party; DUA = Demokratska unija Albanaca/Democratic Union of Albanians; HGI = Hrvatska građanska inicijativa/Croatian Civic Initiative. **Ethnic parties are shown in bold**.

* Željko Šturanović resigned in 2008 due to poor health.

** The Government of Electoral Confidence formed in June 2016 was a caretaker government. The cabinet included five ministers from opposition parties or independents.

the union movement (DF and SPP). On the dimension of national identity, the average distance between voters and their respective parties is half the size as in case of left–right. Evidently, ideology continues to be a poor substitute for the cleavage that emerged around the statehood/nationhood issue since people continue pointing to nationality as the most important collective category of their self-image (83%), significantly ahead of class belonging.

Part of the explanation may lie in the uninformative nature of the policy packages offered by parties, which curtails the ability of voters to map their socio-economic preferences onto a single left–right spectrum. When parties are incentivised to compete only for support within an ethnically defined bloc (Horowitz 1993), voters are likely to hold the expectation of in-group favouritism and distrust in the universal distribution of policy benefits. Although data on the meaning of the left–right scale is lacking in the case of Montenegro, we can nonetheless deduce to what extent ideological orientation is a reliable reflection of voters' attitudes. Again, it seems that an individual's location on the

left–right spectrum is completely detached from their attitudes to economic redistribution[15] because ideological position is identical among those who strongly agree with the government's active efforts to reduce inequalities (M= 5.37), those who only partially agree (M= 5.38) and those who disagree with the idea of 'big government' (M= 5.32). Moreover, almost half (46%) the respondents who declared a strong preference for economic redistribution self-positioned themselves on the right side of the ideological spectrum (CSES 2016).

Based on survey evidence, it is hardly a surprise that conflict over statehood/nationhood has effectively side-tracked all of the 'classic' ideological differences and allowed for a significant level of ideological heterogeneity in each government since independence has been renewed. Obviously, due to being a typical case of a predominant party system, the ideological mixture is still heavily in favour of the policy preferences of the centre-right DPS[16]. Yet, despite the disproportional size of the parties that make up the governments, public displays of ideological disagreement between DPS and SDP were fairly common, especially with respect to the issue of privatising state-owned companies. Still, the majority of Montenegrin governments (see Table 4) have shown some instability, although they have been able to finish (or come close to) their full legislative terms without early elections, despite their mixed/heterogeneous character.

What enables ideological heterogeneity to not exert a negative effect on government stability in Montenegro? Put simply, when the political status of a state is contested, programmatic disputes become secondary. While most parties formally and by name have positioned themselves along the classic left–right spectrum, these labels have remained declaratory and without substance. It is, therefore the nature of the dominant cleavage that has kept left–right ideology subordinated to differences with respect to the question of identity (Beiber 2013). The fact that economic platforms and welfare policy have never been central issues of electoral campaigns has allowed for long-lasting coalitions between right, left and ethnic minority parties. Clearly, the stability of the governing coalitions in Montenegro is consistently provided by homogeneity with regard to the main cleavage. With the exception of the short-lived caretaker government in 2016, there has been no government involving parties that have rejected Montenegrin statehood and nationhood.

15 The survey item measuring preferences regarding redistribution in the 2016 Montenegrin National Election Study asks respondents to what extent they agree with the statement that "government should take active measures to reduce income inequalities".

16 Based on the database of WHO GOVERNS in Europe and beyond, PSGo (Casal Bértoa 2020), with the exception of 2016, the Marković government which included many cabinet members who, despite the public's perception, are formally independent, all other cabinets have been composed of approximately 75% DPS members.

Conclusion

Some previous research indicates that the ideological properties of governments can affect their durability whereby more ideologically heterogeneous governments tend to be less durable than homogeneous ones. In this article, we have attempted to explain differences between the two former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Montenegro with regard to the nature of government formation and especially durability/stability. We focused on the role played by cleavages and ideological properties in explaining outcomes in an institutional environment of similar PR electoral systems.

Despite several limitations, our findings give evidence that ideological homogeneity/heterogeneity has in fact had not impacted government durability in either Slovenia or Montenegro. While the ideological properties of Slovenian governments have varied over time, this variation seem to hold no consequences for government durability/stability. Regardless of their ideological properties, Slovenian governments have typically been marked by considerable instability. In contrast, Montenegrin governments have consistently been ideologically heterogeneous and yet, like in Slovenia, they may be denoted with similar levels of stability as the governments in Slovenia.

Hence, we maintain the primary reason behind the similar outcomes in terms of government stability in Slovenia and Montenegro lies not in ideological heterogeneity/homogeneity, but in the importance of cleavages and their different dimensions dominating each society. While in Slovenia, alongside the most stable traditional-modern cleavage, several others have also emerged, in Montenegro the only 'frozen' statehood/nationhood cleavage (which in Slovenia is indeed a typical historical cleavage which no longer exists, Zajc – Boh 2004: 341) continues to provide both parties and voters with a simple and reliable cue for distinguishing which represents a viable political option.

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Development Processes for Changing the Party System in Slovenia and Montenegro

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Abstract: *This paper explores differences in the party system development of two former Yugoslav republics: Slovenia and Montenegro. Despite sharing a communist institutional system, after that disintegrated Slovenia had a much faster pace of democratic consolidation and economic development than Montenegro. Similarly, the nature of the party competition and party system structure are also quite different. Using a quantitative and descriptive approach applied to the period between 1990 and 2018, we outline patterns of party competition and party system development and explore how they complement the stages of democratisation. We investigate how the comparatively faster democratisation in Slovenia is reflected in the competitive party system with a focus on the ideological divide as the chief source of electoral competition. In contrast, we look at how the prolonged transition in Montenegro is reflected in the closed party system with party competition occurring mainly along ethnic lines.*

Keywords: ***political parties, party system, democratic change, typology, Slovenia, Montenegro***

Introduction

Democratisation has captured the minds of many scholars, while much room remains to fully explore the complex processes unravelling in countries in transition. Without analysing the democratisation processes per se, we revisit this general idea by spotlighting the development of party systems across various stages of democratisation in two former Yugoslav republics: Slovenia and Montenegro (for a similar approach, see Pridham 2003; Jungerstam Mulders

2006). We focus on these two cases because they share important characteristics like a common communist institutional system and a shared past for around 70 years. Further, while the transition to a democracy was triggered by the breaking up of the common communist regime, it led to clear differences in the speed of democratisation and quality of democracy generally. In the paper, we consider significant similarities and differences between the two cases and concentrate on the question of whether these democratisation differences can be identified and linked with development of the party system. By applying this strategy, we hope to isolate the factors and conditions which correlate with effective party competition, party system development and institutionalisation.

The paper explores party system development through two themes which Fink Hafner (2005) states exert a negative impact on the success of countries' democratic transition: institutional (constitutional) and non-institutional factors (socioeconomic). Regarding the institutional setting, the paper begins by briefly considering the transformation of the 'old ruling elites' into newly formed political parties, and the fresh challenges brought to post-communist countries by the fall of communism (Nacevska 2018). Following Linz – Stepan's (1996: 16) observation that the democratic transition has been completed[1], we look at Slovenia's fast and Montenegro's long transition and show its complementarity with the structure of their party competition and development of their party systems.

Analysis of the institutional differences in rules for establishing new parties follows, especially in electoral systems and how they structure party competition. While both countries nominally conduct their elections under proportional representation rules, the Slovenian system with its unit and district division closely approximates majoritarian competition among individual candidates. Together with ideological party-based competition, the electoral system in Slovenia is complemented by more frequent changes in party elites and a more fragmented party system. We illustrate this point by providing data on party system fragmentation with the effective number of parties, and party system stability with electoral volatility rates. Here the main question is whether the stages of democratic development complement the levels of stability and fragmentation of the party system.

With regard to the second theme of Fink Hafner (2005) (socioeconomic factors), we describe how the initial, fast societal-level bargaining, a clear idea of development held by the Slovenian elites, and party competition structured along ideological lines were quite rapidly followed by a democratic system. On the other hand, the frequent changes in goals held by the elite (federal unity vs. state independence), ethnic division and competition along ethnic cleavage lines were followed by a prolonged transition and consolidation of democracy in Montenegro.

1 The transition is completed when a certain agreement has been achieved in political procedures for electing a government at indirect, free and general elections.

Moreover, we focus on differences in salient issues in the party competition, i.e. ideology and ethnicity[2].We argue these differences have been the source of the various *internal* and *external* challenges to the power of the ruling elites in these two countries. Here, the relative ethnic unity in Slovenia was followed by party competition on ideological lines, where we outline how this structure is related to *external* power challenges made to the ruling elites. These external challenges eventually led to the demise of LDS (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) in 2004. Yet, in Montenegro. ethnic heterogeneity was followed with ethnic voter-party linkages. These ethnic linkages probably explain the fairly stable patterns of electoral support that have so far meant the country's dominant party DPS (Democratic Party of Socialists) enjoys an unrivalled position. Here, the power challenges were *internal* and arose from a party split in 1997 rather than a competitive political environment. This part of the paper focuses on the question of how cleavage structures (i.e. ideological vs. ethnic) relate to the nature of the party competition and party system in general.

Creating new democracies and building nation-states – case studies of Slovenia and Montenegro

The Yugoslav federal republic government of Slovenia declared its independence on 25 June 1991, with its declaration only briefly being challenged by the Yugoslav People's Army. Slovenia thereby largely escaped the violence that marked the federation's dissolution. The Constitution that followed in December 1991 established Slovenia as a multiparty parliamentary republic. As the most developed of all the Yugoslav republics – with the most advanced economy, already well integrated into Western European markets, and ethnically the most homogenous of all republics – Slovenia's transition to a democracy was both smooth and quick. This transition was characterised by cooperation and bargaining among the emerging civil society and various new social movements, newly emerging opposition political parties, and existing political elites (Kustec – Henjak 2015). In comparison, Montenegro's almost two-decade-long transition was characterised by the transformation of the ruling elite's political goals. The change was reflected in a turn from a republic that in the early years of the breaking up of Yugoslavia had sought to be a member of a federal state with Serbia, towards an independent Montenegro. This change in political goals in the direction of independence was also followed by a change in the meaning of the notions of 'Montenegrin' and 'Serb' identity (Džankić 2013). The political shift culminated at a national referendum on independence held on

2 Relying on expert survey data, Rohrschneider – Whitefield (2009) argued that distributional issues are the most salient issue in the party competition in Slovenia. On the other hand, Vuković (2015: 127) argued that following the crises of the socialist federation "the most salient political issues in the constituent republics became those related to ethnic/national and religious identity".

21 May 2006 at which Montenegro declared its independence from Serbia and Montenegro (formerly the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) and renamed itself the Republic of Montenegro (Polity IV Country Report 2010). Here, we arrive at the first big difference between the two countries. As noted, the process of democratic development and nation-state-building was much faster in Slovenia. Regarding the former, Montenegro's independence followed some 15 years later with significant internal opposition and an identity-building process for both Montenegrins and Serbs. With quite a homogenous population, Slovenia was able to resolve its independence claim much quicker and without internal opposition to the idea.

Characteristics and typologies of the party systems in Slovenia and in Montenegro since 1990

The initial bi-polar systems in post-communist countries (communist vs. anti--communist bloc) evolved in various ways to become bi-, tri- or multi-polar systems (Fink Hafner – Krašovec 2011). This process was followed by the development and changing of patterns in party competition. Among various indicators for analysing changes in party competition patterns (Mair 2006: 65–66), the most useful for the Slovenian case is "whether the government is made up of parties of the same ideological colour or if it allows a wider variety of party ideology within the same ruling coalition" (Fink Hafner – Krašovec 2011: 8). In this regard, the greatest political conflict in Slovenia is ideological in nature, although there have been instances of cross-ideological cooperation.The Slovenian parliamentary system with proportional representation, a relatively low threshold and fairly undemanding requirements to establish a new party (except for rules on the public financing of political parties) has been relatively accessible to new parties. Despite the introduction of stricter rules in 1994, only 200 signatures along with political programme and internal party rules are still needed to set up a new party (Fink Hafner 2001).The Montenegrin system is based on proportional representation as well and has also been quite accessible to new parties (Stankov 2019). The major difference with respect to Slovenia is the primary issue over which parties compete for votes. Unlike the ideological axes of Slovenian party competition, starting in 1997 societal cleavages became axes around which political parties have competed in Montenegro. Parties rely on these cleavage divisions as they fight to represent different ethno-cultural groups, particularly groups based on structural cleavages (religion, language, culture), and recreate them as a catalyst of modern political struggles (Džankić 2013).While Slovenia was transformed into a parliamentary party system after the first multi-party elections in April 1990, Montenegro was for several years struggling to establish *a competitive* pluralist system. The first serious challenge to the power of DPS arose from a party split in 1997 that saw the creation of

DPS and SNP[3]. To reiterate, while both systems have proportional representational systems and loose rules for new parties, they differ in two key respects. First, the Slovenian system is much more competitive and experiences regular shifts in power, while after three decades DPS' domination of the Montenegrin political landscape came to an end in October 2020. Second, Slovenian parties compete along ideological lines while Montenegrin parties are still structuring their competition around ethno-structural cleavages. The following sections detail the developmental paths in these two states.

Development of the party system – Slovenia

The main characteristics of the Slovenian party system development are focused on the communism vs. anti-communist cleavage. Fink Hafner – Krašovec (2011) analysed the development process starting from the 1992 elections based on the 1991 Constitution which allowed for polarised pluralism with a tri-polar pattern of competition. The party LDS (Liberal Democracy of Slovenia) occupied the metric centre for about a decade. Like in other transition countries, after LDS enjoyed its highest electoral support in 2000 (36.21% of votes) and a possible position as the dominant party, LDS' electoral support started to decline. The party started to lose its electoral profile and became burdened by clientelism and corruption linked to its long-term position in government. In the period between 1992 and 2008, new small parliamentary parties played an important role in mitigating the population's anti-party sentiments (Fink Hafner 2012). Many things in Slovenia altered in 2008 with the arrival of the first, somewhat bigger new parliamentary party. This process continued at the 2018 elections, with the newcomers even receiving the greatest share of the votes at the 2011 and 2014 elections. Creating expectations that a balance between responsibility and responsiveness[4] would be restored, the new party system has so far been characterised by either partial or full turnover since some or most new parties have been replaced by newer ones (Haughton – Deegan Krause 2015). This process further raises concerns about instability of the party system itself (Cabada – Tomšič 2016: 44). While analysing the idiosyncrasies of the Slovenian party system's development, Fink Hafner (2006) argued the party system incrementally developed as a "lack of any clear-cut ideological shifts or electoral engineering, as well as a combination of ideological polarisation with broad governmental coalition-building with the same party in the centre was taking

3 The Socialist People's Party

4 Responsibility is defined as the decisions of political parties and leaders that take account of the long-term needs of their people and countries, and the claims of audiences other than the national electoral audience. We can talk about responsiveness when political decisions sympathetically respond to the short-term demands of voters, public opinion, interest groups, and the media (Bardi et al. 2014: 237).

place for most of the 1990–2004 period, which ended with the 2004 – centre--right electoral victory" (Fink-Hafner 2006; Ramet 2006; cited in Hlousek 2014).

According to Kustec and Henjak (2015), in 1992 the Slovenian Democratic Union split into two parties: the social-liberal wing became the Democratic Party while the conservative faction established the National Democratic Party. A third group, dissatisfied with either option, joined the Social Democratic Party (SDSS, later simplified to SDS), which suffered a clear defeat at the 1992 elections and was barely able to enter the Parliament. Nevertheless, it formed a coalition with the winning Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (the central player in the Slovenian political space) and even became a member of the governing coalition (Kustec – Henjak 2015). Later on, it became the dominant party of the centre-right under the name Slovenian Democratic Party. In 2004, the electoral loss of LDS was a milestone amid further changes to the Slovenian party system, particularly in dominant pattern of party competition. The 2004 shift towards moderate pluralism brought about bi-polar party competition and the alternation of centre-right and centre-left governments. Legislative elections in October 2004 reversed this trend, with SDS (Social Democratic Party of Slovenia), a right-wing populist party led by Janez Janša, gaining a narrow victory over LDS. SDS took control of the government, in a coalition with NSi (New Slovenia – Christian Democrats as a socially conservative party), SLS (the Slovenian People's Party as a conservative party), and DeSUS (the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia – mostly centre-oriented with a Pro-European ideology). However, the four biggest parties attract around three-quarters of all votes (74% at the last elections in 2008), so small parties are still needed to create government coalitions (Fink Hafner – Krašovec 2011). Despite the relative openness of Slovenia's party system, only a small number of new parties entered the Slovenian Parliament in the first two decades. This trend started to change at the 2008 parliamentary elections, fostered by the rapid decline of LDS, the strengthening of SD as the temporarily strongest party on the left, and the entry of a new parliamentary party that splintered off from LDS (Kustec – Henjak 2015). The processes that ensure an open party competition system (Mair 2006), after the bipolarity visible since 2004, remained malleable and were generally a flexible addition to the established party competition.

Different parties emerged upon the transformation of the League of Communists of Slovenia[5]. At the 2011 and 2014 elections, the party system's insta-

5 Such as the United List of Social Democrats in 1993 and Social Democrats in 2005; the League of Socialist Youth (later the Liberal Democracy of Slovenia); the Socialist League of the Working People (later the Socialist Alliance); the Social Democratic League (later the Social Democratic Party of Slovenia). Simultaneously, the opposition to the old regime, emerging from society, first called the Alliance of Intellectuals and later renamed the Slovenian Democratic Alliance/Union, was established at the end of the 1980s. It included social groups with specific issues at heart, such as religious groups (Slovenian Christian Democrats; Christian Socialists), peasants (the Slovenian Peasant Party – People's Party, later renamed the Slovenian People's Party), pensioners (the Democratic Party of Pensioners), regional parties

bility reached new heights, with the once-dominant LDS almost completely disappearing from the scene, being supplanted on the broad left first by SD, then by Positive Slovenia (a centre-left political party) and, finally, by the Miro Cerar's Party, later renamed the Modern Centre Party (centre party – social liberalism) (Kustec – Henjak 2015). At the 2018 elections, LMŠ (the List of Marjan Šarec, a centre-right party) entered the Parliament. Except for Zares and the (United) Left, all of these parties were strongly reliant on their party leader (Malčič – Krašovec 2019). Here, Cerar represented the high point of the Slovenian electorate's search for a properly behaving political leader as he claimed to "transcend traditional political and ideological divisions and brought new standards of political culture" (Cabada – Tomšič 2016: 42).

Generally, Slovenia may be defined as having undergone two stages of development: a) the first stage is before full EU membership; and b) the other stage is after full EU membership. In stage one, there were no significant problems in the consolidation of democracy, no significant EU-related cleavages in the national party arena and no direct EU-political pressures on the national party competition (Fink-Hafner 2006). Krašovec, Lajh and Kustec Lipicer (2006) point out the »asymmetrical« Europeanisation effect and changes in parties' organisational structures. The new stage of membership opened up new space for Europe to impact the national party system format and thus EU issues became the main nationally-specific domestic ideological cleavage that triggered certain party struggles (Fink-Hafner 2006).

Development of the party system – Montenegro

Post-communist parliamentary life began back in 1990 with general parliamentary (and presidential) elections held to determine the new course of politics in Montenegro. Here, the League of Communists of Montenegro, later transformed to the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) won an absolute majority in both votes and shares of seats (56.18% and 83/125 seats). This election laid out the path for the uninterrupted electoral domination of DPS that continued for 30 years until the election in October 2020.

However, this does not mean the DPS' power structure was not challenged in this 30-year period. In the first period of transition from 1990 to 1997 (Darmanović 2007), Montenegro (as part of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia) was considered to be an authoritarian regime. The regime's nature was reflected in frequent alterations to the electoral rules between elections, most likely as a strategy to consolidate power under the threat of electoral loss. Still,

(e.g. the Alliance of Haloze, Alliance for Primorska, Party of Slovenian Štajerska) and ethnic interests (e.g. the Alliance of Roma, Communita Italiana) (Kustec – Henjak 2015). The DEMOS coalition was created by an agreement between the Slovenian Democratic Union, the Social Democrat Alliance of Slovenia, the Slovene Christian Democrats, the Peasant Alliance, and the Greens of Slovenia.

considerable democratisation and pluralism arose from the split within the party rather than from the external pressure of other political subjects. Similarly to how Darmanović (2007) describes the 1990–1997 period as the first period of transition, we posit that this is the first period of party system development, characterised by the DPS' dominant position and the lack of any sort of competitive constraints on its political domination.

Džankić (2013) states that 1997 is a crucial critical juncture for determining the country's political course and is the first electoral cycle where serious pluralistic competition can be observed. This critical juncture was opened by revisiting the decision that followed the 1990 general election to remain in a federal state with Serbia. This decision was probably based on the expectation that the communist system which had disproportionally benefited Montenegro *vis-à-vis* other Yugoslav republics would continue to do so (see Roberts 2007). Some authors argue that precisely the failure to secure such a privileged position in the subsequent years is what inspired the 1997 turn from Milosevic and his regime in Belgrade (Džankić 2013; Vuković – Milačić 2016). This turn ultimately resulted in a party split of DPS into the opponents and proponents of the regime in Belgrade. While the initial point of the division is said to be about political and economic hardship (Vuković – Milačić 2016), the division became salient and shaped the political landscape once it was structured along the Serb-Montenegrin identity divide (Džankić 2013). This is what Džankić (2013) calls the ethno-structural cleavage in Montenegrin politics, namely, the fact that the overriding political conflict is organised along the divide between the Montenegrins and the Serbs[6].

In the mentioned context of 1997, half the DPS supported the turn to independence under the leadership of Milo Đukanović, while the other part split and created the Socialist People's Party (SNP) led by Momir Bulatović. These events mark the first real challenge to the power of the communist political infrastructure inherited by DPS and the beginning of pluralistic competition based on ethnic cleavages. As noted, the impulse towards pluralism arose from disagreement within DPS and not from an external political subject. The direct political confrontation that followed was extremely close, with Đukanović (DPS) winning the 1997 presidential election over Bulatović (SNP) by a mere 5,488 votes in total (50.8% vs. 49.2%).

This slight electoral advantage may be directly linked to the opening of the party system. Further, the party system's opening and the true introduction of pluralism is reflected in the overall democratisation of Montenegro and recognised as this is the first year in which the Polity IV index considers Montenegro

6 Contemporary political conflict in Montenegro is structured as an ethnic identity cleavage, but cannot be separated from the statehood issue. The statehood issue saw the culmination of the redefinition of Serb and Montenegrin identity and remains at the core of what it means to be a Serb or a Montenegrin in Montenegro.

to be fairly democratic rather than an authoritarian political system. To reiterate, we can look at 1997 as the end of the first period of the transition (Darmanović 2007) and as the finalisation of the transformation from a one-party system to political pluralism.

The events in 1997 represent a critical juncture in the party system's development, which we argue effectively came to an end in 2002. We posit that the 1997–2002 period is the second stage in the development of the Montenegrin party system, denoted by cleavage-based competition but unstable political partnerships. As mentioned, one part of the critical juncture entailed the formation of political pluralism, while another feature was the process of structuring coalition potential. Here, DPS' struggles to form lasting political partnerships are well illustrated by the 2001 parliamentary elections. For the first and only time, Montenegro was ruled by a minority government as DPS secured just 42% of the vote and 36/77 seats in parliament. Initially, part of the government, the People's Party, left the coalition as DPS was continuing to push for independence; however, the Liberal Alliance provided a parliamentary majority without entering the government so as to enable the formation of a minority government. The Liberal Alliance's support was made conditional on DPS guaranteeing a new referendum on independence within 1 year. When these political guarantees were not honoured, the Liberal Alliance withdrew its support and snap elections were held in 2002, giving enough time for DPS to consolidate its power. The coalition which formed in 2002 shaped the course of Montenegrin politics for over a decade and marks the third stage of the party system's development (2002–2012). In this period, political issues were still dominated by the cleavage division, but the coalition potential is clearly delineated. DPS has found its political allies in minority parties (Albanian, later Bosniak and Croatian) and the smaller Social Democratic Party of Montenegro (SDP).

The fourth stage in the development may be characterised as certain political processes that failed to have a long-lasting impact on Montenegrin party politics. We are primarily referring to the wave of "new" parties emerging (largely from party splits) between the 2012 and 2016 parliamentary elections that attempted to alter the established patterns of competition. Most notably, new political parties such as Positive Montenegro or Democratic Montenegro tried to shift the focus of the political contest away from ethnic cleavage issues and towards economic issues and sustainable development However, while most 'new' parties were able to secure some representation at the national level, they were unable to break the ethnic division in the coalition-building, failed to challenge the position held by DPS seriously, and did not present economic issues as being politically relevant to the electorate (Stankov 2019). We label this period the fourth stage in the development of the party system in Montenegro.

Two constant features are observable in all stages of the party system's development. First, since 1997, the party competition is organised along the ethno-

-cultural cleavage with one bloc consisting of Montenegrin and minority parties (pro-independence) and the other of Serbian parties (pro-union). This division clearly structured party competition, contestation issues and coalition-building potential from 1997 up to the independence referendum held in 2006, and we argue that this division is still present and relevant today. Ethnic cleavage divisions are reflected in pro–against independence blocs, while the main point of contestation is the general ethnic identity division. While the statehood issue has obviously shaped the meaning of the identity division and the independence referendum was finalised 14 years ago, the ethnic identity division persists today. Moreover, apart from the statehood issue, ethnic contestation spills over on to policy preferences related to foreign policy alignments, language and church issues, as well as sexual minority rights. The second constant is the electoral supremacy of DPS at the national level which came to an end at the elections in October 2020, prompting some authors to characterise the Montenegrin party system as multiparty with a dominant party.

In summary, we can identify 5 stages in the party system's development: a) the transition from a one-party system to fully-fledged pluralism (1990–1997); b) cleavage competition with unstable political partnerships (1997–2002); c) structured and predictable competition, cleavage persistence and DPS domination (2002–2012); d) the emergence of several new parties and attempt to change the predictability of the party competition, issues, topics and electoral alliances (2012–2016); and e) the reconsolidation and predictability of the party competition (2016 onwards).

Similarities and differences in party system development

Looking at the two cases together, we detected only one common characteristic – the frequent entry of new political parties. However, while both cases have seen an abundance of new parties since 2008, the coalition-building potential was only altered in Slovenia. Although new parties in Montenegro, such as Positive Montenegro and Democrats, have been successful in rallying up the electoral support, they have been unable to create a significant majority for a government without DPS[7]. Further, the two cases are developing quite different party systems, which we believe reflects the general stages of democratisation of the respective polities. In this regard, the Slovenian party system is more open and has witnessed frequent alternations in power with a government coalition being built around ideological similarities. In contrast, the Montenegrin party system was a pre-dominant party system in which the coalition potential is still

7 The new election results change this conclusion slightly. DPS lost the 2020 October elections, but its coalition-building potential remains the same. Traditional opposition parties won a slight majority to enable the formation of a new government, which had not been formalised at the time of writing this paper.

structured along ethnic identity cleavage lines. In addition, although we may speak of roughly two stages in the party system development in Slovenia, namely prior to and after EU accession, we identified 5 of such stages in Montenegro. These stages depend on the level of party system institutionalisation and the dominant issues that structure the party competition. Seen together, we believe these differences in the two-party systems reflect the general state of democracy in these countries and demonstrate how democratisation stages are correlated with stages in development of the party system.

The electoral system as a factor in party system characteristics

Electoral system research often stresses that proportional systems tend to be more open to newcomer parliamentary parties than systems with majoritarian rules. Proportional systems cause less deformation of electoral results and force political parties to collaborate and create a consensual political culture more supportive of democratic developments than majoritarian rules (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009). Although there is a 'chicken and egg' problem with respect to causality, it is generally believed that proportional systems translate shares of electoral votes into representative seats more precisely than other systems (Fink Hafner – Hafner Fink 2009). The general type of electoral system at the national level (see e.g. Selb – Pituctin 2010) may influence the district-level electoral rules (e.g. by getting rid of small parties). The choice of electoral system seems to follow what may be called the 'Micro-mega rule' (Colomer 2004), by which the large prefer the small and the small prefer the large (a few large parties tend to prefer small assemblies, small district magnitudes and rules based on small quotas of votes for allocating seats, while multiple small parties tend to prefer large assemblies, large district magnitudes, and large quota).

Juberías (2004) explained "the model of transition towards democracy in the following three patterns: 1. In countries whose democratic transitions were characterized by a sudden and revolutionary breakaway with the past and which therefore held their first free elections under the supervision of the former oppositional organisations, a basically proportional representation electoral system was chosen; 2. In countries where the transition to democracy was carried out by means of negotiation, usually between the opposition forces and the more liberal sectors of the single Party – the option was a mixed electoral system, combining both proportional and majoritarian elements. Slovenia fits this pattern – elections took place under Communist apparatus control, although the democratic opposition was strong enough to impose its point of view on a significant number of aspects and to somehow scrutinize the entire process; 3. In countries where opposition was practically non-existent or very weak and disorganized until the actual moment of the elections, the organisation of these fell undisputedly into the hands of the Communist Party apparatus

and therefore they were held using the traditional majority system – which most Communist officials felt was best suited for them". Therefore, the electoral rules in post-communistic countries are extremely important.

Slovenia has a proportional electoral system. Elections are regularly held every 4 years upon the expiry of the term of the parliament, while early elections are organised when the National Assembly is dissolved during the 4-year parliamentary term. Candidates may be proposed by political parties or voters. The country is divided into 8 electoral units for elections to the National Assembly. Each unit is divided into 11 districts; accordingly, each unit returns 11 deputies (DVK 2020). The principle enshrined in law is that one candidate is elected for each electoral district. Special electoral units have been formed to serve those areas in which the Italian and Hungarian national communities reside. This principle is the voting right exercised by members of the Italian and Hungarian national communities[8] (DVK 2020).

Although it seems there are relatively many districts (11), in real life competition among political candidates occurs at a lower level and is closer to a majoritarian system.

One may say that the parliamentary threshold has remained very low, albeit it has slightly increased. Up until 2000, it was three mandates/seats or approximately 3.3%, although since 2000 under the National Assembly Elections Act the election threshold has been set at 4%. Whether a party has reached that threshold is determined by the National Electoral Commission when the seats are being apportioned. In 2000, the electoral formula was also altered on two levels: a) within an electoral unit, seats are apportioned using the Droop quota[9]; and b) at the national level, seats are apportioned using the D'Hondt method. Candidates who receive the highest number of votes as a proportion of the total number of votes in the electoral districts in which they stood are elected from the list of candidates (relative to the seats received) (DVK 2020). Voters may only opt for that candidate from the list who stood for election in their voting district. Until 2000, only parliamentary parties were entitled to this provision. After several attempts to change the rules and after Constitutional Court decisions in 1999 and 2002, all parties gaining at least 1% of votes at elections become entitled to such public subsidies (Krašovec – Haughton 2011).

We may conclude that Slovenia's electoral system and proportional representation has a relatively low threshold and fairly undemanding requirements to establish a new party. Even though the rules for the public financing of political parties pose an obstacle, in general the Slovenian system can be defined as being relatively open to new parties.

8 Each community is represented by one deputy in the National Assembly, with the members of these communities being entitled to vote for other National Assembly deputies as well.

9 On the district level, the Hare quota was used until 2000, but was later replaced by the Droop quota (Krašovec 2007).

In comparison, Montenegro's electoral system is largely a proportional representation system that has seen several iterations over the years. Changes here usually consisted of redrawing electoral units, the electoral threshold and minority representation rules between elections. Further, these changes have acted to ensure DPS enjoys electoral domination and that potential coalition partners will enter the parliament and limit the reach of the opposition bloc. Whenever the power of DPS was threatened even in the slightest, in 1992, 1997 and 2001, the system was altered to enable deinstitutionalisation of the party system and to give greater space for either minority representation (Albanian ethnic parties) or small parties (Liberal Alliance). In this way, democratisation proceeded, but firmly guided by the threat of losing power to the unionist opposition bloc.

The electoral rules were fixed after the referendum and have remained largely unchanged since 2007[10]. The referendum campaign showed that DPS was no longer in a position to single-handedly form a government. Instead, it would need to enter coalition agreements to stay in power. This coalition-building potential was structured along these ethno-structural cleavages so that parties in support of independence were a natural partner of DPS. While governmental coalitions since 2006 reflect a pro-independence bloc, the point of political contestation expanded to a broad spectrum of identity issues found in the ethno-structural divide between the Serbs and Montenegrins. Apart from the Social Democratic Party, the rest of the coalition bloc was created from Croatian, Albanian and Bosnia ethnic parties[11].

This reliance on minority parties is leading for the first time to a fixed Montenegrin parliamentary structure with 81 seats and electoral rules which enable minority parties to enter the parliament under affirmative-action rules. According to the Article 94 of the Electoral Law, minority parties are exempt from the 3% electoral threshold and are required to separately win at least 0.7% of votes for a seat allocation of up to 3 members of parliament (MP). If they do not win at least 0.7%, a minority party can still be awarded 1 MP position by winning 0.35%, a stipulation introduced specifically for the Croatian minority group. In other words, for their support of Montenegrin independence minority parties have gained almost guaranteed representation and formed every coalition government in Montenegro ever since. Further, Article 13 of the 2007 Constitution states that the languages for official use are Bosnian, Croatian and Albanian. This right is further reinforced in Article 79 that lists specific minority rights, including public use of national symbols, state-based aid for cultural and religious associations, and dual-language use in municipalities with the

10 Later changes to the electoral law include the introduction of gender quotas, but they do not change the key features of the electoral system (district magnitude size, electoral formula, and threshold, number of seats or ethnic minority representation rules).

11 According to the latest census in 2011, Croatians made up 0.97% of the population, while Albanians accounted for 4.91% and Bosniaks 8.65% (excluding an additional 3.31% of Muslims as an ethnic category).

significant presence of a minority population. With respect to our core argument, this demonstrates how the threat of losing the dominant position in the party system along with the threat of deinstitutionalisation have opened space for democratic progress and the inclusion of minority opinions and representation.

To summarise the above, the electoral systems of Slovenia and Montenegro are quite different. While they are both proportional representation systems, the Slovenian system allows preferential voting and is divided into multiple districts and electoral units. On the other hand, Montenegro has a single-unit electoral district for the entire country. In that sense, the Montenegrin system is the simplest form of proportional representation, while the Slovenian one approximates majoritarian competition on the electoral-unit level. Second, the threshold levels also vary (3% and 4%) and Montenegro has introduced many more provisions dedicated to minority party representation. While we are unable to draw causal conclusions, we note the electoral system differences made to the party system arena at least in terms of the nature of the party competition. The Slovenian preferential vote could be argued to increase the responsiveness and responsibility of officials who are elected and related to a volatile electorate and unstable party system, as shown in the previous section. The electoral system of Montenegro not only fosters ethnic minority representation, but is witness to the dominance of ethnic voter–party linkages in the entire system. With these permanent voter characteristics being in the focus of the party competition, the closed nature of the Montenegrin party system is not surprising.

Quantitative measures of the party systems – fragmentation processes and and a comparative analysis of the volatility of the case studies

Post-communist party systems are characterised by considerable fragmentation[12], high volatility as well as low trust in parties and parliaments (Lewis 2001; Jungerstam Mulders 2006; Rose 2009). The latter translates into relatively widespread anti-party sentiments (Fink Hafner 1994).

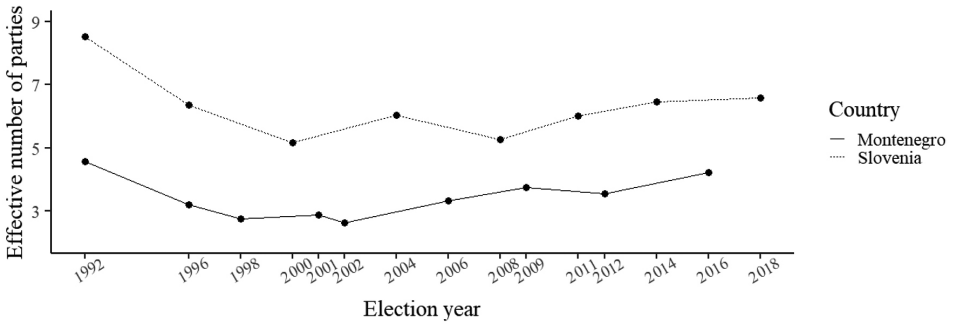
While analysing the stages of developing a democracy and the transition, we used two quantitative indicators – the index of electoral volatility and the index of the effective number of parties. Regarding the latter, the effective number of political parties shows in which ways party systems are fragmented. The fragmentation of a party system is an important indicator of a low level of institutionalisation, although causality cannot be inferred among these phenomena (Jurek 2010).

At the beginning, the Slovenian party system was "mainly bipolar" (Fink Hafner 2006), structuring the competition among centre-left parties and a clus-

12 Compared to older Western party systems.

ter of new (largely centre-right) parties. Further, it was quite fragmented – the average effective number of parties for the 1990–2004 period is 6.5 (Fink Hafner 2006), while an increase follows after 2008. The Slovenian party system shows a tendency for a progressive concentration of party competition. Looking at the entirety of the democratic competition, the effective number of parties has been continually declining from almost 9.0 in 1990. Nevertheless, Slovenia has a fragmented party system.

Figure 1: Effective number of parties by electoral year in Slovenia and Montenegro[13]



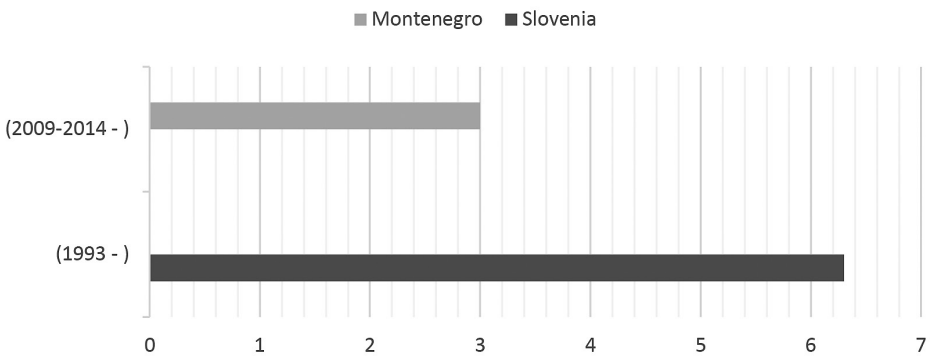
Source: Slovenia: Own calculations based on results of the National Electoral Commission (DVK 2020); Montenegro: Own calculations based on vote shares (Laakso – Taagepara 1979)

Regarding Montenegro, this paper has briefly shown that the salient political conflict is the ethno-structural cleavage between the Serbs and the Montenegrins. Reliance on this cleavage as the main source of political confrontation is perhaps what makes Montenegro "one of the most closed party systems in Europe" (Enyedi – Bertoa 2018). Here, two blocs are in competition and the crossing of ethnic cleavage lines in terms of coalition-building is very unlikely. The first bloc consists of DPS, small Montenegrin parties and ethnic minority parties, and coincides with a standard formula for government formation since 2002. On the other hand, Serbian parties and small civic parties form the second bloc. In one occurrence, the civic party Positive Montenegro entered a coalition with DPS despite having clearly promised during the election not to do so, the decision led to the party's dissolution and disappearance from the Montenegrin political scene. In the section below, we show that voters indeed perceive the party competition to be structured in such a way that limits volatility within the

13 Differences may arise if share of seats in the parliament is used instead. However, since the number of seats was changed multiple times in the time frame analysed, we decided on the absolute vote shares at the parliamentary elections.

party blocs.Looking comparatively at the average effective number of electoral (ENEP) parties in Slovenia and Montenegro, it is evident that Slovenia still has a fragmented party system while the party system in Montenegro is much more closed. The average effective number of parties is almost less than half than that in Slovenia, indicating that the differences in dominant and salient political issues (i.e. ideology vs. ethnic cleavages, respectively) have probably also been translated and reflected in the balance of power and coalition-building potential in the party system.

Figure 2: Average effective number of electoral (ENEP) parties in Slovenia and Montenegro (1990–2016)



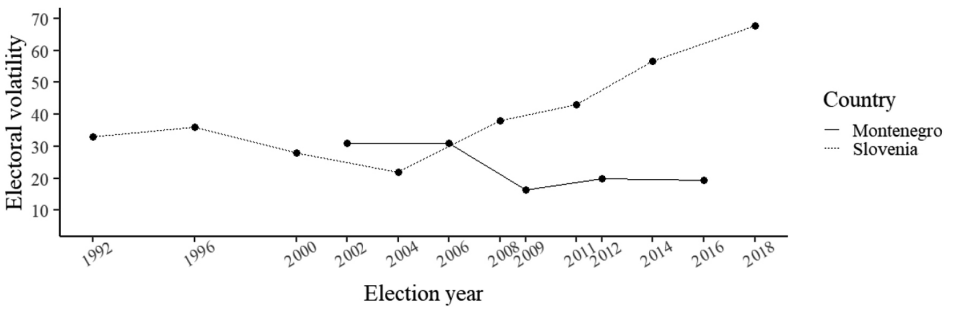
Source: Enyedi – Bertoa (2018)

With respect to the other measure of party system stability, volatility has traditionally been used as a measure of a party system's institutionalisation (Mainwaring – Torcal 2006). Considerable electoral volatility signifies a fluid political environment and thus a lower level of institutionalisation of the party system (Bielasiak 2002:198–206). A low level of electoral volatility reveals close links between parties and society, which might indicate a low level of democratic development. Understanding this linkage is critical since political parties should be viewed as a fundamental component of democracy (Jurek 2010).

In our specific cases, volatility in Slovenia remained comparatively high (above 30%) after the first elections in 1992 (Fink Hafner et al. 2017). This was mainly due to the party consolidation processes that brought about the disintegration and merging of smaller, mainly left-wing political parties. As a stronger bipolar pattern of party competition emerged, volatility declined and was at its lowest (23%) in 2004 when a coalition was formed the right-wing parties for the first-time since Slovenia's independence (Fink Hafner et al. 2017). Volatility then rose again at the 2008 elections in which new (largely left-wing) political parties were established and the level of volatility further rose to 50% in

2014, although these new parties completely failed at the subsequent elections (Kustec – Henjak 2015).

Figure 3: Volatility – parliamentary elections in Slovenia and in Montenegro[14]



Source: Slovenia: Own calculations based on results of the National Electoral Commission (DVK 2020); and Enyedi - Bertoa (2018); Montenegro: for 2001–2002 and 2002–2006 (Powell – Tucker, 2014). The values represent the mean electoral volatility for 3 electoral cycles (including 2006–2009). For 2006–2009; 2009–2012; 2012–2016 (see Kapidžić - Komar 2019).

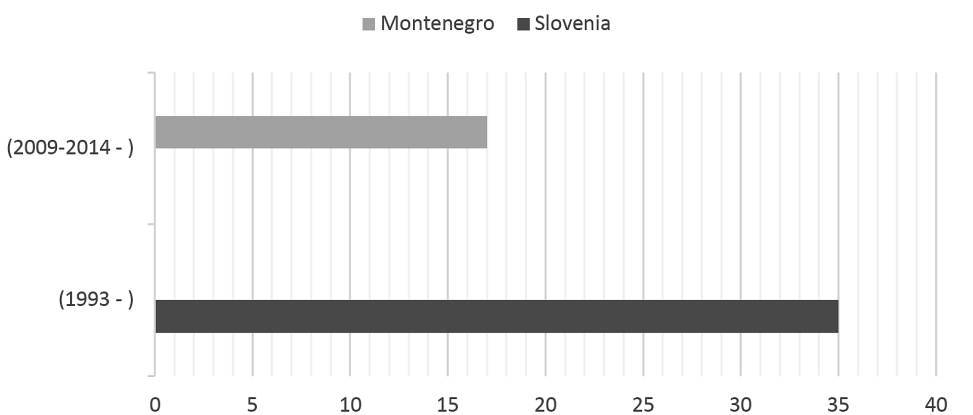
In general, volatility in *Slovenia* has risen significantly. The starkest finding is that with the end of LDS' dominance of the political scene, voters supporting the broad left side of the political spectrum shifted their support from LDS to SD, then to PS, then to SMC (Kustec – Henjak 2015) and finally to LMŠ. It is interesting that SDS managed to win the support of almost one-third of the electorate between 2004 and 2011, only to witness the demobilisation of about one-third of its voters at the 2014 elections while still retaining its status as the second-largest party in the context of the significantly lower turnout (Kustec – Henjak 2015). Evidence of cleavage-based politics reflected in patterns of electoral volatility is clearly visible in Montenegro. Electoral volatility in Montenegro has been found to be one of the lowest among post-communist societies (Tavits 2005; Powell – Tucker 2014), yet it is on the rise in the last few years[15]. However, in a recent working paper Kapidžić and Komar (2019) showed that the rising volatility rate, averaging out at 19.3%, is still on average much lower than in other Eastern European countries (Bértoa – Deegan Krause – Haughton 2017) and is primarily occurring *within bloc*. *Within-bloc volatility* (Bartolini – Mair 1990) means that voters change their choices but

14 Due to the very fragmented nature of the party system in the 1990s, it is impossible to calculate a reliable value for volatility levels. This is a consequence of many new parties forming and disappearing after one electoral cycle as well as frequent electoral coalitions between diverging party families making it hard to disentangle the actual electoral result of certain parties at specific elections.

15 Note that Powell and Tucker (2014) attribute most of the volatility in Montenegro to the emergence of new parties, a feature discussed earlier in this article.

only within their ethnically limited bloc of parties (Kapidžić – Komar 2019). In other words, even when voters are changing their electoral choice, the choice is still confined to either the pro or against independence bloc. Almost all of the volatility, 13.98% (out of 19.3%) is within-bloc (Kapidžić – Komar 2019), supporting the notion that Montenegro is the most closed party system in Eastern Europe (Enyedi – Bertoa 2018). In general, it is believed that party volatility strongly affects the elite–mass linkage and stabilisation of the party system in new democracies, as well as parliamentary recruitment and elite formation (Semenova et al. 2014). A party system is more likely to become unstable due to irregular and erratic elites than the lack of a strong political identity among voters (Tavits 2008). With a preferential vote system that fosters individual competition within the parties themselves, this pattern is relatively obvious when we consider the frequent alternations of parties and party leadership in Slovenia. At the same time, the Montenegrin system remains relatively stable in this regard. Although no causal inferences can be drawn, voter–party linkages based on stable voter features like ethnic identities limit the potential for individual vote shifts. In addition, here we are somewhat constrained in the time comparison of the electoral volatility in Slovenia and Montenegro since no reliable data could be found prior to 2006 in Montenegro[16].

Figure 4: Average electoral volatility in Slovenia and Montenegro (post-communist European democracies, 1990–2016)



Source: Enyedi – Bertoa (2018)

16 Different pre-electoral coalitions make it quite difficult to distinguish individual party performance from election to election.

Conclusion

In this special issue, our article offers a comparative approach to assessing the quality of democracy in specific areas like party system development and differences in democratisation processes in two case studies – Slovenia and Montenegro, after the breaking up of Yugoslavia.

Different *internal and external factors* in Slovenia and Montenegro are correlated with the quality of democracy in the case studies. To explain *internal factors* such as: the transformation of the 'old ruling elites', creation of 'new political parties', ideological cleavages, the fragmentation processes, volatility and electoral rules, we applied a *descriptive and quantitative approach* between 1990 and 2018, presenting the party system structure in the two case studies and the speed and stability of the democratic consolidation. Even though both countries were members of SFRY, after its disintegration Slovenia enjoyed a faster, easier and 'smoother' path on its way to establishing a democracy, a stronger economy and greater homogeneity compared to the drawn-out process of democratic consolidation, crises of identity, nationalism, involvement in war, and much slower economic development seen in Montenegro.

On the other side, there are also different *external factors* like the year of independence, joining NATO, EU-integration status and involvement in war that probably led to higher scores for Slovenia than Montenegro for the indexes of the quality of democracy (see the introduction part of this special issue).

Analysing democratic development processes, we explored the linkages between a faster and more in-depth democratic transition that is followed by effective political competition, shown by both the effective number of parties and the willingness of voters to punish or reward parties at elections. While on the one hand Slovenian politics at the start was structured along the communist–noncommunist divide, it later elaborated a system in which parties compete on actual ideological platforms, with a higher number of parties and a more fluid electorate. This competitive environment probably contributed to the faster transformation from the 'old ruling elites' and establishment of democratic practices. In comparison, the ethnic cleavage-based competition in Montenegro quickly replaced the communist–noncommunist divide in a system that has limited the speed of the democratisation process.

Moreover, the differences in terms of the democracy created and the diverging bases of political competition, ideology and ethnicity are complemented by varying strategies these systems use to rally political support. Clientelism and illicit strategies backfired in Slovenia and were followed by the alternation of power in 2000, while some might argue that in Montenegro they are precisely the mechanism that produced the dominant party system (Džankić – Keil 2017). In Slovenia, these internal developments are seen in the strengthened democracy, diffused power across several political parties, and greater resil-

ience towards global de-democratisation challenges. On the other hand, we showed that challenges to the power of DPS in Montenegro are correlated with the improved position of minority parties whose support is almost inevitably required in the government formation process. Here, ethnic bases of politics and reliance on minority support are what provides a *cordon sanitaire* against de-democratisation processes.

With special emphasis on electoral rules and party system developments, as well as the very different fragmentation and index of volatility in Slovenia in comparison with Montenegro, this article has moved one step closer to explanations stating that the party competition and party system development in the two case studies differ not only in the political contexts, but especially in the course of the stages of democratisation.

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The organisational development of interest groups in Montenegro and Slovenia: Do they contribute to more inclusive democracy?

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Abstract: *Despite the joint history of Montenegro and Slovenia as republics of the former Yugoslavia, the development of the interest groups system has been different in these countries. While in Slovenia, these groups started to develop from the 19th century, in Montenegro the interest groups system was almost non-existent in the pre-socialist period with only a few participative elements, such as the use of tribal assemblies. Socialism did not support associational life, since most of the organizations that were founded at the time were under some form of government control. As a consequence, the interest groups system in Slovenia shrank during socialist rule, while in Montenegro it remained at the same level. During the 1980s and after the collapse of the socialist regime the interest group system in Montenegro finally starts to develop, being heavily influenced by international donor and assistance programmes, while in Slovenia the system had a new opportunity to flourish. In this article we are in particularly interested in how the interest group system contributes to the quality of democracy. Although Montenegrin interest groups have been a tool of influence and democratisation primarily on behalf of the international community, their internal democracy is less sophisticated than is the case in Slovenia. The results show that the origin of the interest groups system and the distinct histories of the specific political cultures seem to be embedded in the functioning of contemporary interest groups. This in turn, determines the strength or weakness of these groups in facing the challenges of de-democratisation.*

Keywords: ***interest groups, democratisation, members, access***

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Introduction: The impact of interest groups on democracy

Interest groups represent important actors in policy making in modern democracies. They are positioned as mediators between different actors, acting as a link between citizens and the government, by bringing the interest of groups of citizens to the attention of decision makers. In some respects, interest groups can even serve as a substitute for the public in policy processes (Lundberg – Hysing 2016). Due to the transmission belt role of interest groups in policy making, some scholars have begun to stress the importance of the interest groups system for democracy. For example, the neo-Tocquevillian approach emphasizes the importance of associations for the proper functioning of democracy and democratization (Kaufman 1999) and their influence as crucial actors in truly democratic systems. Indeed, interest groups are the very essence of the democratic process (Watts 2007). Their involvement in the policy making process is particularly desirable, since they can act to enhance democracy. Having interest groups as central democratic partners in the policy making process enhances the open, transparent, and participatory character of the decision-making process. They contribute to a more reasonable process of policy-making, especially by providing information and analysis based on a multitude of different perspectives (Watts 2007: 14–21) and from their awareness of everyday experiences by being close to their members and grassroots. The advocates of participatory democracy view the participation of citizens in the political decision-making process as a main quality of state functionality and believe that the legitimacy of rules and legislation need to be assigned by citizens themselves (Jüptner et al. 2014).

The point of any democracy is that it provides citizens with a political voice, so that they 'can express their views, preferences, and interests towards political institutions and hold public officials to account' (Fraussen – Halpin 2016: 476). Interest groups are seen as an alternative to other forms of democratic legitimization where citizens can express their voice such as elections. In this way, interest groups ensure that different types of interests, beyond those represented in the national parliaments, and outside of the election period are taken into account in policy-making (Greenwood 2007; Heritier 1999). As such, interest group involvement in policy-making boosts legitimacy. Decisions that are based on prior consultation with relevant interest groups are more likely to win the approval of the public, since citizens, via interest groups, have an opportunity to express their view on the new legislation before it is adopted. The role of interest groups in the policymaking process is diverse, ranging from enhancing citizens' participation, creating a space for discussion and a forum for members to express themselves, providing representation for excluded social groups and giving a voice to the disadvantaged, to providing expertise to decision makers, advocating for better democracy and more transparent decision-making process

and holding state actors accountable (Piotrowski 2009: 170). All these activities contribute to supporting and increasing the quality of democracy.

Recently, scholars have drawn attention to the concept of "uncivil society", which describes the efforts of interest groups to challenge liberal democratic values (Glasius 2010). For "uncivil society" it is hard to talk about the contribution to the quality of democracy. The interest groups system thus needs to be understood as a system which consists of different interest groups with different values and norms, where not every contribution by an interest group to the policymaking process can be understood as automatically contributing to democracy. However, as Kopecky and Mudde state (2003: 151–152) the distinction between civil and uncivil is generally unhelpful. Furthermore, a vibrant civil society does not yet mean a "civil" civil society (Berman 1997).

If the strong and vibrant interest group system is a sign of a "healthy democracy" (Pietrzyk Reeves 2008: 80) it is an even more important sign of a successful democratisation process in post-socialist countries and a necessary precondition for democratic polity. The emergence of interest groups in post-socialist countries should thus be understood as one of the prerequisites of successful democratization. However, the contribution of the interest group system to the quality of democracy is hard to measure. Still, in general, it could be demonstrated in two ways: 1) as involvement and access to decision-makers and 2) as the internal democracy of interest groups, where members of interest groups have a clear say in internal decisions (Warleigh 2001).

Although access to the decision-makers does not yet mean influence, it is a necessary precondition (Truman 1951). When a political system offers a number of opportunity structures for the involvement of interest groups in policy making, this means that interest groups have more opportunities to express their views and positions. Still, not all groups manage to gain access to decision-makers. Based on previous research, those interest groups with more resources in terms of time, staff, information and money, such as business interest groups, are more likely to have direct access to decision-makers, which creates a bias in interest representation (Eising 2007). Consequently, these groups rely more on direct strategies where interest groups reach out to decision-makers by directly targeting policy activities at them. Interest groups that are less likely to gain direct access rely more on indirect strategies with appearances in the media and the mobilisation of citizens through protests, petitions and demonstrations (Beyers 2008). In this case there is no guarantee that the message of the interest groups will reach their lobbying targets. It may get lost on the way.

Besides the involvement of interest groups in policymaking, in order to ensure the quality of democracy, it is also important that interest groups express democratically formed opinions and actively seek the inclusion of members in internal decision-making. Membership involvement in interest group activities is important due to the skills and capital citizens acquire through active

participation in associational activities. Political and social participation in interest groups enables members to network on joint interests, preferences and needs (Mackerle Bixa et al. 2009: 244; Levin Waldman 2012: 56). Such civic participation can be understood as the "heart of democracy" (Levin Waldman 2012: 56) and as "necessary for democracy and thus for development" (Petrova 2007: 1278). The inclusion of citizens in the representative and service functions performed by interest groups strengthens political democracy and social cohesion (Dekker – Van der Broek 1998: 12; Mackerle Bixa et al. 2009: 244). Through the participation of citizens in interest group activities, citizens learn democratic decision-making (Mackerle Bixa et al. 2009: 244) and become more competent citizens (Dekker – Van der Broek 1998: 17). Active membership in interest groups has a positive effect on indexes such as the levels of social trust, political interest, political learning, political skills, the level of political activity, democratic values (Dekker – Van der Broek 1998: 33; Mackerle Bixa et al. 2009: 244; Levin Waldman 2012: 57; Sissenich 2010: 16) and on the level of tolerance (van de Donk et al. 2003: 268). These in consequence contribute to active citizenship and also help foster stronger democracy. Membership of interest groups can also be understood as a form of social and human capital, an indicator of community involvement and as necessary for "social integration, economic efficiency and democratic stability" (Newton 2001: 202). When members are actively included in the internal decisions of interest groups, the interest groups uphold democratic norms and standards and where the role of members in interest groups is important, the interest groups themselves have a democratic structure and are internally democratic (Warleigh 2011).

However, the involvement of members in interest group activities cannot be taken for granted. Interest groups which aim to have more impact on policy decisions tend to professionalise their activities and engage employed staff with the requisite time, skills and knowledge to engage in lobbying. As a result, some interest groups do not have enough time and resources to include members in their decision-making processes. Members are thereby left out of the policymaking process (Jordan – Maloney 1997, 2007; Warleigh 2001). When members and supporters are left out of policymaking activities, the interest groups' activities may not be as important for the state of democracy and good governance as we would expect them to be, since, in such cases, the interest group lacks internal democracy.

In this article, we are interested in how the interest group system in Montenegro and Slovenia contribute to the quality of democracy. These two states have differently developed systems of interest representation, even though, during their common experience of socialist rule as constituent parts of Yugoslavia, interest group representation was obstructed in both countries. Both countries are young democracies that have recently gone through the process of democratic transition, in which the interest group system plays an important role.

Our main research interest is how the development of the interest group system in each country contributed to the inclusion of interest groups in policymaking processes, and the internal democratic structure of the interest groups. To answer our research question, we will firstly compare the process of the development of the interest groups system in each country and in the empirical section analyse two characteristics of interest groups that, besides other factors, can contribute to the quality of democracy: 1) the inclusion of interest groups in policymaking and 2) the internal democracy of interest groups.

However, the characteristics and development of the interest groups system and its participation in the policymaking process can be regarded only as one limited factor contributing to the quality of democracy. As outlined in the introductory chapter of this special issue (Komar – Novak 2020) there are several factors that need to be considered when evaluating the (de)democratisation process in both Montenegro and Slovenia. Since these factors are analysed in other contributions to the special issue, we will limit our analyses only to the contribution of the interest groups system to the quality of democracy. Nevertheless, this represents a limitation to our analysis, since we will not be able to draw large conclusions. When it is only the development of the interest groups system that contributes to democracy and other factors fail to do so, then a country cannot be regarded as democratic.

The article is structured as follows: after the introductory section where we describe the contribution of interest groups to the quality of democracy, we continue by comparing the similarities and differences in the development of the interest group systems in both countries. In the empirical part, we analyse data collected as part of a Comparative Interest Group survey, which enables the comparative analysis of the involvement of interest groups with decision-makers and their internal democracy, following which we present the answers to our research question. In the concluding part, we sum up the main findings.

The development of the interest group systems in Montenegro and Slovenia

In post-socialist Central and Eastern European countries, by contrast to Western democracies, the emergence of modern interest groups and political systems was not the result of century-long processes, but rather the result of rapid and unexpected regime change in the late 20th century. The same is true for both Montenegro and Slovenia. The development of the interest group system in both countries could be divided in four different periods: pre-World War II, the Federal Yugoslav period, the period of democratic transition and the most recent period of Europeanisation. Nevertheless, the development process did not evolve in both countries in the same way. Although during the period of federal Yugoslavia, interest groups system activities were obstructed, we can still

highlight many differences in the characteristics of the interest group systems in both countries.

Table 1: Differences and similarities in the development of interest groups in Montenegro and Slovenia

Time period	Montenegro	Slovenia
Before World War II	No interest group system; society organized more around extended family linkages and tribes	Development of an interest group system with the March Bourgeois Revolution in 1848
Federal Yugoslavia	Postponed development of an interest group system until the late 1980s.	Development of the interest group system slowed down until 1974, when new associations were established. In the 1980s new social movements encourage pluralization.
Democratic transition	The first anti-government, anti-war, weak and disorganized groups were established that later died out. Further expansion of the interest groups system was possible after a surge of foreign donations aiming to democratize the country	The number of interest groups increased and very diverse interest groups were established.
Process of Europeanisation	Foreign donors started to withdraw which led to a decrease in interest groups supported by donations and the establishment of new grassroots organizations. Since assistance is now channeled through large EU donations, the largest organisations have flourished and started to act as an intermediator for smaller groups, who now receive donations from their larger peer organisations.	Interest groups started to network with similar EU organisation to acquire knowhow in their specific policy field.

The interest groups system in Slovenia started to develop quite early on and has a long tradition, although with periods of inhibited development. The breaking point for the development of associations was the March Bourgeois Revolution in 1848 that introduced freedom of association as well as the legal basis for established associations (Črnak Meglič – Vojnovič 1997: 156). In the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, interest groups played an important role in the social, political and cultural life in Slovenia (Bibič 1997: 22; Črnak Meglič – Rakar 2009: 239). The interest groups system before World War II was very vivid, diverse and comparable to that found in other European countries (Kolarič et al. 2002: 97).

Despite sharing a common recent history, in Montenegro, unlike in Slovenia, the interest group system was almost non-existent prior to the 2nd World War, at least as we would understand such a system today. Even though there were

participative elements in the early 19th century, when some of the main decisions were made by tribal assemblies consisting of selected male representatives,[2] the pre-transition political culture in Montenegro could best be described as 'subject', using the classification by Almond and Verba (1963). Being very underdeveloped and poor and having a society organized more around extended family linkages than rules and regulations, the Montenegrin system of interest articulation was dominantly personal and individualized. People tended to prefer to appeal directly to the ruler to get their interests served directly from him, rather than to organize in groups and promote group interests. Bearing in mind the size of the country, this was in fact possible. The other option for problems of a more collective nature was inter-tribal warfare. The tribal assemblies consisting of the most "notable" men articulated the interests of the tribe in question. Even though this communal level democracy was quite lively given the time in question, it was too collective to produce interest groups. Moreover, bearing in mind Montenegro's pre 2nd World War lack of development in terms of the economy, political culture and social organization, it does not come as a surprise that most interests at the time were connected to warfare and politics and articulated through political parties and movements.

After World War II, with the change in the political system and with the advent of federal Yugoslav rule, the development of the interest groups system in Slovenia was slowed down. During that period, some of the organizations died out and other came under state control. Organizations whose activities were limited to the local level or whose content did not interfere with political power continued to operate. Organizational life became limited to social and political organizations and associations that received state support (Hvalič et al. 2001: 7; Kolarič et al. 2002: 99–102). A lot changed for Slovenian interest groups with the changes made to the constitution of Yugoslavia in 1974 that introduced decentralisation and the adoption of the Act on Societies, which guaranteed citizens their constitutionally ensured freedom to associate, to carry out their interests and establish societies. During this period new, autonomous, citizens'-initiated organizations were established. The social and political changes that started before independence, beginning in the mid1980s, encouraged pluralization, initially in the area of subcultures and social movements. The first new social movement established in Slovenia was Punk at the end of the 1970s. The unsuccessful repressive measure of the state against the Punk movement opened up space for other autonomous social movements such as the peace, ecological, spiritual, subcultural and feminist movements that were established at the beginning of the 1980s (Kolarič et al. 2002: 108–109; Fink Hafner et al. 1992: 249–250).

Even though federal Yugoslav rule brought a lot of emancipatory innovations to Montenegro, the establishment of an interest groups system was not one of

2 These assemblies were called "plemenski zborovi", which directly translates as tribal assemblies.

them. The system of governance was not a major stimulant for changing the "subject" political culture of Montenegro, as defined by Almond and Verba (1963) since most of the organizations that were founded at the time were under some sort of government control. In these circumstances, Montenegro entered the era of pluralism before ever being able to develop a truly participative political culture. Nevertheless, the first official interest groups can be related to the beginning of federal rule. Even then, the culture of promoting your own interests in Montenegro relied mostly on personal connections within the Communist Party to get "things" done. The other options included government approved organisations, such as labor unions. This is why there are only a few interest groups in Montenegro that originated before 1989. The interest groups system in Montenegro started to develop in the late 1980s and after the break-up of Yugoslavia. However, there were several factors that impeded its progress: these included the unresolved statehood issue that prolonged the period of transition, the predominant party system and the previously described political culture.

With the arrival of independence in 1991, the change in the political system and the introduction of a market economy, the number of interest groups in Slovenia increased (Črnak Meglič – Rakar 2009: 237; Fink Hafner 1998: 290) and very diverse interest groups were established. In the mid-1990s, Slovenia was one of the countries with the greatest number of interest groups in Europe (Kolarič et al. 2002: 116) while Slovenian members of parliament noted the increased activity of interest groups in policymaking (Fink Hafner et al. 2015b: 77). Neocorporatism defined the opportunities for interest groups in Slovenia in important ways. As part of the Economic and Social Council, which has been established in 1994, business and labour interest were represented and had the opportunity to access decision makers directly. Additionally, a corporatist system was incorporated in legislative power in the form of an upper chamber. The National Council represents territorial and functional interests including those of trade unions and employers' organizations, as well as some professional interests (Novak – Fink-Hafner 2019a).

It took significantly longer for Montenegro to complete its transition than Slovenia. In the first independence referendum which was held in 1992, 95.4% of those who voted (on a 66% turnout), expressed their preference for continuing to live "in association with the other Yugoslav republics who wish the same" as was asked by the Referendum question. This in fact, at the time, meant only Serbia. This "attachment" to Serbia continued until the late 1990s, with the first real break happening in 1997 after a split within the ruling party between "pro-union" and "pro-independence" camps (Krašovec – Batričević 2020). Finally, the "pro-independence" faction prevailed in the referendum that took place in 2006 and during which 55% of the participants voted in favour of independence. The late democratic transition in Montenegro is significantly reflected in the structure of the interest group system. First of all, most interest groups

were established after 1997. The development of a post-socialist interest groups system in Montenegro prior to Europeanisation might be divided in two phases: a civic alternative phase and an expansion phase (Komar 2015). The majority of interest groups that were established during the civic alternative phase (1989–1997) were anti-governmental and anti-war groups that articulated the voice of the opposition. Although genuine, they were weak and disorganized and most of them ceased to exist after a time or lost their influence. The expansion phase (1997–2006) was characterized by an expansion stimulated by external factors. In particular, being concerned by the situation in the region and seeing Montenegro as a potential anti – Milosevic ally, the international donor community poured funds into civil society organisations and independent media in the late 1990s. Many grants supported the institutional development of these organisations and aimed to strengthen their organisational capacity.

Alongside the democratisation process in Slovenia, processes of Europeanisation also had an important influence on the political culture of interest groups, transforming them in more active organisations (Fink Hafner et al. 2015a). These effects started especially after 1996, when Slovenia signed an Association Agreement and submitted its application for EU membership, and have been ongoing since then (Djurović – Lajh 2020). Interest groups in Slovenia started to receive funding from the EU, although donations from foreign funds were not present to the same extent as in some other post-socialist countries. Networking with EU level umbrella groups and with interest groups from other EU member states became very important to the development of interest groups in Slovenia, to their empowerment and in terms of acquiring new resources such as information and know how (Fink Hafner 2007). During this period, interest groups also participated in the negotiation processes for accession to the EU (Fink Hafner et al. 2015b). With full membership of the European Union, the interest groups were presented with new opportunities for funding from EU projects and programmes, as well as new access points to decision-makers.

The Europeanisation process was also significant for the development of the interest group system in Montenegro. The process started after 2006 when Montenegro signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement and applied for EU membership (Djurović – Lajh 2020). This phase of the development of the interest groups system has been described as the Europeanisation phase (Komar 2015). After Montenegro became an EU candidate country, many independent foreign donors withdrew, leaving the European Commission as one of the main remaining contributors. This initiated a "clean up" among interest groups that depended on foreign funds. Smaller ones started to disappear while the large ones became much professionalized. They receive significant donations (often from EU funds) that enable them to employ professional staff and resources in their work. Many of these professionalized interest groups became an important player in the EU integration process. Even though candidate status does not en-

able Montenegro to influence EU policy making, their access to EU level interest groups and institutions is considerable. Very often they become an instrument of EU policy in Montenegro. They participate in government working groups to prepare legislation, write shadow and monitoring reports, and inform EU officials about actual Montenegrin progress in implementing the reforms that are the conditions for EU accession.

Table 2 presents the way in which the interest groups system slowly developed in both countries. While prior to 1980 in Slovenia more than 20% of today's interest groups had been established, in Montenegro this share is lower, and fewer than 10% of current interest groups were established before 1980. The Slovenian interest groups were established in different time periods, mostly after independence (in 1991) and after becoming an EU member state (in 2004). The majority of Montenegrin interest groups were established after 2004, and especially after independence in 2006. Independence and the change in the political system had an important effect on the development of the interest group system in both countries. We can assume that with the further integration of Montenegro into the EU, there will be a further impact on the membership and pluralisation of interest groups.

Today, the interest group sector in both countries could be described as vivid, with established relationship between government and interest groups (Vujović 2019; Novak – Fink Hafner 2019b; USAID 2019). Nevertheless, the system faces various challenges such as the absence of more stable funding, especially for advocacy activities, and consequently low levels of professionalization in general. Both countries, however, have recently adopted Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs) Acts and measures designed to improve funding opportunities, at least for general interest groups (Novak – Fink Hafner 2019b; USAID 2019). In both countries, EU funds are among the most important sources of funding (Vujović 2019; Novak – Fink-Hafner 2019b).

Table 2: Year of the establishment of interest groups

	Up to 1980	1981-1990	1991-1997	1998-2003	From 2004 on
Slovenia	21%	8.9%	26.4%	15%	28.7%
Montenegro	9.3%	1.6%	6.7%	14.5%	67.9%

Source: CIG survey

We will now move on to an analysis of two factors related to the contribution of interest groups to the quality of democracy: 1) their inclusion in policymaking and 2) their internal democracy.

Data and methodology

In this article, we define interest groups as groups that are informal and do not seek to form the government, that are political and pursue public policy goals and that are organised (Beyers et al. 2008). This may include public interest, citizen and/or diffuse interest groups, organized industry, professional and business associations, voluntary groups, cultural groups, think tanks, youth organizations, cultural exchange groups, pro-European groups, and so on. However, we have excluded companies, firms, law firms and consultancy firms. Some interest groups are primarily service providers, but may also perform advocacy and lobbying activities.

For the analysis, we use data gathered as part of the Comparative Interest Group Survey (CIGS) (Beyers et al. 2016; Beyers et al. 2020). The survey addresses the organisational characteristics, political activities and strategies of interest groups. Thus far, it has been conducted or is in the process of being conducted in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. For the purposes of this special issue, we will limit our analysis to Montenegro and Slovenia (see Komar – Novak 2020). The response rate of the survey was 36% for Slovenia and 38.2% for Montenegro, which is relatively high compared to similar online surveys (Marchetti 2015).

For each country, a comprehensive mapping of the interest groups population at the national level was conducted. In the case of Slovenia, the sampling was based on the Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Public Legal Records and Related Services (AJPES) database, which is the primary source of public information on business entities in Slovenia, being where all legal entities need to be registered. In Montenegro, the initial sources were two registers: the Ministry of the Interior's list of registered NGOs and the Central Registry of Business Entities. From the latter, we selected only those organizations that represent the interests and views of specific groups.

The research question that we want to answer is: how does the interest group system in Montenegro and Slovenia contribute to the quality of democracy in both countries? To answer this question, we will compare two factors related to the contribution of interest groups to democracy: 1) their inclusion in policy making and 2) the internal democracy of interest groups themselves in Montenegro and Slovenia. In the analysis we will take a descriptive approach, since we want to compare both factors of the contribution of interest groups to democracy in both countries.

The inclusion in policy making is operationalised as the frequency of contact with national decision makers. We are only interested in contact with national decision makers and not EU policy makers because, predominantly, inclusion in national policymaking contributes to the quality of national democracy. The

exact wording of the question was "During the last 12 months, how often has your organization actively sought access to the following national level institutions and agencies in order to influence public policies?" The respondents evaluated the frequency of their contact with ministers (including their assistants/cabinets/political appointees), elected members from the majority governing parties in parliament, elected members from minority or opposition parties in parliament, national civil servants working for the Prime Minister's Office, national civil servants working for departmental ministries such as agriculture, environment, transport or health, and so on, national civil servants working for the coordination of EU affairs and people working for the courts. The frequency of contact was reported on five-point scale: 1 – we did not seek access, 2 – at least once, 3 – at least once every three months, 4 – at least once a month and 5 – at least once a week.

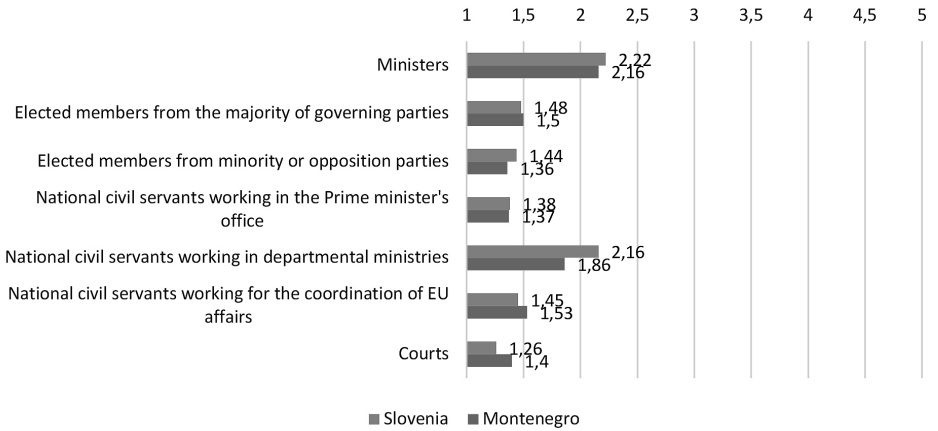
The internal democracy of the interest groups is operationalised through the role of members in interest groups activities. The exact wording of the question was "How important are members to your organization with regard to the following activities?" The respondents evaluated the importance of members to the following activities: providing evidence of support from affected members or concerned citizens, helping to influence public policy (e.g. by contacting politicians or civil servants), identifying problems or providing ideas about your organization's activities, providing ideas about your organization's campaigning strategies, running local groups or branches and generating income for the organization (e.g. through fees, subscriptions, fundraising, contributions, and so on). The importance of members was also reported on a five-point scale: 1 – not at all important, 2 – not very important, 3 – neither important nor unimportant, 4 – important and 5 – very important.

We will now present the research results where we will take a comparative approach and compare the data for Montenegrin and Slovenian interest groups.

Results and discussion

Firstly, we look at the contact between national interest groups and national decision-makers. We understand this measure as an indicator of the openness of the political system to include interest groups in policymaking. For an interest group to have an impact on policy results, it first needs access to the relevant decision makers. Established contacts with decision makers are an indicator of direct access where the possibility that interest groups are heard by decision makers is greater than in the case of indirect access.

Figure 1: Contact with national decision-makers (q33)[3]



Source: CIG survey

As can be seen from Figure 1, the surveyed interest groups in Montenegro and Slovenia behave similarly when it comes to contacting decision makers. The averages in both countries do not differ significantly. In both countries, interest groups tend to contact the executive more frequently, especially ministries and national civil servants working for departmental ministries. However, interest groups from both Slovenia and Montenegro contact decision makers rarely. On average, these contacts occurred at least once a year for ministers and national civil servants working for departmental ministries. Other political actors are hardly ever contacted, which shows the absence of regular contacts.

The main differences between Montenegrin and Slovenian interest groups in relation to their contact with decision makers can be observed when it comes to contacting elected members from minority and opposition parties, where interest groups in Montenegro tend to contact these people less frequently than those from Slovenia do. The second difference can be seen when it comes to contacting national civil servants, where, again, Montenegrin interest groups tend to contact them less frequently. On the other hand, compared to their Slovenian colleagues, Montenegrin interest groups tend to contact national civil servants working for the coordination of EU affairs and the courts more frequently. We could speculate about the reason, but one of the hypotheses might be the prolonged position of one party in power in Montenegro (Nacevska – Stankov 2020) that places decision making power almost exclusively within the government and makes the usual deliberative process that include

3 The values in the figure represent the following: 1 = we did not seek access, 2 = at least once, 3 = at least once every three months, 4 = at least once a month and 5 = at least once a week.

opposition parties less effective. In addition, the fact that Montenegrin interest groups contact EU affair officers more often than groups from Slovenia do illustrates the non-democratic elements of their political culture and the need to seek external legitimacy, which, in Montenegro, is stimulated by both the lack of trust in institutions and the role of international community in building democracy. On the other hand, Slovenian interest groups, operating in an EU member state, may take advantage of other access points in the multi-level system of the EU when they try to influence EU policymaking, so they do not rely only on EU affairs officers (Novak – Lajh 2018). Indeed, in their involvement in national policy making, Slovenian interest groups turn more towards national civil servants working for departmental ministries. Finally, the fact that Montenegrin interest groups contact the courts more frequently than those in Slovenia do illustrates the conflicted nature of policy making in Montenegro and the fact that interest groups often need to assume the role of watchdogs and monitors of the decision-making process.

Figure 2: Importance of members, mean value (q5)[4]

Source: CIG survey

More differences between Montenegrin and Slovenian interest groups can be observed when it comes to the perceived role of the members within interest groups as shown in Figure 2. In most aspects, Slovenian interest groups evaluate the importance of their members as being greater than it is to their Montenegrin peers. The difference is most visible when it comes to the importance of members in generating income for the organisation. As has already been described, most interest groups in Montenegro are not member-based or

4 Importance of members is reported on a five point scale, with the following responses: not at all important (1), not very important (2), neither important nor unimportant (3), important (4) to very important (5).

grass-roots oriented. They depend on foreign and, more recently, governmental donations for their financing. On the other hand, more Slovenian interest groups have been created so as to represent their membership and therefore they are more dependent on them for the funding. Furthermore, Montenegrin interest groups rely less on their members in identifying problems and offering ideas about activities or strategies. The situation is reversed in the two cases: Montenegrin interest groups rely more on members for providing evidence of support from affected or concerned citizens and members as well as for running the local branches. In general, interest groups representatives view their members as relatively important to interest groups activities. Members are on average important to interest groups, which could be seen as indicative of high levels of internal democracy that are probably connected to the lower levels of the professionalization of interest groups in these two countries and their dependence on volunteers and voluntary work (Novak – Fink Hafner 2019a; Komar 2019). With the further development of the interest group systems and their professionalization in both countries, it will become important to maintain the active role of members in interest group activities. This is especially true for interest groups in Montenegro that have a generally weaker grassroots base.

Conclusion

In this article, we have provided a structured overview of the development of the interest groups systems in both Montenegro and Slovenia. We found that even though the two countries shared a substantial part of their recent history, due to their different political cultures, their interest groups system developed differently. Our main aim in the article was to answer the question of how development of interest group system in each country contributed to the inclusion of interest groups in the policymaking process and to the democratic structure of the interest groups themselves. We tried to answer this question by looking at the historical development of the interest groups system and through an empirical analysis of the characteristics of modern-day interest groups in both countries.

The development of the interest groups system in Slovenia began in the 19th century and even though it stayed dormant during the federal Yugoslav period, it restarted soon after the introduction of pluralism in the 1990s. As the result, their internal democracy seems to be stronger as they depend more on their members both for funding and for daily operations.

On the other hand, the interest groups system in Montenegro basically started to develop after the end of socialism, either in the form of an early anti-war civic opposition that emerged as a reaction to the government or as a tool for democratisation used by the international community in the late 20th century. Reaching its peak in that period, the system never developed to be internally democratic and has remained dependent on external funds for its functioning.

The data from the CIG study showed that Slovenian interest groups tend to be included more in policy making in general, while their Montenegrin peers tend to have greater contact with EU coordination officials, which illustrates the need for external legitimation in policy making in Montenegro. Additionally, they contact the courts more often which provide evidence of the conflicted nature of this process. Moreover, the CIG study provides evidence that the interest groups system in Slovenia contributes more to the quality of democracy by involving their members more and giving them more power. The case is different in Montenegro, where most interest groups are not grassroots based or member centric.

These results show that the origin of the interest groups system and the history of each specific political culture seem to be embedded in the functioning of contemporary interest groups in both countries, which could affect their resilience in facing current de-democratisation challenges. Where there is a well-developed interest group system, this can contribute to the quality of democracy and even strengthen it. However, in both countries there is still room for improvement in terms of creating a more inclusive democracy especially as regards the inclusion of interest groups in policymaking and increasing the accessibility of decision makers. If interest groups do not have access to the policy making process, this can easily lead to a de-democratisation process. When aiming to improve the quality of the policy making process, decision makers could also be pro-active in ensuring the involvement of interest groups. Furthermore, the development of the interest groups system in Montenegro should in the future concentrate on supporting more membership based and grassroots interest groups that might also contribute to encouraging active citizenship and the political socialisation of its citizens. Although Slovenian interest groups are highly dependent on their members, in order to strengthen inclusive democracy, the same applies to them, since active citizenship in that country remains underdeveloped.

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Relationship with the European Union: Slovenia and Montenegro Compared

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Abstract: As part of former Yugoslavia and non-members of the Eastern Bloc, Slovenia and Montenegro enjoyed a special status and relationships with the European Communities (EC) before most other socialist countries. Economic and social interactions with the EC and its member states thus formed part of Slovenian and Montenegrin life even during socialism, particularly after Yugoslavia signed special agreements on trade relations with the EC in the 1970s and 1980s. In this respect, Europeanisation as 'practical' integration with the EC was closely linked with liberalisation processes concerning the economy, society and politics along with democratic transition processes that began in the late 1980s. When Slovenia joined the European Union (EU) in 2004 following a relatively smooth integration process, Montenegro was still holding EU candidate member status, after having officially started its accession negotiations in June 2012. The article analyses selected development and integration aspects of Slovenia and Montenegro, their relationship with the EU, together with their similarities and differences. The aim is to highlight developments in both countries and determine whether Slovenia, as an ex-Yugoslav republic and EU member since 2004, may serve as a good example for Montenegro to follow while pursuing European integration.

Keywords: ***European Union, Europeanisation, enlargement, Slovenia, Montenegro***

Introduction

Europeanisation is generally associated with terms like innovation, modernisation or formation, and thus often used to describe several different phenomena and processes of change (Lajh 2005). It is hence no surprise that investigating Europeanisation processes has become popular in the area of former Yugoslavia,

which has a distinct history, including how the European Union (EU) views the former socialist country. This area also has several outstanding issues in its relationship with the EU.

In all of the former Yugoslav republics, albeit under different conditions, the democratic transition started in the early 1990s when the republics all adopted new constitutions and held their first democratic and free elections (Fink Hafner – Lajh – Krašovec 2005). Except for Slovenia, the democratic transition in all the other former republics was largely initially postponed. The many reasons for this include (in)direct involvement in war, strong ethnic cleavages, and socio-economic factors. In the past, the Yugoslav state was very diverse and the region of former Yugoslavia remains that way today, both politically and socio-economically. As a result, Slovenia was the only former Yugoslav republic to join the EU on 1 May 2004, experiencing the Europeanisation process in various aspects of its political system and public policies. In contrast, all the other former Yugoslav republics saw delays in their democratic transition (see Ramet 2002). They were fighting for democratic survival more than confronting the task of completing European integration processes. In general, these delayed democratisation processes then exerted a negative influence on the development of market economies. Moreover, the other Yugoslav republics have had to meet additional criteria imposed later in the EU accession process. Above all, these criteria include cooperation with the International Court of Justice in The Hague, especially from countries heavily and directly involved in the Civil War (Lajh – Krašovec 2007).

When it comes to Europeanisation processes, the degree of adaptation depends on the 'goodness-of-fit' between the European-level arrangement and the domestic structures: the lower the compatibility (*fit*) between the new requirements on one hand, and national structures on the other, the greater the adaptational pressure (Risse – Cowles – Caporaso 2001: 6–7). Europeanisation processes thus 'require' various national actors to participate in the internalisation of EU norms and development of new identities. Satisfying these new requirements means changing actions, routines and even formal procedures (North 1990: 83), subject to the level of adaptational pressure. The different political arrangements in the EU mean the outcome is a very diverse pattern of problem-solving approaches and styles of organisation (Héritier 1999: 19–20) in both EU member and accession states. This internalisation (or adaptation) is thus not mechanical.

In light of these considerations, this article's main aims are to discuss how the respective relationships of Slovenia and Montenegro with the EU have developed and to highlight the biggest changes in the two countries. Ever since the dissolution of former Yugoslavia, both countries have been subjected to different modernisation processes. While Slovenia is already an EU member and has experienced the Europeanisation processes in various domains of its political system and public policies, Montenegro with EU-candidate-state

status and 8 years of accession talks experience still faces many challenges with Europeanisation. Given the considerable differences in several aspects of political, social and economic life, even when taking the common history of Yugoslavia into account, our main research thesis is that we cannot expect Montenegro to be able to see Slovenia as a perfect model to follow in its own Europeanisation processes.

The article is divided into three major sections and proceeds as follows. The first section explains the special relations of former socialist Yugoslavia with the European Community. The second section considers Slovenia's evolving relationship with the EU. It begins by describing the key physiognomies of Slovenia's accession to the EU, i.e. a relatively smooth integration with only a few problems, marked by a strong pro-EU orientation of both the Slovenian political elite and the citizens after the country's independence. Then it focuses on the main challenges in the period of full EU membership, especially the financial and economic crisis. The third section analyses Montenegro's path to the EU from the perspectives of regaining independence and negotiating EU membership. Finally, the fourth section synthesises the overall findings and discusses the primary challenges and future positions of Slovenia and Montenegro within/towards the EU.

Relationship of Former Socialist Yugoslavia with the European Community

The first official contacts between the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the European Economic Community (EEC) were already made in 1962 but the complex negotiation process meant the SFRY-EEC Declaration on Relations was only adopted on 2 December 1967, leading to the establishing of diplomatic relations and appointment of the first Yugoslav Ambassador to the EEC on 16 September 1968 (Adamović 1988: 243–246). The Declaration was the first political act signed by the EEC in its previous practice with a socialist state, a legal framework for strengthening economic and political cooperation with Yugoslavia.

On 25 October 1962, the Yugoslav ambassador in Brussels, Vjekoslav Prpić, formally expressed to the European Commissioner for External Relations, Jean Rey, his government's desire to establish official contacts with a Commission delegation (ECHA 1986a: 1). The Six Council in December that year decided to meet the Yugoslavs' request in principle, without giving them any precise details as to when exploratory talks could start (ECHA 1986b: 1). However, the door was opened for the future negotiation and establishment of the first official framework for political and economic cooperation. Two rounds of exploratory conversations took place in Brussels in January and May 1965. These talks concentrated on three main subjects: contemporary trade relations between the

Community and Yugoslavia, contractual relations between Yugoslavia and the EEC member states, and the future effect of European integration on Yugoslav exports of agricultural and industrial products (ECHA 1980: 1). After a few breaks, the conclusion of the GATT Kennedy Round (1964–1967) in Geneva allowed the parties to re-activate their bilateral relations. This was the end of the mentioned procedure which began in Brussels in January 1965. After three phases of negotiation, the two sides signed their first non-preferential trade agreement in 1968 granting each other the status of most-favoured nation. The Agreement came into force on 1 May 1970 and provided not only certain concessions for agricultural and industrial products but also the legal framework for the economic relations between the Community and Yugoslavia (Commission of the European Communities 1970: 2). A joint committee was established to supervise the smooth running of the agreement. It was the start of the SFRY's economic integration steps towards the Community.

After the 1970 agreement, the EEC's Yugoslav policy was characterised by continuity. A second trade agreement was signed in June 1973, providing for the further liberalisation of trade and an adjustment of the EEC's external tariffs to ensure free access for Yugoslav exports of agricultural products into the Community. A third trade agreement was signed in February 1980, with the main goal to reduce the deficit (USD 3 billion in 1979) in the Yugoslav balance of payments vis-à-vis the Community. The agreement therefore represented an attempt to restrict the access of Yugoslav products to the Community markets (trade part) and foster cooperation in several crucial areas like industry, technology and investment promotion (financial part and cooperation). Yugoslavia was to be granted ECU 200 million over a 5-year period (USD 1.44 million in February 1980) in the form of loans from the European Investment Bank with normal market conditions. The third agreement was signed for an indefinite duration with a trade segment review every 5 years (European Community 1980: 1–2). The other cooperation fields were labour mobility, industry, energy, scientific and technological research, agriculture, transport, tourism, the environment, and fisheries. Both Yugoslavia and the EEC saw this cooperation agreement as a political landmark for future relations (Zaccaria 2016: 163–164).

As the Community enlarged and deepened its common policies, economic cooperation strengthened. On 17 December 1990, the SFRY also joined the first Central and Eastern European Community Programme (PHARE). At the end of the 1980s, the SFRY was strongly reliant on economic relations with the European Communities, yet upcoming events in the long term were delaying any form of integration. Further cooperation became much more difficult as Yugoslavia entered a period of economic, political and social crisis which ultimately led to the country's disintegration (Obadić 2014: 344).

When considering EU accession or candidate states, adaptation pressures on different domains of the political system vary dramatically with respect to

the level of institutional relationship with the EU. In this context, Lippert – Umbach – Wessels (2001: 985) talk about five steps in Europeanisation. In the pre-phase of Europeanisation, the initial contacts between applicant states and the EU are (re-)established. In the first phase of Europeanisation, the European or Accession Agreement is signed, with this providing the backbone of (future) institutional relations. The second phase embraces the pre-accession period, which leads to the first elementary institutional adaptations, particularly with regard to the efficient coordination of European affairs on the national level. The third phase of Europeanisation includes the negotiation process in which either incremental or radical changes in individual policy fields first occur. The last phase of Europeanisation embraces the period of membership (Lippert – Umbach – Wessels 2001: 985–1000).

The main preconditions for EU membership are respect for the principles of freedom, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. In this way, to approach the EU a country must fulfil economic and political conditions known as the Copenhagen Criteria, according to which a candidate country must: (a) be a stable democracy, respect human rights and the rule of law and protect minorities; (b) have a working market economy; and (c) adopt the common rules, standards and policies which make up the body of EU law (Jacobsen 1997: 1). When considering the post-Yugoslav region, after independence only Slovenia followed the Central and Eastern European 'natural' pattern and, according to Lippert – Umbach – Wessels (2001: 985), had completed all five steps of Europeanisation, later to be followed only by Croatia. However, at this point at least two more important facts must be mentioned. Besides the noted preconditions for not only EU membership but for building up deeper institutional relations, practically all the other former Yugoslav republics were meeting the additional criteria for EU accession. Among these criteria, cooperation with the International Court of Justice in The Hague is especially prominent. Second, in most other post-Yugoslav republics, the EU has not been the sole "institutional mentor" (Ágh 2003: 117) since this role has also very much been in the hands of the wider international community.

As part of former Yugoslavia and non-members of the Eastern Bloc, Slovenia and Montenegro held a special status and relations with the EEC before most other socialist countries. Economic and social interactions with the EEC and its member states thus formed part of Slovenian and Montenegrin life even during socialist times, particularly after Yugoslavia signed special agreements on trade relations with the EC in the 1970s and 1980s (Fink Hafner – Lajh 2003). In this respect, Europeanisation as 'practical' integration with the EEC was closely linked to the liberalisation processes concerned with the economy, society and politics as well as to the democratic transition processes that started in the late 1980s.

Slovenia's Path to the EU: From Best Student in the Class to the European Periphery?

Slovenian Accession and the Copenhagen Learning Process

Slovenia's relationship with the EU is as long as the history of the country's independence. The process of Slovenia's transition from a socialist political system within Yugoslavia to independence in the late 1980s and early 1990s was already characterised by the ambition to join the EU with the aim to become an economically successful and internationally recognised democratic country (Lajh 2012). In this sense, EU membership was defined as a national project even before Slovenia's formal independence. The reformed former Slovenian League of Communists even adopted a document entitled "Europe now – for the European quality of living" for its congress in autumn 1989 and used the slogan "Europe Now!" at the first multi-party and democratic elections in 1990 (Balažic 2002). Other political parties also included EU integration in their electoral programmes for the first multiparty elections (Krašovec – Lajh 2009). Fink-Hafner even claims that Europeanisation had "become a kind of substitute for the old ideology" (Fink Hafner 1999). In 1991, the ambition to become an EU member was formally declared in the Basis of Slovenian Foreign Policy (Fink Hafner – Lajh 2005). The whole EU accession period in Slovenia was marked by a broad consensus among the political elite on the process of joining the EU. All relevant Slovenian political parties generally agreed that Slovenia should become an EU member. Except for one parliamentary political party, the Slovenian National Party, no parliamentary political party publicly opposed this aim. Moreover, as early as in 1997, practically all parliamentary parties – again with the exception of the Slovenian National Party – and the representatives of the Hungarian and Italian minorities, irrespective of their other differences and conflicts, decided to sign an Agreement on Cooperation in the Accession Process with the EU (Fink Hafner – Lajh 2005).

Despite the general support for European integration, the process of joining demanded certain adaptations that the Slovenians were not too happy to make. The three most salient issues were: (1) the 'Spanish Compromise', which gave foreigners the right to buy Slovenian real estate and triggered a fear, of especially among Slovenians living close to the border, that the former 'occupier' would again occupy the land; (2) the issue of closing down the duty-free shops located on the border with Italian and Austrian, where foreigners used to buy luxury goods like cigarettes, alcohol and cosmetics; and (3) a transition period for the free movement of labour (Krašovec – Kustec Lipicer 2008). Unsettled issues connected with EU membership triggered a decrease in public support and slowly saw some Euroscepticism emerge among the Slovenian public. In addition, in 2002 it was announced that due to its stable economy Slovenia

would be joining the EU as a net contributor and be paying more funds into the EU than it would be receiving (Nations in Transit 2003). Still, even after minor problems with the country's accession to the EU, despite these rumours of Slovenia being a net contributor the lion's share of the public remained in support of Slovenia's EU membership (Lajh 2012). This was confirmed at a referendum on EU accession (see Krašovec – Lajh 2004), which finally showed there was no serious opposition to accession in Slovenia. In March 2003, 60.4% of the electorate participated in the referendum, with almost 90% percent of voters being in support of joining the EU. This very high support for the EU was probably also a result of the Slovenian Government's "Slovenia at home in Europe" campaign (Fink Hafner – Deželan 2016: 476). On the same day, 66% of voters also supported a referendum to join NATO.

During the process of Slovenia's accession to the EU, the national political system needed to adapt to the new circumstances. Fink Hafner and Lajh (2005) demonstrated that national institutions, processes, traditions and politico-cultural context remained flexible and pragmatic in their adaptations. No radical change was made; instead, political structures only rearranged their setup to meet the demands of the accession process. In October 1995, special units for handling EU affairs were established within most ministries and other governmental bodies. EU tasks were thereby dispersed rather than concentrated in a special unit with an EU-knowledgeable elite (Fink Hafner 2007). The coordination of European affairs began at the end of 1997, starting with establishing the Government Office for European Affairs (GOEA), led by a minister without portfolio that took on management and coordination of the Slovenian accession process, the forming of the Negotiating Team of the Republic of Slovenia for Accession to the EU, and inter-sectoral working groups which included representatives of ministries and relevant institutions to prepare the negotiating positions. However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained the chief negotiator, while the Prime Minister led the coordination of managing EU affairs (Fink Hafner 2007: 818–819). At the end of the negotiations in February 2003, the Minister for EU Affairs was created in the first year of membership and the GOEA was reformed and institutionalised to become the central coordinating unit (Fink Hafner 2007).

Slovenia joined the EU on 1 May 2004. Along with the broad agreement on EU membership, other EU-related issues from 2004 onwards enjoyed general support and were seen as national projects, including introduction of the common currency the euro, joining the Schengen Area and conducting the first Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU (Krašovec – Lajh 2009). This attitude to the EU whereby parties agreed not to take advantage of inter-party competition on EU matters characterises the first period of membership until the country held the EU Presidency. In May 2007, on the basis of a party agreement the parliamentary parties even signed the "Agreement on the co-operation

of political parties, the group of unconnected deputies and representatives of national minorities in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia for the successful preparation and implementation of the Presidency of the EU". This agreement was informally known as an "agreement on 'non-attacking' the government in the period of holding the EU Presidency" (Fink Hafner – Lajh 2008). However, two parties in opposition – Liberal Democracy of Slovenia and Slovenian National Party– did not sign the agreement (Krašovec – Lajh 2009).

Economic Crisis and Dropping Trust in the EU

The next few years of Slovenian EU membership began with the global financial and economic crisis that not only impacted the EU but also the Slovenia–EU relationship. After all, Slovenia was hit particularly hard by the crisis with poor public finance conditions and escalating public borrowing. These economic and financial crises strengthened feelings of Euroscepticism among Slovenians.

In 2012, Slovenia started to struggle with a deepening economic crisis, rising public debt and a collapsing banking sector. The government was under European Commission pressure to accept certain austerity measures and reforms connected with managing the consequences of the financial crisis, attracting some negative attitudes regarding the EU. Austerity measures were adopted in early 2012 but these were still unable to reassure the major credit agencies, which doubted Slovenia could save its state-owned banks. In the end, this triggered predictions that Slovenia would be the sixth EU member state to require a bailout (Lajh 2013). In March 2012, EU member states that had adopted the euro agreed to the golden fiscal rule and agreed that their country's expenditures would not exceed their revenues. The Slovenian Government suggested inscribing the fiscal rule in the Constitution, which the new government of Alenka Bratušek took care of in 2013. Following the recommendations of the European Commission, the new government also adopted a stability programme on fiscal consolidation and national reform programmes containing policies to promote growth such as raising the level of value-added tax (Lajh 2014). Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek wished to convince the international public that Slovenia would not become the next EU member to request a bailout. In an unfortunate interview with CNN, she repeatedly declared "we do not need money, we need time". Ultimately, Slovenia managed to avoid an international bailout with a series of austerity measures and structural reforms. In June 2015, the European Commission finally allowed Slovenia to leave the EU's excessive deficit procedure (Lovec 2017).

Much of the period since 2014 has also been marked by tensions between Slovenia and Croatia concerning their disputed border, with both turning to EU institutions for support. Slovenia has relied heavily on an international arbitration judgment to finally resolve the border issues with Croatia that have

strained the Croatia–Slovenia relationship for several years. Slovenia even vetoed Croatia's EU accession negotiations (Lajh – Krašovec 2010) and is currently expressing an interest to block Croatia's entry to both the Schengen Area and the OECD due to Croatia's apparent lack of respect for international law. In 2015, the Croatian Parliament and Government decided to abandon the arbitration after a Croatian newspaper disclosed a secretly recorded conversation between a member of the Slovenian delegation and the arbitrator on the panel (Haček 2016). Despite this unfortunate event, Slovenia insists the arbitration judgment should be enforced while Croatia insists the EU should not play any role in resolving the border issue. In June 2017, the Permanent Court of Arbitration announced its ruling, designating three-quarters of the Piran Gulf to Slovenia and establishing a easement between Slovenia and international seas (Lovec 2018). The court judgment was not implemented within the estimated 6-month period. The Slovenian public also strongly condemned the Slovenian European Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc for insufficiently representing Slovenia's interests at meetings of the College of Commissioners regarding enforcement of the arbitration judgment.

The bilateral relations between Slovenia and Croatia took another blow during the migration crisis between October 2015 and March 2016 when almost 480,000 migrants crossed the Schengen border between Croatia and Slovenia. Slovenia accused Croatia of not respecting the EU's rules and procedures and encouraging more people to cross the border than agreed. When EU assistance at the border and extra EU funds finally arrived, the situation slowly started to improve and normalise as the Western Balkans corridor was closed (Haček 2016; Lovec 2017). Yet civil society remains critical of the EU's asylum and migration policy that has been clearly unable to cope with the crisis. With the controls being established on the inner border between Slovenia and Austria due to the possibility of illegal migrations, Slovenia faces another unpleasant experience in the EU. Slovenian politicians and MEPs have tried in conversations with the EU to negotiate an end to these border controls, but have thus far been unsuccessful.

Despite the slight rise of Euroscepticism during Slovenia's EU membership, the EU still enjoys a relatively positive image among Slovenians. The share of Slovenians with a very negative image of the EU is consistently below 5% (Krašovec – Lajh 2020). Dissatisfaction with the EU was at its highest in 2013 and 2014 during the economic crisis. Further, Slovenian politicians in the EU, such as former Slovenian Commissioner Violeta Bulc and Slovenian MEPs, have constantly been evaluated as the most popular by the Slovenian public. However, before the 2019 EP elections the media published various ratings of the work of Slovenian politicians in the EU where they performed worse than their colleagues. Violeta Bulc was one of the worst-rated European Commissioners, coming in 21st place among 28 (Burson Cohn – Wolfe 2019). Slovenian MEPs

were similarly unsuccessful; except for Tanja Fajon who was ranked in 49th place among 751 MEPs, the rest were ranked between places 378 and 531 (MEPranking 2018). Slovenia's role in the EU was also judged by the Slovenian public when the media revealed that the Slovenian Government was ranked in last place (25th) alongside the neighbouring Croatia, Latvia and Malta with regard to the country's common influence on European politics and policies. Slovenia was only reasonably active in the policy field of bigger European integration (European Council on Foreign Relations 2018).

The Slovenian Government views the second Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2021 as an important milestone. In February 2018, a working group led by the Prime Minister to manage staff and finance during the presidency was established. The document "Special governmental project: Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia of the Council of the EU" was published in March 2019, where the government states in the introduction that Slovenia's reputation among the EU members and beyond will depend on success with project (Zorman Macura 2019). Such statements already give the impression that Slovenia will again concentrate on the organisational aspects of the presidency and forget its own preferences regarding EU policymaking. Slovenia will once more preside in a trio with Germany and Portugal. It is anticipated that developing the European perspective on the Western Balkan countries will again be a priority topic for Slovenia.

Montenegro's Path to the EU: Regaining Independence and Negotiating on EU Membership

Regional approach and the Enlargement Plus criteria

In the early 1990s, the state of Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, a process still not fully resolved, leading to a series of civil wars in the Western Balkans. After the destructive events of in the 1990s, the Western Balkan countries (ex-Yugoslavia, without Slovenia, plus Albania) started on their political and economic rehabilitation and reconciliation. Balkan reconstruction became a pressing issue for the international community following the wars of the 1990s (Montanari 2005: 82). The geopolitical landscape in the Western Balkans was not as uniform or homogenous as the umbrella term may suggest. The region christened "the Western Balkans" by Brussels in 1998 is basically a space squeezed between EU member states (the EU's only internal neighbouring region), supposedly destined to join them but without a clear accession timetable (Štiks 2011: 123). The EU played a key role in the region's rebuilding efforts by influencing and shaping the nature of the state, society and foreign relations by utilising the prospect of EU membership as a vital tool for exerting its influence in the region. As the EU started to pursue a revised enlargement strategy

with integrative elements, the region has gradually been transformed from its "Balkanised" form into a "Europeanised" one. Yet, the regional approach failed to provide the prospect of membership as the major incentive for conditionality and did not deliver tangible results (Braniff 2009: 554).

In the first decade of the 20th century, the EU's policy on the Balkans moved from an agenda dominated by security issues related to the war and its legacies to one focused on the perspective of the Western Balkan states' accession to the European Union, regarding which there has been a formal political commitment on the part of all EU member states ever since the Thessaloniki Summit held in June 2003 (Rupnik 2011: 17). The EU thereby created the main instrument for the Western Balkans countries, the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), launched in 2000. The Stabilisation and Association Process is the name of the EU's comprehensive, strategic approach to the Western Balkan countries, fostering regional cooperation, political dialogue and economic development among regional countries (Delević 2007: 2–3). Socio-economic changes in the Western Balkans, as a set of young states and democracies, including Montenegro, have been encouraged by the process of European integration as the most important drivers of overall changes in the region (Djurović – Jačimović 2014: 13–14).

Bearing in mind the experiences with the fifth round of enlargement, in December 2006 the European Council agreed on a new consensus on enlargement. Thus, all future enlargements of the Union would be subject to a more detailed pre-accession dialogue and more complex negotiation process. The process already becomes more complex in the battle for candidate country status, which means a country must be 'prepared beforehand' for the obligations deriving from membership. The accession process and accession negotiations are thereby becoming more complicated and demanding. We may talk about a new trend in the EU's enlargement policy – Enlargement Plus (Djurović – Milović 2013: 333). After Croatia joined the EU in 2013 and regional markets were opened up to EU companies, relations with the Western Balkan countries became a unique mix of stabilisation, democratisation and accession through the conditionality and socialisation instruments.

Three generations of reforms and EU candidate status

In the case of Montenegro, like in other parts of the ex-Yugoslav economic space, the transition started with a period of economic recession. In other words, unlike the Central and Eastern European countries, following a number of negative events, the transition in the former Yugoslav countries became a process of country dissolution and disintegration of the single market, finally resulting in war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The founding of the SRY in April 1992 was followed by UN economic sanctions up until September 1995, a block-

ade of international trade, hyperinflation, and a general decrease in economic activity in all sectors. Of all the former Yugoslav states, Montenegro was more seriously affected by the breaking up of the state and the lost Yugoslav market for its exports as it was traditionally oriented to producing raw materials and importing final products from the then single Yugoslav market with a population of 23 million (Djurović – Radović – Djurašković 2011: 14). The mentioned dissolution of Yugoslavia and all associated problems meant the SRY found itself in a period of survival, a 'transition recession', while between 1990 and 1996 it experienced the most difficult economic and social crisis in recent history.

In an attempt to protect its basic economic resources, Montenegro started to gradually build its own economic system, including the design of its own economic policy. In July 1999, Montenegro adopted some regulations of a transitional character and stopped transferring some of its customs revenues to the federal budget, along with some of its sales tax and excise duty revenues. Montenegro then soon took charge of the customs service for its territory. Parallel to this, in November 1999 Montenegro introduced a dual currency system. Consequently, in November 2000 only the German mark remained the official currency in the payment system (Djurović – Muhadinović 2016: 521). After unilaterally introducing the German mark in 1999 after the economic crisis of the 1990s and the hyperinflation consequences, Montenegro established its own Central Bank of Montenegro, its own foreign trade and customs policy. In these exceptional circumstances, Montenegrin authorities adopted the euro as the country's official currency in 2002 (Djurović 2012: 243–244). The above mentioned were all initial steps for achieving macroeconomic stability after the transitional recession. The fight for independence in economic governance gradually became the path to regaining independence. The Republic of Montengro became part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which officially existed from April 1991 to February 2003, which was followed in the next 3 years by the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Montenegro again became an independent country after a referendum held on 21 May 2006.

The *first phase* of the real transition and first generation of reforms actually began with the monetary reform and by taking over powers in the fields of foreign trade and customs policy. It continued with the dynamic price liberalisation of the internal market, a reduction of customs and non-tariff barriers, the establishing of a significant number of new institutions, the adoption of strategic documents in key policy areas, which amounted to the approval of a set of new regulations in the fields of financial policy, customs, tax, and sectoral policy. More than 80% of the state's capital became privately-owned property through different privatisation models. In addition, the period of gradual economic recovery was followed by steady FDI growth. The first three years after regaining independence may be characterised by extraordinary economic dynamics: the average real GDP growth rate from 2006 to 2009 was 9%, the average net

FDI as a share of GDP I 2006–2009 was 25% (Central Bank of Montenegro 2020). This was a period of gradually strengthening Montenegro's economic independence, as confirmed by the will of its citizens at a referendum held in May 2006. Its European orientation was then affirmed in October 2007 when the Stabilisation and Association Agreement was signed.

Having completed the first generation of reforms (privatisation, internal price and foreign-economic liberalisation, macroeconomic stabilisation), Montenegro successfully implemented the second generation of reforms, which address the following: completing its own legal system, establishing efficient and effective market institutions, and coordination of economic policies (Djurović – Radović – Djurašković 2011: 16). The third generation of reforms may be defined as the process of European integration and the Montenegrin economy's substantial growth in competitiveness in response to the challenges of the economic crisis (Montenegrin GDP contracted by 5.7% in 2009, grew by 2.5% and 3.2% in 2010 and 2011, respectively; it contracted again in 2012 by 2.5%; the average real growth rate between 2006 and 2019 was 3.3%) (Monstat 2020). Opening of the economy, the liberalisation of foreign flows, rapid growth of different economic sectors, low inflation rate, even a budget surplus, strong FDI inflows, continuous reduction of the unemployment rate, lower external debt and a high trade deficit are all basic characteristics of the Montenegrin economy in the mentioned period. The business environment gradually became more attractive to investors, while economic relations were also strengthened, especially with the EU.

The relationship between Montenegro and the EU has been constantly developing. The signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on 15 October 2007 in Luxembourg denotes the start of the first contractual relationship with the EU. Political dialogue between Montenegro and the EU was launched by virtue of a government decision on 31 August 2006, when the Joint Declaration of Montenegro and the EU on establishing regular political dialogue was adopted. The first meeting of the Council for Stabilisation and Association, held on 14 June 2010 in Luxembourg, initiated a new form of cooperation – dialogue on association with Montenegro. Sustained by a general political consensus and high level of support for EU membership, Montenegro submitted its application for EU membership on 15 December 2008. This membership application initiated a set of comprehensive internal reforms and intensive preparations for the opening of accession negotiations that resulted in the adoption of a 5-year National Programme for the Integration of Montenegro with the EU on 5 June 2008. The European Commission issued an Opinion on Montenegro's application for membership on 9 November 2010, stating that Montenegro was a functional democracy with stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law and a functional market economy. The European Commission recommended the Council give candidate-country status to Montenegro

whereas the date of opening of the accession negotiations was to depend on the success in meeting recommendations in seven key areas identified in the Commission's opinion. Pursuant to the EC Opinion, the European Council gave of candidate status to Montenegro on 17 December 2010 and made its decision conditional on the opening of accession negotiations after having fulfilled the seven key priorities. On 12 October 2011, the European Commission published the Progress Report for Montenegro for 2011 in which it recommended opening up accession negotiations with the EU. The European Council concluded on 29 June 2012 that accession negotiations with Montenegro should be initiated and convened the first Intergovernmental Conference between Montenegro and the European Union with a view to the negotiations' formal beginning (Government of Montenegro 2012: 2–3).

Accession negotiations with the EU: 8 years of learning lessons

Following the restoration of independence after the referendum on 21 May 2006, as an independent country Montenegro has regarded joining the EU and NATO as its key strategic foreign policy priorities. NATO membership was achieved in June 2017, while the EU accession talks started in June 2012 with a very uncertain date for accession. After 8 years of accession talks, 32 (out of 35) negotiating chapters have been opened and 3 have been closed temporarily (chapters related to Science and research, Education and culture, and External relations).

Montenegro became an associated member of the EU when the SAA entered into force on 1 May 2010. The country uses the SAA mechanisms in its preparations for EU membership, thus providing for complementarity of the negotiations and the SAA framework in meeting the commitments undertaken. Montenegro actively participates in regular political dialogue with the EU on bilateral and international matters of mutual interest and promotes common positions in different areas of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including the development of good neighbourly relations (Government of Montenegro 2012: 4).

Thus far in the accession process, Montenegro has received 87 closing benchmarks, i.e. conditions to close negotiation chapters, in 28 negotiating areas. However, the backbones of the negotiation process are 83 interim benchmarks created exclusively for Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) and Chapter 24 (Justice, freedom and security). These chapters ensure an overall balance in the progress of the negotiations across the chapters. Item 25 of the General position of the EU for accession talks with Montenegro states that "should progress under these chapters significantly lag behind progress in the negotiations overall, and after having exhausted all other available measures, the Commission will on its own initiative or on the request of one-third of the Member States propose to withhold its recommendations to open and/or close other negotiating chapters, and adapt the associated preparatory work, as ap-

propriate, until this imbalance is addressed" (Council of the EU 2012: 7). This chiefly explains why 2019 was, for the first time, a year without intergovernmental conferences and without any chapter being opened or closed.

Based on lessons learned mostly from the accession talks with Montenegro and Serbia, the Commission proposed a new methodology for future accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia. To strengthen the current accession process, in February 2020 the Commission set out a new methodology for accession negotiations in the region. It is based on four main principles: credibility, firm political steering, predictability for both sides, and more integration dynamics (European Commission 2020: 2–3). The revised methodology relies on the same criteria to join the EU (Article 49 of the TEU, the Copenhagen criteria, the Madrid criteria and the additional SAP conditions related to regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations) which are clear and do not change. Introduced novelties to be inserted in their negotiation positions are as follows: screening process in clusters of chapters to allow for faster opening; preparation of roadmaps for Chapter 23 and Chapter 24, but also roadmaps to strengthen democratic institutions, for public administration reforms and for closer links with Economic Reform Programmes; the possibility to update opening/closing benchmarks; re-opening of chapters; negotiation of the fundamentals will be opened first and closed last, and progress with these will determine the overall pace of the negotiations (linking all chapters with rule-of-law chapters through an enhanced balance clause: without fulfilment of the C23 & C24 interim benchmarks, one cannot close any other economic chapter) etc.

Conclusion

This article presented selected aspects of the development and integration of Slovenia and Montenegro, their relationships with the EU, as well as their similarities and differences. The purpose of the article was to highlight developments in both countries and determine whether Slovenia, as ex-Yugoslav republic and an EU member state since 2004, can serve as a good example for Montenegro as it pursues European integration. The article's main finding is that the two countries should – due to their similar interests – collaborate more in both the political and economic spheres. Slovenia has over the last 30 years acquired considerable experience with its political and economic transition towards a competitive European economy, and substantial experience within the EU, i.e. 15 years of fully-fledged EU membership. This may serve as a productive platform for Montenegro and allow it – based on the Slovenian experiences – to avoid certain mistakes made by Slovenia during its EU accession process.

Since the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, the experiences of Slovenia and Montenegro with European integration have varied and today different challenges are continuing with respect to the EU – Slovenia as a member and

Montenegro as a candidate. After 15 years of EU membership, it seems that EU affairs in Slovenia are slowly more acknowledged also at home. The Slovenian public is mostly interested in the role played by Slovenia in the EU and calling for a more active role. Based on the historic memory where Slovenia and its citizens have over the ages been subordinated to other bigger political structures, many citizens are hoping for a more important role in Europe. However, the recent period of Slovenian EU membership may be characterised as the absence of clear goals for Slovenia within the European integration. It seems that in the EU context Slovenia lacks visions and ambitions concerning its role. Domestic circles have been critical of this lack of political orientation since this has also added to the passive role being played by Slovenia and its political actors in the EU. There is thus far no sign this situation will improve as Slovenia is continuing with its 'policy' of no clear strategy in the EU, even though its goal of presenting itself as being committed to the idea of a united Europe remains. In the past, some attempts to be more proactive were even made. For example, after Jean Claude Juncker presented five possible scenarios for the EU's development, Slovenia expressed its strong ambition to remain in the circle of more integrated member states. At the beginning of 2017, some Slovenian intellectuals even wrote and signed the "Ljubljana initiative" to commence the process of adopting a new EU Constitution with the aim to protect the European idea and codify all of its dimensions within it. This initiative was also supported by Slovenian President Borut Pahor (MMC 2017), yet it has remained ignored in the EU context.

On the other hand, the result after two decades of the Stabilisation and Association process in the post-Yugoslav region is modest: only Croatia is an EU member state, Montenegro has been negotiating for 8 years, Serbia for 6 years, while North Macedonia and Albania entered the negotiations only at the end of March 2020, Bosnia and Herzegovina is hardly paving its way towards candidate status, and Kosovo is merely waiting for visa liberalisation. Despite the slowdown in the EU integration dynamic in recent years, support for EU membership in Montenegro is stable and exceeds 60% in almost all surveys. The country is entering a crucial phase of the integration process with a focus on the rule of law and the functioning of key democratic institutions important for meeting the main political accession criteria (areas of electoral legislation and trust in institutions, law on religious freedom and its implementation, media freedom, joint efforts to strengthen cohesion elements within the divided society etc.). It is extremely important to build greater trust among all stakeholders and political actors and to enhance dialogue about the accession process and make it more effective. The EU integration process must become more predictable, more credible – based on objective criteria and rigorous positive and negative conditionality – more dynamic and subject to greater political steering (European Commission 2020: 2–3). Only in this context is the future

of Montenegro within the EU possible and may be seen as confirmation of the country's chosen development strategy.

Finally, changing European integration itself must be considered. The EU is not the same as it was over 15 years ago when it was first enlarged to post-socialist Eastern Europe. Moreover, in this period, Brexit means it has lost one member-state, while the integration also experienced two great crises – the 2008 economic and fiscal crisis and the 2015 migration crisis. Besides, the start of 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic health crisis, almost simultaneously also triggering a new economic crisis. All of these crises present the EU with several major challenges, including the uncertainty about the future physiognomy of the EU as a whole, and in particular the visions of future enlargement of the EU.

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Social policy in Slovenia and Montenegro: Comparing development and challenges

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Abstract: *Slovenia and Montenegro have a common past; however, they have also experienced diverse developments in the field of social policy over the last three decades. The social policy of the two countries is based on a Yugoslav welfare model, and yet the positions of the two countries were quite rather different even as part of Federal Yugoslavia, with Slovenia being one of the most developed territories within the federation, while Montenegro was one of the least developed. In this article, we will describe the position and main challenges of the transition of the two countries from 1990 in relation to the developments and changes in the core fields of social policy, such as the labour market and social assistance, family policy and old age policy. The emphasis will be on linking the diverse starting points, the process of transition and the direction of developments, within the framework of path dependent changes in the two welfare systems, as well as a discussion of the relevant structural pressures, such as the economic and social situation of the two countries and ways of coping with these pressures that were employed. In the conclusion, the changes within the individual fields of social policy will also be discussed in relation to the prevalent discourses of the neoliberal transformation of modern welfare states, along with the development of social investment perspectives within social policy as a whole.*

Keywords: ***social policy, welfare system, transition, Slovenia, Montenegro***

Introduction

Slovenia and Montenegro have a common social policy background based on a specific Yugoslav welfare model, which offered a rather generous welfare system. Although social insurance for some categories of workers for certain

social risks existed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the system remained rather underdeveloped and was inconsistently implemented (Stambolieva 2016: 24). In Federal Yugoslavia, a mixed Bismarckian-Beveridgean system was constructed, encompassing both social insurance and social protection. The social insurance system included several branches, for example health insurance, pension and disability insurance and temporary unemployment insurance. The core of the social protection system was targeted toward the neediest, while in a broader sense, the beneficiaries were all workers, their families and whole communities, who benefited from different services provided mostly by companies and municipalities (Stambolieva 2016: 24). However, despite the common welfare system, intrinsic differences, stemming from differences in economic circumstances and the allocation of resources, created significant discrepancies between different regions (at that time, the constituent republics and provinces), which resulted in significant variations in the scope and quality of the social programmes. In the 1970s, the greater autonomy of the federal units reinforced these diverging trends, which significantly intensified in the transition period after the collapse of Yugoslavia (see Stambolieva, 2016). The transition period in the former Yugoslavia had four phases: a) macro-economic stabilisation; b) liberalisation; c) privatisation; and d) re-structuring (Lazić 2000). Many were hoping that political pluralism and the market economy were tested paths that the citizens of Eastern and Central Europe would rush down on their way to a society of abundance and freedom (Lazić 2011). However, the countries followed divergent paths in relation to both the transition and the democratisation process, with both being smoother and faster in Slovenia, and slower in Montenegro (see Komar and Novak 2020).

Slovenia is generally perceived as a transition success story among post-socialist countries (Stambolieva 2016). From the time it declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1990 until the beginning of the global recession in 2008, Slovenia featured both strong economic growth and a comparatively high standard of living. It was also amongst the first of the former Eastern Bloc territories to join the European Union, the first of these newcomers to preside over the EU, holding the rotating EU presidency of the European Council in the first six months of 2008, and was among the first to join the Eurozone. During the transition period following Slovenia's independence, the left-oriented political elite opted for gradual reforms of the welfare system rather than the 'shock therapy' that was experienced by some other post-socialist countries (Kolarič et al. 2009; Ferge 2001). Based on the legacy of the well-developed state welfare system and gradual reforms, the Slovene welfare system developed as a dual model, combining elements from both the conservative-corporatist model and the social-democratic model, based on the Esping-Andersen (1990) typology. First, the characteristics of the conservative regime are the use of compulsory social insurance systems, which are the primary instrument for

the provision of social protection for employees and their family members. On the other hand, as is found under the social-democratic regime, the strong public and state sector maintained the status of the main service provider of all types of services to which all citizens are equally entitled (Kolarič et al. 2009; Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2017).

By contrast, in Montenegro, numerous social and economic problems that came about as a result of the process of transition have continued to the present-day, despite certain optimistic expectations. Slovenia came out of its transition process as a success story while in Montenegro the process of transition triggered a process of the retraditionalisation of the society, in which many of the positive elements of the modernisation of the previous Yugoslav period were also lost. Transition theoreticians argue that the period of transition was affected by the following: the economic structure as a limiting factor of transition, the reproduction of the state bureaucracy, the reproduction of the class structure, the reproduction of cultural patterns grounded in traditional society, the social expectations of the population, the reproduction of collectivism, the reproduction of authoritarianism, the methods used to realise of transition, and the existing international relations (Bešić 2000: 125–131). Additional circumstances that distinguish the two countries and hindered the transition in Montenegro included war in the region, the large number of refugees and migrants and the international sanctions that were imposed to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of which Montenegro remained a part until 2003. In these circumstances, the final effects of transition were reflected in strong social stratification. Certain elements of modernisation that were present in the former Yugoslav society (in the spheres of health, education and housing policies, for example) were lost. The evident polarisation of Montenegrin society resulted in a division of the population into "winners" and "losers" in relation to the transition processes. Members of the newly formed economic elite have become a significant social subject in Montenegro, and have held significant sway in political decision-making. On the other hand, the "losers" in the process of transition have faced problems in terms of existential functions, and their low position on the social scale has further been marked by a rapid reduction in opportunities for adequate social participation, which has resulted in the spreading of social exclusion. The process affected almost all categories of the Montenegrin population, particularly those who were qualified and semi-qualified workers in former social enterprises, youth people and the older population. Additionally, refugees and migrants also faced the consequences of these social crises immediately upon their arrival in Montenegro.

The measures employed by policy creators in Montenegro towards the end of the 1990s were short-term in nature, and mainly aimed at "putting out fires". The social policies were not adequate in facing serious challenges, nor was there a tradition of applying the mechanisms of social policies to address

poverty (Madžar 2000: 97). GDP dropped by a half in the period between 1990 and 2000, and the influx of refugees and migrants placed additional strain on the exhausted social funds (Ardarenko – Đurović 2004: 4). All social positions were ossified. The "winners" in the process of transition attempted to preserve or increase the wealth they had accumulated in the transitional currents. The poor struggled to escape the vicious cycle of poverty, especially due to a lack of extensive state policies with long-term effects. A wide range of social programmes became inaccessible to a vast number of people, and the implementation of significant activities that were not *ad-hoc* in character, and that aimed at the mitigation of these consequences began only in 2000[1]. Accordingly, we can argue that the implementation of comprehensive socio-political measures in Montenegro started at the beginning of the 21st century, and mainly intended to eliminate the consequences of the policies of the last decade of the 20th century, with a pronounced intention to contribute to the transformation of Montenegrin society, in line with the conditions of the functioning of the market.

In this article, we will describe the position and main challenges of the transition of the two countries from 1990 in relation to various developments and changes in the field of social policy, by analysing the main policy changes in the core fields of social policy such as the labour market and social assistance, family policy and old age policy. The emphasis will be on linking the diverse starting points, the process of transition and the direction of developments, within the framework of path dependent changes to the two welfare systems, as well as a discussion of a range of structural pressures – such as the economic and social situation of the two countries and the preferred means of coping with these pressures. We argue that more differences than similarities can be found between the two welfare systems and their developments, which can be traced back to the beginning of the transition, the various paths that the countries chose in tackling their social issues, as well as the different pressures that they have faced over the last three decades.

The social and economic context

The social and economic context is one of the relevant factors for understanding the success of the process of democratisation (see Komar and Novak 2020), and specific social and economic conditions also determine particular social policy responses. According to Lakićević (1997), "the social crisis of the former Yugoslav society was caused by the lack of flexibility of the economic, technological and political systems to adapt and change, which resulted in the

1 During 1990/2000 in Montenegro, there were a number of short time social actions by the state, which were focused on particular groups of people (refugees, pensioners, unemployment people, and so on). In general, these type of state actions included short time material support and some benefits related to living conditions.

deterioration of the overall social situation, particularly in comparison with developed countries at the time" (Milosavljević 2004). This legacy is especially evident in Montenegro.

The beginning of the essential economic transition in Montenegro started in the final years of the 20th century, with the process of the transformation of ownership, privatisation and the introduction of the Deutsche Mark as the official currency, which made numerous problems more visible (Katnić 2017). The economic transition that implied moving from a centrally planned economy to market structures contributed to the creation of thousands of private companies, and to re-orientation of the economy from industry to service provision. The transformation of the economy resulted in the reduced relevance of agriculture and industry, and increased the importance of service provision and trade (Katnić 2017: 13). Montenegro entered the 21st century with an inherited socio-economic legacy derived from the previous economic system, and the creators of the social and economic policies were faced with accumulated reform challenges.

In social and economic terms, Slovenia was the frontrunner among the ex-Yugoslav countries, which was also evident in its relatively quick economic recovery after the crisis in the 1990s, when there were high unemployment rates. The GDP growth in the 2000s was relatively fast and higher than in Montenegro until 2005, when Montenegro experienced high growth (see Table 1). Both countries experienced a decrease in GDP growth in 2008, with Slovenia experiencing lower growth than Montenegro until 2014.

Table 1: GDP growth (annual %)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Montenegro	3.1	1.1	1.9	2.5	4.4	4.2	8.6	6.8	7.2	-5.8	2.7	3.2	-2.7	3.5	1.8	3.4
Slovenia	4.2	2.9	3.8	2.8	4.4	4.0	5.7	6.9	3.3	-7.8	1.2	0.6	-2.7	-1.1	3.0	2.3

Source: World Bank 2019.

The relatively good social position in Slovenia is illustrated by its low poverty rates (see Table 3) as well as its low levels of inequality. In Slovenia, the Gini coefficient has remained stable at relatively low levels below 25 per cent, while in Montenegro it is higher, i.e. above 30 (see Table 2). This reflects the already mentioned greater stratification of Montenegrin society after the transition.

While the at-risk-of poverty rates are relatively low in Slovenia, they rose as a consequence of the economic crisis starting in 2008, most evidently after 2010, reaching 14.3% in 2015. Poverty rates are low among children, usually lower than that found in the general Slovene population, and dropped significantly

Table 2: Gini coefficient

	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
GINI COEFFICIENT					
EUROPEAN UNION (15 COUNTRIES)	31	29	:	:	:
EUROPEAN UNION **	:	:	:	30.5	31.0
SLOVENIA	:	22	23.8	23.8	24.5
SLOVENIA (WB)	:	:	24.6	24.9	25.4
MONTENEGRO (WB)	:	:	30.2	28.9	31.9

Note: **(, EU15-2004, EU25-2006, EU27-2013, EU28)
Source: Eurostat 2018, some data from World Bank 2019 (marked WB).

from 2015 to 2018, returning to pre-crisis levels. Older people, on the other hand, represent a more vulnerable group, with higher at-risk of poverty rates than is found in the general population; even so, this rate has been decreasing steadily since 2005. One of the most vulnerable groups in Slovenia are the unemployed, who face extremely high at-risk of poverty rates, which have not reset and dropped after the crisis, remaining as high as 45.6 % in 2018 (see Table 3).

Table 3: At risk of poverty rates for Slovenia (60% of median equivalised income after social transfers)

Slovenia	2000	2005	2010	2015	2018
Total	11	12.2	12.7	14.3	13.3
Under 18	:	12.1	12.6	14.2	11.7
65 and over	21	20.3	20.2	17.2	18.3
Men	11	10.6	11.3	13.0	12.6
Women	12	13.7	14.1	15.6	14.0
Unemployed	42	25.1	44.2	44.9	45.6

Source: Eurostat 2019.

Table 4: Poverty line in Montenegro

Year	Absolute poverty line	Poverty rate (%)	The depth of poverty (%)	The severity of poverty (%)
2006	144.68	11.3	1.9	0.6
2007	150.76	8.0	1.4	0.4
2008	163.57	4.9	0.9	0.3
2009	169.13	6.8	1.4	0.5
2010	169.98	6.6	1.1	0.3
2011	172.25	9.3	2.0	0.7
2012	182.43	11.3	2.8	1.4
2013	186.45	8.6	2.4	1.1

Source: MONSTAT 2019, Department of Labour Market Statistics, Living conditions, Social services and Household consumption.

Table 5: Dispersion around the threshold of poverty risk in Montenegro

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (p)
The poverty risk when the threshold is					
40% (40% median)	16.2	11.9	13.5	12.9	11.9
50% (50% median)	21.9	17.4	19.9	18.7	17.2
70% (70% median)	33.4	32.5	31.9	31.2	30.4

Source: MONSTAT 2019.

The expenditure associated with household consumption that determines the poverty line in Montenegro increased between 2006 and 2013 – from €144.68 in 2006, to €186.45 in 2013. Simultaneously, the number of poverty-stricken people (the poverty rate) decreased by almost a half between 2006 (11.3%) and 2010 (6.6%) (see Table 4). However, the trend in the deteriorating social situation continued from 2010, and the rate of poverty was at 8.6% in 2013. The depth of poverty shows how much income should be transferred to people affected by poverty in order for household income to increase and move beyond the poverty line. Accordingly, the number of people who should be provided

with these transfers increased from 1.9% in 2006 to 2.4% in 2013 (see Table 4). Additionally, the number of people who are the farthest away from the poverty line in relation to those who are the closest to the line (that is, the severity of the poverty experienced) reduced in the period between 2006 (from 0.6%) and 2010 (to 1.1%). Poverty is more prevalent in larger households, as well as among older people (65 or above), and among the unemployed or retired. Households, in which an adult female or a person over the age of 65 is the sole or main income provider, are at a particular risk of poverty. Essentially, it is age, education, status and the type of employment that drive the risk of poverty. According to the data, (see Table 5) we can note a statistically significant difference in the coverage of the risk of poverty depending on whether the median is at 40% or 50% of the average income of household members. Compared to the situation in 2013, the risk of poverty has decreased but Montenegro is still far from meeting those standards that guarantee the stable position of a larger number of households and a minimal risk of poverty.

Social protection expenditure has remained stable in Slovenia, being at the same level, 23.7 % of current GDP, both in 2000 and in 2015 (see Table 6). The largest share of social protection is represented by social protection benefits. By function, the largest share is intended for old age and widows/widowers, which represent almost half of the expenditure, followed by expenditure on sickness benefit and healthcare, which forms approximately 39% of total expenditure. A significant share of the remaining budget is used for families and children, which has decreased slightly from 8.97 % of the budget in 2000 to 7.5% in 2015. On the other hand, the share taken by unemployment benefits has been decreasing steadily, from 4.15 % in 2000 to 2.69 % in 2015, while the expenditure on social exclusion has increased from 1.6% in 2000 to 3.11 % in 2015.

The share of the overall budget used for social and child protection in Montenegro is somewhat lower, being 17.4 % of GDP in 2017. The distribution follows a similar pattern to that of Slovenia, where the largest share of expenditure is intended for old age protection (39.5 % in 2017), followed by expenditure on sickness benefits and healthcare (27.7 %). The share used for employment benefits is similar to that in Slovenia, at. approximately 2 %, as well as the shares given to families and children and to social exclusion (7.7 % and 2.7 % respectively) (see Table 7).

In sum, the analysis clearly shows that in the examined period of transition, Slovenia had more favourable social and economic circumstances in comparison to Montenegro, which is clearly reflected in the differences within the countries changing welfare systems. These are characterised by diverse social policy developments, as is shown in the next section.

Table 6: Social Protection Benefits by Function, 2000-2015 (% of total expenditure) and social protection expenditure as a share of GDP in Slovenia

	2000	2005	2010	2015
Slovenia				
Social protection expenditure as a % of GDP	23.7	22.6	24.4	23.7
Total expenditure	100	100	100	100
Social protection benefits	97.42	97.85	97.9	98.3
Family/children	8.97	8.41	8.69	7.5
Unemployment	4.15	3.2	2.69	2.69
Housing	0	0.06	0.04	0.1
Social exclusion n.e.c.	1.6	2.78	2.34	3.11
Sickness / healthcare and disability	38.65	40	38.65	37.43
Old age and survivors	44.05	43.4	45.49	47.47

Source: Eurostat 2018.

Table 7: Social Protection Benefits in Montenegro

Social and Child Protection in Montenegro	2016 (% of GDP)	2016 (% of total costs)	2017(% of GDP)	2017 (% of total costs)
Total costs for social and child protection	18.7		17.4	17.4
Total costs for social benefits by functions	18.2	100	16.8	100.0
Sickness / health care	4.8	26.3	4.7	27.7
Disability	1.5	8.3	1.5	8.7
Old age	7.0	38.6	6.7	39.5
Successors	2.2	12.0	2.1	12.3
Family / children	1.9	10.4	1.3	7.7
Employment	0.4	2.3	0.3	2.0
Social exclusion non/registration in other categories	0.4	2.2	0.4	2.1

Source: MONSTAT 2016, 2017.

A comparative overview of social policy developments in Slovenia and Montenegro

In this section, we offer a short overview of the policy changes in separate policy areas after the transition in each country. The main distinction between countries is the gradual approach to policy changes in Slovenia, while in Montenegro, the measures employed by policy creators at the end of the 1990s were short-term, and mainly aimed at "putting out fires". The social policies were not adequate in facing serious challenges, nor was there a tradition of applying the mechanisms of social policies to address poverty (Madžar 2000: 97). The positive economic situation in Slovenia after the transition also allowed a degree of expansion of the existing social policy measures in that country, while the worse economic position in Montenegro, where GDP decreased by a half in the period between 1990 and 2000, and the influx of refugees and migrants (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and especially Kosovo in 1999) placed additional strains on its already exhausted social funds (Ardarenko – Đurović 2004: 4).

However, the beginning of the 21st century brought important changes; in Slovenia the effect of the economic crisis of 2008 was strongly felt and lead to a more in depth restructuring of the system with the goal of cutting costs and increasing its long-term sustainability. On the other hand, in Montenegro, the implementation of these types of comprehensive socio-political measures only started at the beginning of the 21st century, and mainly aimed at eliminating the consequences of the decisions and pressures of the 1990s, with a pronounced intention to contribute to the transformation of Montenegrin society. During the first decade of the 21st century, various processes of social structuring and social stratification in Montenegro were the result of the lack of a link between economic, cultural and social capital. The ways in which individuals, families, households and local communities reacted to the frequent shocks they experienced in terms of income and earnings have not been examined systemically before.

The labour market

The labour market in Slovenia experienced two major crises resulting in high unemployment rates: one in the early 1990s associated with the transition from the Yugoslav economic system to a market economy, and the in 2009 related to the global economic crisis (see Ignjatović – Filipovič Hrast 2018). The 1990s were notable for the ongoing, relatively generous insurance based unemployment system (Stropnik – Stanovnik 2002). However, there was a continual gradual retrenchment of the system, where the maximum payments were decreased and period for receiving the benefit shortened (Ignjatović et al. 2002; Ignjatović – Filipovič Hrast 2018). Furthermore, in 1998 the basis for determining the level of compensation was changed from three to twelve months' average salary, while

there was also a lengthening of the insurance record (Stropnik – Stanovnik 2002). These very gradual retrenchment trends continued in the second decade after independence, i.e. from 2000 onward. Another important retrenchment measure in this period was the abolition of non-contributory based unemployment assistance in 2006. Along with these developments, the introduction of social investment measures was also evident in the form of active labour market policies. These policies were particularly evident in the introduction of training, career orientation measures and educational support measures for the unemployed; however, this was accompanied by increased conditionality in access to unemployment rights, which were linked to active engagement in searching for a job (Ignjatović et al. 2002; Kopač 2005; Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2019).

With the onset of the global economic crisis in 2008 and the effects of that recession, which had a significant impact on the Slovene economy and caused high unemployment rates, there were several policy changes adopted in the field of labour market, designed to address these new challenges. These responses varied from relatively generous temporary measures such as a partial subsidy of full-time work for part-time workers and the introduction of 'temporary waiting-to-work' under special conditions, to more permanent expansionary measures brought about by legislation changes in the period from 2010 to 2013. The latter included increasing protection for more vulnerable workers, raising the minimum wage, softening the eligibility criteria for those with a more irregular employment record, increasing the level of unemployment benefit and raising contributions for fixed term contracts to stimulate permanent contracts, as well as introducing severance pay for those on fixed term contracts (see also Ignjatović – Filipovič Hrast 2018).

Despite this relatively generous and expansionary approach, the generally implemented austerity measures limited and reduced some of the more generous changes to the labour market, e.g. by reducing the benefit levels (see Ignjatović – Filipovič Hrast 2018). Furthermore, one of the important labour market trends has been its segmentation and the increasing share of workers with flexible contracts (e.g. fixed term, student work) which are used by employers to reduce labour costs and increase flexibility (Ignjatović 2002; Kanjuo Mrčela – Ignjatović 2015; Ignjatović – Filipovič Hrast 2018). These problems remained inadequately addressed by the described policy changes. Active labour market policies were implemented; however, their strengthening and further development was limited due to a lack of resources. Specifically, the amount of resources for active labour market policies is lower than the EU average and also decreased after 2013 (Eurostat 2019; see Ignjatović – Filipovič Hrast 2018; Trbanc et al. 2017).

The issue of unemployment in Montenegro is the leading social and individual problem. Montenegro entered the process of transition, which was marked by an overall social crisis. The former Yugoslav economic system was not able

to accumulate and invest even the absolute minimum of its economic means, or to repay its accumulated debt, and the political system lacked the capacity to generate any positive economic or political changes (Milosavljević 2004: 43). According to the data on registered unemployed people in Montenegro, the number of unemployed reached the highest value in 2000, when the average number of registered unemployed was 83,583. Such a situation was caused by the war in Yugoslavia, and a large number of migrants and refugees finding refuge in Montenegro at the end of the 1990s. After that period, unemployment rates were on a constant decline, and the lowest number of unemployed was recorded in 2008, when there were 42.200 unemployed registered in the country. As a consequence of the global economic crisis, unemployment rates increased in 2009 and 2010. Additionally, unemployment rates of the working age population were particularly high from 2012 to the first quarter of 2015, when it ranged between 20.7% (in the first quarter of 2012) and 18.2% (in the first quarter of 2015). The rate of unemployment has decreased in recent years, but it remains relatively high. Last year (2018), Montenegro had a 15.2% rate of unemployment, which is the lowest rate recorded in the past ten years.

Table 8: Unemployment in Montenegro (in percentages of working age population)

Year	Total	Men	Women
2013	19.5	20.0	18.8
2014	18.0	17.8	18.2
2015	17.6	17.7	17.3
2016	17.7	18.2	17.1
2017	16.1	15.4	17.0
2018	15.2	15.2	15.1

Source: MONSTAT 2018.

In the last six years in Montenegro, according to official data, there has been a reduction in unemployment (see Table 8). Moreover, there is no significant difference in the rate of unemployment between men and women. In Montenegro, as in Slovenia, there is an increasing emphasis on the concept of activation. The creators of policies have opted for strategic approaches to solving the problem of unemployment. In the past few years, various strategies and action plans have been devised to propose new measures and instruments for reducing unemployment. Youth is a primary point of focus in these strategies (as a particularly at risk category for unemployment), as well as people with disabilities (who fall in the category of hard-to-employ, and the category of us-

ers of financial help). The policy of employing the older population has not yet been fully affirmed in Montenegro.

During 2018, financial assistance for unemployment in Montenegro was provided to 9,366 unemployed people. Unemployment finance benefit amounts to 40% of the minimum wage in Montenegro. In addition, within the amount of financial assistance we should also calculate and pay contributions for health and pension – disability insurance. Until 2019, under the Labour Law, financial assistance for unemployed people in Montenegro amounted to 77 euros a month. The new Labour Law includes changes to amount of financial compensation offered (as of April, 2019), and the financial assistance increased from 77 to 108 euros a month, indicating an expansionary response. The reason for the increase is the accompanying increase of the minimum wage in Montenegro from 193 € to 222 € per month. The minimum period for which financial assistance is paid is three months (for unemployment people with an insurance period of one to five years), and the maximum is 12 months (for those who are insured with more than 25 years of insurance period coverage).

Family policy

Family policies in Slovenia have played a central role in supporting high labour market participation among women, which has been a tradition in Slovenia for more than half a century. This was sustained by the development of a widespread network of childcare services, and the introduction of insurance-based social security schemes in the case of maternity (i.e. maternity/parental leave) and other family-related benefits (e.g. child benefits). Additionally, an individual tax system was established. After its independence, Slovenia preserved its well-developed family policy measures from the Yugoslav period. Hence, Slovenia has a relatively well-developed family policy, particular in terms of parental leave and preschool child care, enabling the reconciliation of work and family life, providing equal opportunities for men and women and a horizontal redistribution of income in favour of families with children and the disadvantaged (Stropnik 2014). However, following the 2008 economic crisis, various austerity measures and the introduction of the new social legislation with policy modifications, retrenchment has been particularly evident, with the introduction of strict(er) means testing and targeting. Universal benefits, such as the large-family allowance and the childbirth grant, have become means-tested. Furthermore, although the government's austerity measures regarding family policy have mainly affected cash benefits, these policies have also been connected to reductions in social investments. It was only services such as childcare for which no austerity measures were introduced. Likewise, leave policies were affected to some extent, where retrenchment was evident as wage compensation for parental and paternity leaves were lowered and an upper ceiling for the maternity-

-leave benefit was introduced (Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2019). These changes to child benefits and the introductions of austerity measures have lowered the number of child-benefit recipients and reduced government expenses. This is in line with increased selectivity as one of the main dimensions of post-crisis policy in European welfare states (Taylor Gooby et al. 2017). It should be noted that this is the first time since Slovenian independence that family policy has been affected by austerity measures. After 2014, but most especially after 2018, certain expansionary measures were again introduced[2].

Family policy in Montenegro is not independent public policy. Generally, measurement's and instruments of family policy are incorporate in social protection activities[3]. The Law of Social and Child Protection (2013) is based on the principles of decentralization, de-institutionalization and the development of community services. Child protection is an activity of public interest and the public interest provided by the state and local municipalities, under conditions prescribed by The Law on Social and Child Protection. The Act stipulates that municipalities will participate in the financing of measures and programmes for the development of child protection, as well as providing material benefits. In addition, child protection in Montenegro is focused on particular child populations and their families according to The Law of Social and Child Protection. This law introduced novelties related to supervisory jobs in social work, inspection, and the model of functioning of the public procurement of social services and child protection. In the course of reform, progress has been made in the development and application of information technology and after many years of professional effort the Social Welfare Information System – Social Card (IISSS) was introduced (IDEAS 2019). Overall, only those eligible for social and child protection in Montenegro can use the various forms of tangible and intangible support based on The Law of Social and Child Protection (2013). Several financial measures are in place, such as: material support for new-born children,

2 Minor changes were adopted in 2014, changing some aspects of parental and paternity leaves, child benefits for single parents and the rights of social parents and introduced more gender-equal leave policies. In the social investment field, this expansion was evident in the prolongation of paid paternity leave; however, this was introduced based on a delayed and gradual implementation dependent on GDP growth. The new law also responded to the increases in poverty among single-parent households by increasing benefits for single parents. However, these changes affect only a very small percentage of single-parent households, because of the narrow definition of a 'single-parent family', thus creating an implementation gap (Rakar 2015). In 2018, the government abolished some of the austerity measures with regard to child benefit, the child birth grant, the large family allowance and finally implemented the policy of 30 days of paid paternity leave.

3 The most important acts are: The Law on Social and Child Protection, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", 27/2013, 1/2015, 42/2015, 47/2015, 56/2016, 66/2016, 1/2017, 31/2017 – decision of the CC, 42/2017 and 50/2017 (2013), the Law on Protection from Family Violence "Official Gazette of Montenegro", 46/2010 (2010). The Family Law, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", 1/2007, 53/2016 (2007), the Law on the Treatment of Juveniles in Criminal Proceedings, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", 64/2011 (2011), the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities, "Official Gazette of Montenegro", 39/2011 (2011), and the Strategy for the Prevention of Violence and Protection of Children from Violence (2017–2021).

material support for children, food assistance in pre-school facilities, care support and benefits, the refund of earnings during pregnancy leave and maternity leave, including for people engaged in entrepreneurial activities, assistance for parents of new-born children, the refund of earnings to the employer for employees who engage in working half-time, and the earnings of people who engage in entrepreneurial activity half-time.

The system is targeted mostly at those most in need, and therefore lacks more universal approach that can be found in Slovenia. The present practice of support for families and children who are not eligible for social services and child protection measures was reduced to sporadic implementation. For example, in Podgorica (the capital of Montenegro) a flat tax (municipal tax) is paid according to the number of family members. The government of Montenegro has provided financial support to families with three or more new-born children from the budget reserve over recent years. Furthermore, local municipalities in Montenegro have had local projects for the distribution of school books and materials to children for free. Generally, though, we cannot speak about a proactive and progressive family policy based on universal principles.

Old age policy

Population aging is a phenomenon that typifies almost all European societies, and is an issue that affects Montenegro as well as Slovenia. Slovenia is faced by the intensive ageing of its population and the old age dependency ratio is projected to rise to 57.6% in 2060, from 24.4% in 2012 (Eurostat 2018). In the policy field, the most important tool to address this, but also the most relevant challenge, is the pension systems. Slovenia has a pay-as-you-go system introduced after World War II (Stanovnik 2002). This system has gradually changed since the 1990s, with smaller and incremental changes such as the tightening of the eligibility conditions, limiting the ratio between pensions and wages and increasing the retirement age. In 1999, a three-pillar system was introduced; however, the main plank of this system is the first pillar based on compulsory insurance. Additional reforms addressed the sustainability of the system further and tightened eligibility, such as increasing the retirement age (to 63 for men and 61 for women), as well as increasing the period for which the highest average earning is calculated (Stanovnik 2002; Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2019). While the first pillar remained the most important, the inclusion in the scope of the second pillar also increased, but this was not enough to address the reduction of the rights inherent in the changes made to the first pillar (see Verbič 2009). Although the changes remained gradual, they were part of more general retrenchment measures, as the retirement age was increased again and also equalised for men and women, while the non-contributory old age state pension was abolished (see also Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2019).

Similarly, in Montenegro, the demographic trends in the past 50 years indicate that the population is aging. One positive trend in the demographic structure is higher life expectancy, but the declines in the percentage of residents younger than 15, and the population aged 15–24, are particularly concerning. The share of youth in the total population of Montenegro decreased by 6% between the 1950s nd the first decade of the 21st century. Furthermore, according to UN population projections, by 2050, the share of population aged 15–24 will be half what is was in 1950 (Katnić 2017: 40). We can identify a number of negative effects that are a result of the demographic trends of an aging population in Montenegro. The instability of the pension system in Montenegro is caused by the unstable relationship between the active and passive population. Persistent problems in the health system in Montenegro are demonstrated by dysfunction in primary health care, the lack of flexibility in the system, long waiting lists, and so on. The reaction of policy makers to these social problems were mainly focused on strategic approaches to the reform of both pensions and the health system. However, a lot of the planned measures and instruments did not produce the expected results. The reforms made to the pension system in 2004 and 2010 were aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of the pension system in Montenegro; however, the implemented mechanisms encouraging early retirement, lowing the average age of people who retire, while reducing the number of years of contribution increased the overall number of pensioners *vis-a-vis* the number of employees who pay contributions. This, together with the demographic trends, has in fact endangered the financial sustainability of pension fund. The average pension in Montenegro in 2018 was 284 euros. The Pension Fund of Montenegro is also not completely financially independent, and pensions are paid regularly in part thanks to funds provided by the government and allocated to the Pension Fund (PIO). For complete financial independence, the optimal ratio for the Pension Fund of Montenegro is one pensioner for every three employees. The World Bank recently suggested (2018) that the government of Montenegro needs to proceed with changes to the PIO. Representatives of the World Bank have asked Montenegro to establish a special fund for financing privileged pensions, revise the list of occupations covered by this category, increase employment among older workers and work to limit early retirement (World Bank, 2019). This indicates an incomplete reform process in Montenegro, which is, however also reflected in Slovenia, where despite several attempts at reform, the overall reform process is not yet complete and further changes are needed to achieve the full sustainability of the pension system.

Social assistance

In Slovenia, financial assistance, targeting the more vulnerable groups, is available through a form of financial social assistance, one-off financial support, a supplementary allowance, a rent subsidy, child benefits and a pension disability allowance. Financial social assistance targets the most vulnerable groups in society. After Slovenian independence, there was a continuity in social assistance benefits, based on the Social Assistance and Services Act (SAS) of 1992. Means-tested financial social assistance to needy individuals did not change in the period 1993–1999[4] (Stropnik – Stanovnik 2002). The levels were low and insufficient to cover basic needs and therefore 'social assistance beneficiaries were not really pulled out of absolute poverty' (Stropnik – Stanovnik 2002: 94). The subsequent period was again marked by relatively gradual changes and in 2002, the SAS Act was amended, so that it introduced a minimum income and equivalence scale. There was also increasing emphasis on the activation of the recipients of social benefits (MDDSZ 2007: 6), in line with social investment approaches.

One major welfare policy change was the adoption of new social legislation that came into force in 2012, where the minimum income level was increased. The increased amount is however still insufficient to provide significant improvement in the recipient's living standards. Additionally, the strict order of claiming the various benefits (e.g. child benefits and others) and stricter means testing has had a negative impact on the financial situation of single-parent families, those with large loans, families with school-age children, large families, the elderly and couples without children (Dremelj et al. 2013). This was later addressed by certain additional smaller changes made to the legislation. Due to the conditions attached to the recipients of social assistance, single people represent the largest share (three quarters of the total), and the number of recipients of social assistance has steadily increased over recent years, from in 44,041 in December 2012, to 52,140 in December 2016 (Trbanc et al. 2017).

One further important shift in this policy area was the introduction of the activation principle, which was included in the Social Assistance Benefits Act (2010), and therefore the introduction of a social investment approach. The recipients of financial social assistance are thus able to increase the amount of their support if they are deemed active, that is if they are employed, participating in active labour market policy (ALMP) measures, participation in psychosocial rehabilitation programmes or performing voluntary work. The share of those receiving this increase in support was very low to begin with, being only 2.7 %

4 The 1992 SAS Act distinguished between individuals who were permanently unable to work (i.e. who are aged over 60 or not capable of working) and persons who were temporarily unable to secure sufficient minimum income. For the former group, the income was set at 60% of the guaranteed minimum wage, while for the latter, the support was set as the difference between their own income and the level of the minimum wage (Stropnik and Stanovnik, 2002:93). The financial assistance was limited to six months, with the possibility of an extension (MDDSZ, 2000).

of all recipients in 2013. However, the share of recipients receiving this increase rose to 10.4% in 2016 (Trbanc et al. 2017).

In Montenegro, the area of social assistance and support is based on The Law of Social and Child Protection in Montenegro. This law provides material benefits and social services for different categories of children, the elderly, those in poverty, people with disabilities, and so on. There are different forms of financial benefits, targeting those in need, such as: financial support, personal disability allowance, benefits for the parents and guardians of recipients of personal disability allowance, one-off material support, assistance with burial costs, assistance for education, support for housing expenses, and transportation assistance.

In approving material benefits relating to material support, personal disability allowance, care support and benefits and one-off material support, Centres for Social Work ought to register evidence demonstrating the need for assistance and provide analyses and conclusions that might later be used as evidence. Through this mechanism, Montenegro provides a wide range of financial benefits that can provide significant support to vulnerable people. Naturally, there remains the issue of the strain due to processing requests relating to such a vast number of different types of support. In that sense, it would be preferable to merge some of these forms of support. Thus, in relation to financial assistance, the systems in both countries seem to function in a similar way; however, activation principles are not especially widely employed in Montenegro, while they seem to be increasingly applied in Slovenia.

Reflections and conclusions

The described social policy developments are an important part of the democratisation and transition process and illustrates the range of experiences found in the ex-Yugoslav countries, – where there is a historical legacy of diverse social policies, differing economic challenges and divergent responses to them, ranging from a more gradualist approach in Slovenia toward more *ad hoc* measures in Montenegro. Slovenia's transition to a free-market economy has been gradual. Social protection and investment policies have frequently been retained and have even, in some cases, been further expanded, while some have been gradually cut. The global economic crisis of 2008, profoundly affected many Slovenians, whilst also leading to several structural reforms along with *ad hoc* and temporary measures aimed at stabilising the public finances. The combination of these structural changes and austerity measures led to more abrupt changes in the country's welfare programmes, which have been subject to retrenchment through the increasing prevalence of needs testing and tighter qualification criteria, as well as the abolition of certain universal rights (see Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2019).

By contrast, the path taken by Montenegro has been different. In Montenegro, the measures employed by policy creators at the end of the 1990s were short-term, and mainly aimed at "putting out fires"; therefore, they were more regularly formed as *ad hoc* measures and reforms of the system. The dynamics of social reform were carried out in the direction of supporting certain segments of the population that had been targeted by state policy due to their particular vulnerability. During the period from 2003 to 2012, several strategies were created, and new instruments implemented in the areas of the labour market, social and child protection, education, pensions and disability insurance and health care. Furthermore, in all these areas, policy makers identified categories of population that were particularly marginalized. The resources of the Montenegro state (be those financial, infrastructural, or institutional) in the period 2003–2012 did not provide realistic opportunities for more universal approaches to social policy. However, since 2013, Montenegro has promoted a system to monitor the population of actual users of social services (via the ISSS-Social Card), and more or less developed mechanisms for identifying populations that might potentially be at greater social risks. These categories include people who are more difficult to employ for certain reasons, the elderly, the Roma population, refugees and others.

However, some similarities can also be identified between the two countries, such as e.g. the increased emphasis on activation measures in the field of the labour market. Additionally, both countries face certain similar challenges, such as an increasing ageing population that puts additional pressure on their pension systems, as well as high poverty rates among older people and the unemployed. An important challenge facing social policy development in Slovenia is addressing the needs of those groups that seem not to have benefitted from the economic recovery, and who remain trapped in poverty and social exclusion. These include the increasing problem of long-term unemployment and high at--risk poverty rates among the unemployed as well as the elderly, especially for single households (Filipovič Hrast – Rakar 2019).

Montenegro faces specific challenges related to the legacy of the delayed transition and its poor economic situation, with key challenges present in three areas. The first is labour market policy. The programme of reform of both social policy and employment policy (implemented 2015–2020) has identified a number of specific problems affecting the socio-economic stagnation of Montenegro, notably low employment rates and the high inactivity of the labour force; regional differences in the labour market; the under-employment of the local labour force; insufficient promotion of entrepreneurship; high levels of undeclared work; and youth unemployment with a special emphasis on the highly educated. Furthermore, and this is an issue that goes beyond just the labour market, – we have the challenge of the sustainability of the pension system. In relation to employment, there is also a need to harmonize the education

system with the needs of the labour market. Further challenges in education include disadvantaged access to education for marginalized groups; low participation rates for all citizens in lifelong learning; the need to continuously improve the quality of education at all levels; the lack of practical training in educational programmes; and low levels of interest in education which is in short supply at the level of vocational education. The third key challenge is in the field of social and child protection, where there is an insufficiently developed system of services at the local level, a low level of access for people with disabilities and insufficient inclusion of socially vulnerable groups in relation to the labour market.

These challenges, while diverse, also have notable commonalities, in their focus on the ageing population and the reform of the pension system, the labour market and the needs of the most deprived. Although in Slovenia, the emphasis is still on a more universal social policy approach than in Montenegro, there has been an increasing focus on vulnerable groups in both countries, which can be partly explained by both countries adopting a more neoliberal targeted social policy agenda. Moreover, an emphasis on labour market activation and inclusion is prevalent in both countries and partly follows a social investment approach that emphasizes the relevance of labour market inclusion, but it can also partly be seen as a consequence of a more neoliberal agenda, with an emphasis on labour market participation (see Hemerijck 2013; Taylor Gooby et al. 2017). However, the two systems and their developments are more different than they are similar, which can be traced back to the beginning of the transition in both countries, the divergent paths that the countries have followed in tackling their social issues as well as the various pressures that they have faced over the last three decades.

These developments also indicate a variation in the democratisation processes of both countries. According to the Democracy Index of 2019, Montenegro is ranked 84th in the world. In comparison to Slovenia (36th place, 7.50 points) it is significantly lower in relation to the intensity of the process of democratization, and even recorded a large drop from 2006 to 2019. As some of the democratisation indexes (e.g. Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, see Komar – Novak 2020) include socioeconomic development and welfare system development as important indicators of democratisation, we can conclude based on our comparative analysis, that Slovenia has a more developed welfare system, while Montenegro is still lagging behind, especially in relation to the more universal approach and the greater number of social investment oriented measures that exist in Slovenia (e.g. within family policy). However, Slovenia has experienced important effects from both the economic crisis and the gradual retrenchment of the system, which could perhaps also be linked to the rather more critical opinions of its people on the social and political system and their lower confidence in social security systems in comparison to the

population of Montenegro (see Komar – Novak 2020). One important facet of democratisation is responsiveness to the needs of citizens and the implementation of policies that people support, and several of retrenchment measures were highly contested in Slovenia (e.g. pension reform). Thus, there is a clear and important common challenge for both countries: how to address the welfare needs of the people when economic and/or demographic trends complicate rather than assist that process.

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Democratisation of Defence Policies and Systems in Slovenia and Montenegro: Developmental and Comparative Aspects

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Abstract: *The democratisation of national defence policies and systems plays a vital role in making any country more democratic. The democratic transition of this sector in Slovenia and Montenegro has experienced a challenging reform process and it is now time for reflection. This paper aims to identify the main characteristics and issues of the democratisation process in the field of national defence in both countries and, by comparing them, to look for key similarities and differences. The paper argues and confirms that the Slovenian and Montenegrin national defence and security systems were initially faced with serious post-socialist democratic deficits, but gradual democratisation then brought drastic improvements to the quality of their democracy. The process of joining NATO and the change from a military threat perception to a non-military threat perception created space for many reforms. Greatest steps forward in democratisation in both countries entailed nominating civilian defence ministers, having a reasonable number of civilian defence experts involved in the military business, establishing working parliamentary monitoring committees, reducing defence budgets and reallocating funding to other sectors. Progress was also observed in reducing the total number of soldiers, establishing a fully professional armed force, assuring that women in the armed forces were properly represented and increasing the deployment of soldiers to foreign stabilisation operations in a sign of becoming security providers.*

Keywords: ***democratisation, security sector reforms, security, defence policy, defence system, transition***

Introduction

Slovenia and Montenegro endured a difficult process of democratisation and transition to a democracy. The area of national defence was no exception. In fact, democratisation was even more important than bringing democracy into several other fields because national defence and security was a cornerstone of the old socialist regimes. The change and greater transparency of this repressive sector has been fundamental for all modern democratic states in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe.

The state's monopoly over the legal use of force and related secrecy are principal characteristics of national security and defence. A change in these characteristics reflects the true level of democratisation of Central, Southern and Eastern European societies. The power of democratic control over the armed forces, police and intelligence services is significant for democratic systems. Failure in this narrow, yet important field could trigger the end of the democratic state or a seemingly endless limbo without any plausible exit. All newly established states arising from former Yugoslavia underwent a slow, complex and painstaking process of democratising their defence and security policies and systems. These policies and systems were becoming democratic at a time of wars within/between countries, of an economy transitioning to capitalism with all the related uncertainties and legal vacuums, of foreign sanctions etc. The associated uncertainties call for greater academic attention and for lessons to be learnt.

The goal of this paper is to identify the main internal and external characteristics and issues in the democratisation process concerning the field of national defence in Slovenia and Montenegro, two exemplary cases from former Yugoslavia, and to compare them to find any major similarities and differences. Both countries will be investigated with the same indicators, as described below in the argument and related subchapters. We contend that the democratisation process of political systems in Central and South-Eastern Europe has also depended on reforms of national defence and security policies and systems. The Slovenian and Montenegrin national defence and security systems were faced with serious post-socialist democratic deficits, but then gradual democratisation led to drastic improvements in the quality of democracy. The process of joining NATO and the change from a military threat perception to a non-military threat perception created space for many reforms. In both countries, the biggest steps forward in democratisation included nominating civilian defence ministers, having a reasonable number of civilian defence experts involved in the military business, establishing working parliamentary committees to monitor the security sector, reducing defence budgets at a time of non-existing military threats and reallocating funding to other sectors, decreasing the total number of soldiers, establishing a fully professional armed force, assuring that women in the armed forces are properly represented, and

the increasing deployment of soldiers to foreign stabilisation operations in a sign of becoming security providers.

There is a gap in the literature with respect to comparing democratisation in the defence field in cases like Slovenia and Montenegro. Such knowledge could prove useful for improving understanding of trends in the region and extracting valuable lessons.

This paper is structured as follows. First, it focuses on the concept and practice of security sector reform within the broader democratic transition process. The next section conceptually describes eight indicators of democratisation and compares them with regard to the cases of Slovenia and Montenegro. In the conclusion, we verify our argument and draw the key lessons that arise from the two cases' similarities and differences.

Democratic Transition and National Defence: The Concept and Practice of Security Sector Reform

The primary transition in the field of national security and defence in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe after the Cold War had come to an end was about changing the perspective on what security means, and for whom. The traditional unidimensional, military and state-centred security was developing into multidimensional security with environmental, economic, criminal, health and other non-military dimensions. The state was no longer the main referent object of security while the individual was emerging as one. This transition from military to people-centred security meant the entire concept of security was in some ways liberalised.

In this context, the term Security Sector Reform (SSR) was first used in 1998 by the British Secretary of State for Development. It soon became a relevant public policy concept for understanding change in the field of security and defence because, as Fluri (2004: 7) argues, it deals with the use of public resources to ensure the security of citizens. SSR is a broader concept than the democratisation of national defence, but can usefully be applied in this paper. A fundamental part of this concept concerns the transition of countries from an authoritarian to a democratic political system. In other words, SSR lies at the heart of democratic transition in the field of national defence. The purpose of this chapter is to present the main ideas pertaining to this concept.

Every state's security sector consists of institutions responsible for dealing with external and internal security threats to the state and its population, such as the armed forces, intelligence services, police service and institutions exercising control (e.g. the government and its ministries, the parliament and its committees). Some authors also include in the security sector the judiciary, paramilitary forces, border guards, coast guards, custom guards and even non-governmental organisations (see Bearne – Oliker – O'Brien – Rathmell 2005:

1; Schroeder 2010: 9). Defence sector is a narrower concept because it relates only to the armed forces, related intelligence service, ministry of defence and relevant control bodies.

SSR is also an evolving concept. It basically refers to the effective provision of state and human security in the context of democratic governance (Hänggi 2004: 1). A central element of SSR is the individual and his/her security (human security). The OECD defines SSR as the transformation of the security sector's management and operation in a direction more consistent with democratic norms, the rule of law and principles of good governance. This definition highlights two vital elements: the importance of democratic and civilian control over the security sector and the effective functioning of the sector. This means that a crucial challenge is to establish effective security mechanisms that are under sufficient control. SSR is more than just the institutionalisation of laws and practices, it is a lengthy, complex and unpredictable social process. SSR varies greatly from country to country due to their different needs and conditions, while it is also somewhat similar to democracy: they are both permanent processes regarding which no society will ever achieve perfection (Hänggi 2003: 17).

Institutions are a key element of SSR, but institutional focus should be supplemented with a more problem-oriented focus (Edmunds 2004: 60). This means that SSR is also the sum of changes in the ways of thinking and practising security. It involves a series of parallel and directly/indirectly connected reforms in the security sector. The concept places humans in the centre by stressing demilitarisation, depolitisation and stronger civil, democratic and parliamentary control (Hadžić 2004: 11).

A point of departure in the SSR concept is the dysfunctionality of the security sector. This refers to this sector's incapacity to provide security to the state and people in an effective way or to the fact that the sector even constitutes a threat (security deficit). In practice, SSR reduces a security deficit by lowering the democratic deficit (lack of control over the security sector). SSR is therefore a way to achieve the objective of providing security in the setting of effective democratic civilian control. A holistic approach in SSR is therefore about creating effective security institutions, integrating partial reforms in the fields of defence, intelligence, the police and the judiciary, and establishing democratic civil control. The concept merges the operational effectiveness aspect with the democratic governance aspect. Providing both aspects of SSR is a challenge not only for developing post-conflict states in transition, but also for more mature and consolidated democracies (Hänggi 2004: 4–5). SSR is also important for reducing potential pathologies of the security sector like the overconsumption of resources, underinvestment of resources in the security sector, overemphasis on hard or soft security instruments, ineffective democratic control of the sector etc. Such pathologies of the security sector might lead to the reverse process of de-democratisation and even affect economic growth in developing countries (Law 2004: 6).

Many authors have specified various dimensions of SSR. For example, Kuhlman-Callaghan (2000) identified the following: changes in thinking and acting in the field of security, changes to constitutional and institutional frameworks, democratic civil control over the armed forces, reforms of the armed forces containing a redefinition of their purposes and tasks with associated alterations to the structure, training, equipment, size, and various forms of international security cooperation with higher levels of integration. Bearne – Oliker – O'Brien – Rathmell (2005: 1) more specifically identify the following SSR dimensions:

- improving the security sector's effectiveness in implementing security policies;
- state-building;
- improving capacities for civil control over the security sector;
- improving democratic control, especially during the transition from a mono-party to a democratic political system;
- improving the legitimacy of the state and its security sector;
- improving transparency and responsibility in public affairs;
- funding the security sector according to society's capacity; and
- conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction with the implementation of peace agreements.

While discussing SSR, Edmunds (2004: 47–49) noted the following dimensions of SSR: democratisation, good governance, economic development, professionalisation, conflict prevention and integration into Western institutions. These dimensions were assessed as follows:

- Democratisation: the security sector can pose an important obstacle to democratisation. This is clearly seen in the politisation of the security sector in terms of political appetites to use that sector for political purposes or the security sector's involvement in politics. In this respect, democratic civil control is a vital aspect of any democratisation process.
- Good governance is about the appropriate and effective provision of public goods to the population (security is an essential public good). Security institutions should be effective and affordable.
- Economic development is easily disturbed by security instability and unpredictability. Both factors stem from the security sector's poor performance. This means that the effective provision of a secure environment can bring developmental benefits.
- Professionalisation concerns improving the capacity of security institutions to effectively carry out what is required by the civil authority. For the armed forces, this means their tasks are precisely defined to ensure a better performance in future challenges. Hadžić (2004: 36) also showed

that professionalisation is the key cumulative change in the armed forces. Professionalisation aims to improve the implementation of new tasks.
- Conflict prevention: SSR helps prevent internal and external conflicts. Regarding the former, it is about effective management of tensions and problems, while regarding external conflicts it entails creating regional trust based on an existing professionalised security sector under effective civil control (SSR as a regional confidence-building measure).
- Integration into Western institutions: SSR is an important criterion for joining the EU (in the SAP process) and NATO (in the MAP process). It is known that this criterion was improved based on negative experiences with certain states in previous faster rounds.

Indicators of Democratisation in the Field of National Defence and Comparative Results from Slovenia and Montenegro

The above text suggests many possible indicators to support further comparative assessments. For the purposes of our paper, we extracted eight indicators that clearly demonstrate the democratisation of national defence in Slovenia and Montenegro. We relied on the qualitative and quantitative comparative methods to extract some similarities and differences in the countries' democratisation.[1]

Socialist legacy as a basis for creating a new defence system – an initial democratic deficit in the defence field

It is generally agreed that the socialist legacy has hindered SSR in Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. Peterson Ulrich (1999: 183–184) stressed persisting democratic deficits within both civilian and military institutions limiting the full achievement of democratic political control, such as: weakness in budgetary control, lack of expertise on defence issues, a low level of trust in civilian oversight bodies, limited political will to influence defence processes, a poor relationship between the defence ministry and the parliament, a lack of transparency in all democratic institutions, the strong commitment of civilian and military leaders to democracy, deficits in norms of political influence, and the compatibility of military and social values. Croissant – Kuehn (2017: 1) recapitulate the view that reforming post-socialist defence institutions has been challenging due to the ineffectiveness and insufficient preparedness of many new democracies to develop robust institutions to ensure democratic control of the armed forces

1 The limitation of this approach is our narrower focus on SSR in selected countries (we focus predominantly on military/defence institutions in the entire spectrum of security institutions) and our limited number of indicators. Many more indicators could have been a subject or our research, but this would extend the length of this paper well beyond a typical paper in a journal. We should also stress that analysis is done in accordance with the concept of SSR, a newer tool developed at the end of nineties, while some analysed policies are older than that.

and turn them into effective providers of security. Young (2018: 162–168) also stresses that legacy concepts are actively and passively still evident in European post-communist defence institutions in the form of highly centralised decision-making, the absence of critical thinking, an algorithmic approach to problem-solving, undeveloped defence planning, restrictive interpretation of positive law, the absence of a policy framework, unclear institutional roles/missions, inadequate force management and development, capabilities, a weak defence civilian cadre etc. A large body of literature also considers other broader democratic aberrations occurring in the Western Balkans. Much attention has been placed on the widespread and enduring nexus or symbiosis between politics, the security forces, business and organised crime (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2008: 43; Center for the Study of Democracy 2003). This nexus has been maintained through concealed, informal networks that have extended into the intelligence agencies, military establishments and police services. This has created a high level of impunity for those involved in such criminal activity and explains how organised crime has become entrenched in the Western Balkans with serious effects for the functioning of states, the rule of law, good governance and state weakness (Giatzidis 2007: 331–348; Gyarmati 2003: 55–60). Such a link with organised crime has been called a threat to democracy (National Defense University 1997: 204), the economy and economic development (Hebenton – Thomas 1995: 204) and has also undermined civil society, destabilised the political process and affected the rule of law (Williams 1994: 108–109).

Certain troubling elements of the post-socialist legacy have been revealed in Slovenia and Montenegro, although the situation is gradually improving. For Slovenia, three pressing problems are noted. The first refers to the unclear institutional role of the new security sector (especially the intelligence services) when combined with corruption and ineffective parliamentary control. A series of scandals after independence showed that the government and civil and military intelligence services were involved in the (international) illegal smuggling of arms in order to help the friendly Croatia, Bosniaks and Croats in Bosnia in their fight against the common enemy. Two larger shipments of weapons were uncovered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) or the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the related scandals were used in a mutual political struggle for power. Escalation of this fight led to the "Depala vas" scandal in which military intelligence officers arrested an undercover agent who was working for the police. The police had been investigating a potential *coup d'état* by the defence minister and his followers. Eventually, the minister of defence lost his position due to having exceeded his authorities.[2] The second legacy example came in the late 1990s in

2 Also other scandals, reflecting unclear institutional relations and mutual competition, emerged in Slovenia in that time. One of these was scandal VIS/VOMO, which was based on a systematic release of secret documents implicating both civilian and defence intelligence-security services in illegal activities.

the form of unrealistic defence planning. The process was based on the typical Eastern European use of military divisions (despite in reality Slovenia having much smaller armed forces) and on the excessive use of lofty goals that were never really achieved in practice. An important external study by US General Garrett concluded that the Slovenian armed forces were "hollow" and its actual capacities are much smaller. Slovenia had to change this in order to join NATO. Another deficit lingering since the country's independence is the seemingly unusual incompatibility between civilian and military values. The country's secession process was largely driven by the idea of demilitarisation (see Grizold 1992: 80; Jelušič 1997: 163) and such an attitude to the armed forces continues among a significant share of the population even after Slovenia established its own armed forces. Today, the armed forces enjoy relatively strong public support (see Garb – Malešič 2016), which is under serious pressure in cases like the local public attitude to the main military training site at Poček. With respect to Montenegro, the post-SFRY socialist legacy was more present in the state union with Serbia (1992–2006) than after it achieved its independence in 2006. During the time of Milošević, there was a considerable lack of transparency in the entire security sector, with secrecy becoming a means for protecting the regime, while significant links between the regime and the criminal underground were detected. War criminals were hidden and drugs and weapons were illicitly trafficked also with the notable assistance of the intelligence and security services. Hadžić (2001: 82) and Djurdjević-Lukić (2007: 160–162) concluded this lack of transparency protracted the security sector reforms and reflected the absence of substantial democratic oversight in the defence sector.

Both cases reveal a chronic lack of military expertise. Slovenia and Montenegro have never established their own military academy and the initial educated personnel were mainly graduates of the Yugoslav military academy in Belgrade. Many professionals with high ranks in YPA were denied a job or promotion in the Slovenian armed forces. Civilian academic defence studies were only able to bridge this lack of military expertise to a certain extent and thus Slovenia developed a unique combination of an internal education system (Staff and Command School) and university defence studies at the University of Ljubljana. However, Montenegro gave a chance to ex-Yugoslav graduates, but still had to largely compensate by educating cadets and military personnel in famous foreign military academies and colleges abroad.

Integration into NATO and effects on the democratisation of defence

Enlargement has become a key, even a vital, policy of NATO and the EU. It leads to new countries becoming members and is simultaneously a tool for stabilising and democratising the candidate countries. In the national defence

field, participation in the Partnership for Peace has become a very important and accelerating tool for achieving NATO's standards for prospective members (Mannitz 2013: 21) and for the more abstract sharing of joint values and norms within the transatlantic area. NATO required a "transformation through convergence" (Forster 2010: 17) and a more democratic defence policy and system. Candidate countries were given enormous incentives to implement principles of democratic civil–military relations, adopt norms and guidelines for the oversight of armed forces and to strengthen their accountability (see Ball 2010: 33).

For both Slovenia and Montenegro, it is very clear that their NATO Membership Action Plan literally boosted the democratisation of their national defence and security policy in five dimensions. In the political and economic dimension, NATO expected the candidate countries to resolve conflicts peacefully, respect human rights, create appropriate civilian control over the armed forces etc. In the defence dimension, NATO required a defence-reform process leading to the creation of adequate military capabilities usable for operations in the NATO framework. The security dimension of this process helped in the creation of a reliable secret data protection system, while the legal dimension required adoption of the NATO "acquis". Slovenia became a full NATO member in 2004 and Montenegro in 2017. Their inclusion was ratified in the national parliaments of all NATO member states, meaning they had no political objections regarding the state of their democracy. In Montenegro, the decision to join was adopted by the parliament, while Slovenia also organised a national referendum on joining NATO and the EU in 2003 in which a share of 66.08% voted in favour of joining NATO.

However, joining NATO has not proven to be a panacea for all of the problems of democratisation in the two countries. We still see democratic aberrations and deficits in the defence and security field. Montenegro is struggling to build up integrity in the defence sector, seen in the imbalance between the practice of free access to information and regulations protecting state secrets (see DiFi Norway 2015: 39). The Law on Data Secrecy (2014) defined secrecy too broadly in terms of national security and defence protection. The procurement of equipment and public tenders seem to be issues in both countries before and after joining NATO. Montenegro has encountered issues of inefficient internal financial and expenditure control and internal audit control (DiFi Norway 2015: 2). The issue of efficient financial management is still being consolidated after NATO accession, as demonstrated by the relatively frequent cases of public procurement procedures being repealed (see Vijesti 2019). In Slovenia, a major political scandal erupted in the process of purchasing Patria armoured modular vehicles in 2008. A procurement contract with Patria worth EUR 278 million (initially for 135 vehicles, but later reduced to 30) was the core of a widespread political controversy in 2008 when allegations of corruption and mismanagement emerged, centring on business and government officials in Finland, Austria,

Croatia and Slovenia (see RAND Europe 2016). The institutional powers of the Defence Intelligence Agency (OVS) also seem to be somewhat unclear as shown by the Veber scandal. A parliamentary committee's supervision of this service in November 2014 disclosed that the Minister of Defence had ordered OVS to conduct an analysis of the effects of the potential privatisation of Telekom Slovenija. Both the parliamentary committee and the prime minister concluded that this act was in gross violation of the authority and constituted political misuse of the intelligence service (RTV 2018; The Slovenia Times 2015).

Change in perceptions from a narrow military to a broader spectrum of security threats

Once the Cold War and Communism had come to an end, security perceptions across Europe changed significantly. People and states ceased to perceive and prioritise the traditional military threats while several non-military threats were increasingly seen as a national security problem. Many authors (see Pfaltzgraff 1991: 14; Grizold 1999; Prezelj 2000; Hadžić 2004 etc.) stressed the importance of environmental, economic, demographic, criminal, terrorist, health, information and immigration threats, the proliferation of WMD, extremism, ethnic conflicts and so on. This change in security perceptions is relevant for its effect on the reforms of defence and security policies and systems.

Primary national security documents were used to investigate how the threat perception has evolved over time in both countries. The results clearly show the very similar development of threat perceptions from military to non-military. This means that the democratisation of this field in the two countries encountered relatively similar inputs from the security environment. The reduction of inter-state military tensions allowed both countries to further democratise their policies and systems.

Slovenia's national security policy and system were broadly conceived after attaining independence, however the evolution of threat prioritisation is easily detected. The biggest threat to national security in the 1990s was military threat (due to unresolved national, political, military and economic problems among states in former Yugoslavia, potential retaliatory attempts to restore borders and the revival of crises in larger Europe) (Resolucija o izhodiščih zasnove nacionalne varnosti RS 1993). The perception then moved over to 'new' and 'dynamic' non-military threats and risks. After 2000, decision-makers perceived military threats in South-East Europe (SEE) as ones that could only indirectly affect Slovenian national security (Resolucija o strategiji nacionalne varnosti RS 2001). In 2010, a wide spectrum of non-military threats, like climate change, terrorism and public safety threats etc., was recognised by the government (Resolucija o strategiji nacionalne varnosti RS 2010), while hybrid threats were stressed in a more recently adopted document. These threats refer to the multidimensional

combination of traditional and non-traditional threats performed by state or non-state actors (Resolucija o strategiji nacionalne varnosti RS, 2019). Increasing focus has been given to cyber threats and threats posed by illegal immigration. Montenegro's first National Security Strategy in the new state stressed that conventional military threats could jeopardise national security, but significantly less so than non-military risks and a possible regional crisis (Strategija nacionalne bezbjednosti Crne Gore 2006). A very similar perception is seen in the next document from 2008, although transnational threats were perceived to be dominant and it also mentioned that the country could be threatened by different sorts of IT security risks (Strategija nacionalne bezbjednosti Crne Gore 2008). In the National Defence Strategy, the dangers of military threats are addressed, but the document still prioritised asymmetric threats (Strategija odbrane Crne Gore 2008). The Strategic Defence Review (2010) stressed the possibility of the region being destabilised apart from the above-mentioned threats (Strategijski pregled odbrane 2010). The newest strategic documents adopted since joining NATO in 2017 include cyber and hybrid threats (Strategija nacionalne bezbjednosti, 2018) and illegal migrations, weapons proliferation, energy security etc. (Strategija odbrane Crne Gore 2019).

The creation of new defence institutions (armed forces) and mechanisms for democratic and civil control

Good governance of the national security sector requires measures and models for the effective, efficient, legitimate and transparent functioning of security institutions (Caparini – Fluri 2000: 8). In this context, it is essential to introduce structural changes and redefine the tasks of the armed forces. It is also vital for modern democracies to create mechanisms for democratic and civilian control of the defence institutions and armed forces (see OECD 2005: 50; Born 2010). Namely, it is about putting the armed forces in democratic order. The first critical measure is to appoint a civilian defence minister instead of a Communist-type military defence minister. He/she is "the key civil controller" of the armed forces (Hadžić 2004: 12, 33) responsible for civilian oversight in many legal areas, like: budget and law proposals, monitoring of financial spending, organisation and formation of the armed forces, as well as promotions, appointments, and the relieving and retiring of soldiers. The number of civilians in defence sector management further adds to democratic control over the armed forces (Tagarev 2008: 110). The next critical measure is to develop effective parliamentary oversight of the armed forces in the form of parliamentary committees for democratic control of defence and the related intelligence service. This is a crucial institution for democratic norms and standards, responsible for supervising and governing military and security agencies, and developing sufficient expertise and review mechanisms in the process of adopting laws, budgets and policies

(Caparini 2010: 258). However, there is no definitive model for parliamentary oversight of the armed forces and, as Born (2010: 28) states, "democratic control of armed forces is never finished and may always be improved".

Both countries have appointed a civilian defence minister since their independence, whereas defence ministers during the SFRY came from the military. Still, it is true that Slovenia's first civilian defence minister wore a military uniform during the 10-day war for independence with SFRY in 1991. The number of civilians engaged in the defence system of both countries is quite high (1,134 in Slovenian and 149 in the Montenegrin MoD in 2018), reflecting a situation in which many civilians are dealing with defence and military matters.

The activities of both defence ministers and their ministries are exposed to public scrutiny and specific control by national assemblies and their specialised committees. The biggest difference between the countries is that there are two main parliamentary committees monitoring the defence sector in Slovenia (Committee for Defence, and Committee for Oversight of Intelligence and Security Services – KNOVS) and a more comprehensive one in Montenegro (Parliamentary Committee for Security and Defence), responsible for overseeing the work of the entire security sector. The later committee was established after the country's independence in 2006 and is based on a comprehensive legal framework completed and improved by adoption of the Law on Parliamentary Oversight within the Area of Security and Defence (Zakon o parlamentarnom nadzoru u oblasti bezbjednosti i odbrane 2010). In Slovenia, defence and intelligence committees existed after independence, but a key improvement in parliamentary control came in 2003 with adoption of the Parliamentary Oversight of Intelligence and Security Services Act (see Zakon o parlamentarnem nadzoru obveščevalnih in varnostnih služb, 2003). On paper, all committees in both countries exercise control using a range of means, including questions by delegates, and parliamentary inquiries, yet both countries have also been criticised for lacking strong and effective control, that is sometimes politicised. For example, it was claimed in Montenegro that the committee generally does not use its full power, that it is very weak and politicised and controls neither budget planning nor spending (Radević – Kalač 2012: 167). It was also claimed that the committee should have been more proactive and used all the mechanisms available for parliamentary control (Muk 2009: 20).

The tasks of the armed forces of both countries have broadened following independence and especially after joining NATO. After Slovenia attained its in independence in 1991, a new Defence and Protection Law was adopted to regulate the defence tasks and structure of the Territorial Defence forces. Under a new Defence Act passed in 1994 (Zakon o obrambi 1994), the defence forces were restructured and renamed the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF). In terms of parliamentary control, it is very important that the National Assembly adopts or amends the Defence Act with a two-thirds majority of votes instead

of the normal majority. This makes changes in the defence sector less vulnerable to politicisation because this provision requires that political parties in government and opposition reach an agreement. The Slovenian Government is responsible for implementing and preparing the nation's defence based on decisions of the National Assembly, the Constitution and legislation. The President of the RS is the Commander-in-Chief of the SAF and performs this function according to the Constitution and state laws. Article 37 of the Defence Act defines the armed forces' tasks: providing military education and training for armed combat and other forms of military defence, ensuring the required readiness, conducting military defence, as well as participation in protecting and rescuing in the event of natural and other disasters. Before joining NATO, a very relevant change was introduced to this law. This amendment extended national defence tasks to include involvement and active state participation in international security alliances under international treaties. A similar extension was made to the Constitution in 2003, with Article 3a thereof prescribing that in an international treaty ratified by the National Assembly with a two-thirds majority vote of all deputies Slovenia may transfer the exercise of part of its sovereign rights to international organisations. In 2004, the Defence Law was further amended to allow armed forces to cooperate with the police on wider protection of the state border within the national territory. In 2015, amidst the refugee crisis the law was further extended to authorise the armed forces as part of the protection of the state border to warn or temporarily restrict the movement of persons and control groups and crowds.

The Army of Montenegro was formed in 2007. Articles 130–131 of the Montenegrin Constitution define the Council for Defence and Security as the main body responsible for making decisions in the field of defence and security. The Council comprises the President of Montenegro as president of this body, the Prime Minister and the President of Parliament. This body is responsible for approving the plan for the armed forces, deciding on commanding with those forces, proposing international missions, proposing to declare a state of emergency or war to the parliament, proposing the promotion of military officers/diplomatic representatives, proposing the use of the armed forces to help the police with border protection etc. (Ustav Crne Gore 2007; Zakon o odbrani Crne Gore 2017; Zakon o vojsci Crne Gore 2017). Slovenia does not possess such a collective decision-making body in the narrower defence field. The tasks of Montenegro's armed forces are also broadly defined in the law, ranging from defending the country's independence, sovereignty and territory, participating in international forces through to other legal tasks like helping in natural disasters (Zakon o vojsci Crne Gore 2017; Zakon o zaštiti i spašavanju 2016). These tasks were broadened within the existing Law on Defence when joining NATO. Two articles on collective defence (Articles 38a and 38b) were added, touching on the role of Parliament and the President in requesting NATO's assistance and

the possibility that Montenegro's airspace also be protected by NATO (Zakon o odbrani Crne Gore No. 2/17 2017).

Reform of defence budgets and balancing the expenses

The defence budget or military expenditure is the amount of a country's financial resources it dedicates to its armed forces and related activities. It is an important indicator of both a country's military power and the desire to achieve military capabilities through the proper allocation of resources (Fetterly 2007). Brauner (2015) investigated the relationship between military expenditures and democracy. Democracy appears to have a negative effect on military spending and democracies spend less on the military than autocracies do. The author revealed that an absolute dictatorship spends around 40% more than a full democracy and that a successful move to democratic rule has a demilitarising impact. In addition, we can observe a typical trend of a growing defence budget in times of the international/internal deterioration of conflicts and a shrinking budget during periods of peace-building and cooperation. SIPRI (2013) gives a more specific assessment for Western and Central Europe: military spending rose in the period 2003–2009 and then decreased.

SSR and good governance of the security sector understand the defence budget as a major element of civilian control of military authorities. Transparency as an essential element of democracy can be assured since the budget and its programmes are decided on by civilian representatives (DCAF 2008). While adopting the military budget, it is critical to determine what is affordable, allocate scarce resources according to priorities both within the defence sector and between the defence and other sectors, identify the needs and crucial objectives of the security sector as a whole, and ensure the efficient and effective use of resources.

The comparative table below (Table 1) shows that Slovenia, as a 3.5-times larger country in population terms and a much richer country in GDP per capita terms, relatively speaking spends much less in terms of defence expenditure as a share of GDP. Interestingly and when viewed generally, the defence budget in relative numbers as a percentage of GDP has been falling since both countries became independent. This may be attributed to the fewer military threats in the region and the democratic redistribution of funds to other needs. The Montenegrin defence budget as a share of GDP was relatively high (2.26%) at the time it was reaching independence due to its previous war experience in 1999. Its membership in NATO in 2017 also contributed to the gradual increase in its defence budget. A trend of a rising defence budget is shown in both countries.

Table 1: Comparative overview of defence expenditure in USD[3]

Slovenia	2018	2017	2012	2007	2002	1997	1994
GDP	55.0 bn	48.9 bn	45.6 bn	45.2 bn	22.0 bn	18.2 bn	14.5 bn
GDP Per capita	26,586	23,654	22,193	22,473	11,170	10,200	6,800
Defence expenditure	553 m *	477 m *	509 m	741 m	275 m	329 m	290 m
Defence expenditure in % of GDP	0.97	0.97	1.12	1.64	1.2	1.8	2.1
Population	2,102,126	1,972,126	1,996,617	2,009,245	1,964,000	2,017,000	2,007,000
Montenegro	**2018**	**2017**	**2012**	**2007**			
GDP	5.39 bn	4.78 bn	4.28 bn	2.6 bn			
GDP Per capita	8,644	7,678	6,882	3,801			
Defence expenditure	85 m *	66 m *	52 m ***	59 m			
Defence expenditure in % of GDP	1.47	1.57	1.20	2.26			
Population	614,249	642,550	657,394	684,736			

Source: IISS, Military Balance 2019, 2018, 2013, 2008, 2004, 2002, 1999, 1997, 1995

The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia exercises control over the security sector and the SAF particularly through its Committee on Budget and Finance and through the allocation of defence funds via the defence budget (Jelušič 2007: 2–6). On the other hand, the defence budget is an essential vehicle for providing the basis for constant modernisation, equipping and operational actions (Resolucija o splošnem dolgoročnem programu razvoja in opremljanja Slovenske vojske do leta 2025 2010). The Slovenian government's long-term plan for defence expenditure is 2% of GDP, but the economic situation means the plan will not be realised before 2025. According to Furlan – Barjaktarjević (2019: 101), the lowest level of defence expenditure was in 2015 (0.93% of GDP), with the main reason for this rapid decline being the financial and economic crisis. The defence sector has lost one-third of its budget, going from USD 750 million in 2007 to a projected USD 532 million in 2018.

Montenegro had the biggest budget (2.26% of GDP) in 2007 right after the Defence Ministry and the Army of Montenegro were established and institutionalised. This share of the budget also had NATO accession in mind. Due to the Plan of Investment in the Defence Sector 2018–2024 and the process of defence reforms, it is also expected that the defence budget will increase in the following years to 2% of GDP (including military pensions) (see Izvještaj o radu i stanju u upravnim oblastima iz nadleznosti Ministarstva odbrane za 2017. godinu 2018).

3 Data for Montenegro are shown only since its independence.
Legend: * NATO definition; ** includes military pensions; *** excludes military pensions

Professionalisation of the armed forces: from a conscript to a professional force

The transformation of military structures raises questions regarding the size and personnel composition of the armed forces. Janowitz (1971) argued early on that countries will follow the general spirit of the new trend towards smaller, fully professional, and self-contained military forces. Large conscript-based force structures and land-based territorial defence forces are no longer a priority after the Cold War. The number of military recruits has started to exceed demand, questioning the need for a conscript army in many countries (Haltiner – Klein 2005: 9–13). The carrying out of military tasks with fewer soldiers (Hosek 2003) or, generally, reducing the armed forces is also a fundamental element of defence transformation (Haltiner – Klein 2005; Hänggi 2004; Law 2004). At the same time, defence transformation is closely linked to professionalisation, which enables the armed forces to perform their newly defined tasks and better meet future challenges and requirements (Edmunds 2004; Hadžić 2004). One can say that the image of highly trained and specialised professional personnel has replaced the former ideal of a patriotic warrior.

A comparison of the two countries reveals a general decrease in the total number of personnel. Conscript armed forces have been called into the question and both countries have shifted towards a fully professional force (Montenegro did so upon independence while Slovenia changed its system in 2003). We should also note that some reductions might also be simply due to the lack of recruitment or bureaucratic measures to remove the 'hollow forces'.

Table 2: Personnel in the armed forces

Slovenia	**2018**	**2017**	**2012**	**2007**	**2002**	**1997**	**1994**
Active soldiers	7,250	7,250	7,600	5,973	9,000 (including conscripts)	9,550 (including conscripts)	8,400 (including conscripts)
CONSCRIPTS					4,000–5,000	5,500	5,500
Montenegro	**2018**	**2017**	**2012**	**2007**			
Active soldiers	1,950 (Army 875, Navy 350, Air Force 225, Other 500)	1,950 (Army 875, Navy 350, Air Force 225, Other 500)	2,080 (Army 1,500, Navy 350, Air Force 230)	5,800 (Army 2,500, Navy 3,300)			

Source: IISS, Military Balance 2019, 2018, 2013, 2008, 2004, 2002, 1999, 1997, 1995

The SAF's strategic reform goal is to form a modern, efficient, rational, small and well-equipped army that provides for national defence and enables cooperation in NATO's collective defence and peace-support operations (Prezelj 2008). In the context of professionalisation of the force, a significant reduction was made from 72,000 in 1997 to around 38,500 members in 2002 (active + reserve members). The transformation to a professional army with contractual reserves enabled a further size reduction to 7,250 active and 1,500 reserve members in 2018.

Montenegro had 5,800 active military personnel in 2007 in a force inherited from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. All personnel were given the opportunity under the Law on the Armed Forces of Yugoslavia to choose in which union member state they wished to continue their future military service. This was a very democratic consensual reform point in the process of the union's peaceful dissolution. With a decision of the president of state in August 2006, the existing conscription was abolished (see Tahirović – Injac 2016: 46). Since being established, the Army of Montenegro has been a professional military force reduced from 2,080 personnel in 2012 to 1,950 in 2017. The new Strategic Defence Review and New Formation of the Army of Montenegro contain plans to continue decreasing personnel numbers to 1,800.

Changes to the personnel policy: gender composition of the armed forces as an example of democratic representativeness

Gender mainstreaming and growing awareness of the importance of women's participation in peace and security management has become an inevitable element of defence policy and related personnel policy. The main idea of the feminist approach is that 50% of the world's population is female and, without females, genuine and sustainable peace cannot be achieved. Accordingly, gender integration into the armed forces is vital. There are three gender perspectives on the security sector: 1) respect of universal human rights; 2) men and women are equal and must be involved in decision-making processes; and 3) gender mainstreaming could improve operational effectiveness (Arostegui 2015: 8). The representation of women in key armed forces positions seems not to pose a challenge to the military profession (Schnabel – Farr 2012: 79). A positive-action system is increasing women's representation in the armed forces where the average in some countries is 10%. This is an estimated standard in OSCE countries as determined by the Women in the Armed Forces in the OSCE Region report (Atkins 2018: 3). The improved role played by women in the armed forces is also the result of endeavours of the UN, its international legal framework and resolutions arguing for the promotion of gender equality in peace and security, ensuring the participation of women in decision-making, and integrating gender perspectives in all processes (Arostegui 2015; also see

Groothedde 2013: 13). Excluding women from the armed forces and holding them back from certain positions in the armed forces can be considered to amount to gender inequality.

The comparative assessment of the two countries shows they both have increasingly enabled women's participation in the armed forces and thereby added to the force's stronger democratic representativeness. In Slovenia, it is obvious that each major reform process, especially the creation of the country's own armed force in 1991 and abolishing the conscript force in 2003, were important legal steps giving women equal joining, recruiting and career-making opportunities in the force (Brožič – Pešec 2017: 125). The current Defence Act includes the principle of equal opportunity for men and women in employment (Article 92). Female members are integrated into units under the command of the Chief of General Staff, work and train together with men, and are subject to the same chain of command, standards and discipline. According to the Ministry of Defence (September 2019), women constitute 16.5% of the military structure. This share is one of the highest among NATO member states. At the end of the 1990s, the share of women in the SAF was 13%, ranking the Slovenian army among the most feminised armed forces in the world. Also extremely relevant is the appointment of Major General Alenka Ermenc as the Slovenian army's Chief of Staff in 2018. According to the MoD, in no other NATO member state does a woman currently hold this position (RTV 2019). Female officers also have worked as information and personnel officers in international military operations and in 2011 one of these officers reached the highest female rank in the SAF: brigade general (Vuga Beršnak – Jelušič 2015). In 2017, Major Nina Raduha was the first female commanding officer of a contingent in UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) (Obramba 2017). The director of the national police in Slovenia is also female.

Montenegro's security sector features more women than in other sectors. According to data from June 2019, the share of women in the MoD is 49.26%, in the Agency for National Security 38.5% and in the Ministry of the Interior 58.1%. The vast majority of women in the MoD are administrative civil servants (63.23%) and, incomparably less, non-commissioned officers (16.67%) and officers (0.23%) (Karović-Brčvak 2019: 32–35). Women accounted for 10.69% (193 women) of the Army of Montenegro in 2019. These figures are a significant rise since 2013 when the share was 8.97%. Female army members are employed more in civilian positions, such as in the medical service, logistics or military police (SEESAC/UNDP 2014: 14). Currently, nine female cadets are enrolled in military academies abroad (Karović-Brčvak 2019: 34). It is very interesting that the first cadet from Montenegro, who graduated from West Point, the most prestigious military academy in the USA, in June 2019 is a young woman (Vijesti 2019). Another story concerns Kristina Bačić, the country's first woman pilot in the armed forces, who graduated from an air force academy in Greece. Statistics

also show that nine women from the Army of Montenegro have participated in international missions. A female officer was appointed Gender Advisor to the Commander of NATO Allied Command Operations in July 2018 (Karović-Brčvak 2019: 34).

Transition from security consumer to security provider: participation in international peace-keeping and peace-building operations

The proliferation of violent and complex conflicts and crises after the Cold War added to the need for international peace-keeping and peace-building operations. Countries' participation in international multilateral operations is appreciated and understood as demonstrating accountability and willingness to share responsibility for international peace and stability. Schnabel and Farr (2012: 20) argue that the preparedness of security providers to meet a threat and assure peace and stability abroad is critical, while Lunn (2002: 93) understands this as proof of the improved political sensitivity to local conditions and consequences. Most multilateral military operations are led by UN and NATO frameworks. Especially the former has developed extensive standards of interoperability of military equipment, operating procedures and command and control mechanisms (Forster 2010: 15). Many SEE states became effective security providers through multilateral military operations stimulated by NATO and to some extent the EU, and their enlargement processes.

Comparing the two countries shows they both act as responsible security providers abroad. Kosovo is a major focus of the Slovenian contribution, while Afghanistan is a focus of the Montenegrin contribution. Their initial participation rose significantly in 2012: Slovenia to 431 and Montenegro to 43 soldiers.

The ability to take part in international military operations is central to Slovenia's defence strategy. The SAF first deployed members in 1997 to the OSCE multinational peacekeeping force ALBA in Albania and to UNFICYP in Cyprus. In 2007, with all-volunteer armed forces the SAF deployed a battalion-sized unit to Kosovo, and commanded the other Alliance troops. Today, the country contributes to EU, NATO, UN and OSCE operations, exercises with other member states, and assists in missions in SEE (IISS 2016). Due to security sensitivity after the Yugoslav wars, the SAF were not seriously deployed in the Western Balkans before 2002.

The Army of Montenegro participates in several international military missions – Resolute Support (Afghanistan), EU NAVFOR Atalanta (Somalia), EUTM (Mali), UN MINURSO (Western Sahara) and UNMIL (Liberia) (Ministarstvo odbrane Crne Gore 2019). Since 2018, Montenegro has deployed military staff to two more NATO missions: KFOR (Kosovo) and the multinational Enhanced

Table 3: Participation in foreign military operations

Slovenia	2018	2017	2012	2007	2002	1997	1994
AFGHANISTAN: NATO (Operation Resolute Support)	8	7	77 (ISAF)	42 (ISAF)			
BiH: EU – EUFOR (Operation Althea)	14	14	14	58	78 (SFOR II)		
IRAQ (Operation Inherent Resolve)	6	6		4 (NTM-I)			
LATVIA: NATO (Enhanced Forward Presence)	50	50					
LEBANON: UN – UNIFIL	18	15	14				
MALI: EU – EUTM	4	4					
MIDDLE EAST: UN – UNTSO	3	3	3	2	2		
SERBIA: NATO – KFOR	241	252	323	92 (Joint Enterprise)	6		
UKRAINE: OSCE	1	2					
ALBANIA: OSCE – ALBA						25	
CYPRUS: UNFICYP						27	
SUM	**345**	**353**	**431**	**198**	**86**	**52**	

Montenegro	2018	2017	2012	2007
AFGHANISTAN: NATO (Operation Resolute Support)	20	18	41 (ISAF)	
MALI: EU – EUTM	1	1		
UKRAINE: OSCE	3	2		
WESTERN SAHARA: UN – MINURSO	2	2		
ALBANIA: OSCE		1		
SERBIA: OSCE		1		
LIBERIA: UNMIL			2	2
Foreign forces – Ireland OSCE				1
SUM	**26**	**25**	**43**	**3**

Source: IISS, Military Balance 2019, 2018, 2013, 2008, 2004, 2002, 1999, 1997, 1995

Forward Presence (eFP) Battalion Battle Groups (Latvia)[4]. Before 2018, Montenegro did not participate in any regional missions but at the end of that year

4 The data for Montenegrin participation in the mission EU NAVFOR Atalanta, KFOR and eFPare not shown in table.

it decided to deploy two officers in KFOR, a mission with a regional character (Kosovo). However, this decision has been protracted due to political sensitivity and the close bilateral relations with Serbia.

Conclusion

This paper shows that the democratisation of the defence and security sector lies at the heart of the democratisation of any state in the region. We are able to confirm the claim that serious and significant progress in democratising defence and security in Slovenia and Montenegro came after dealing with the post-socialist legacy, the reduction of military threats and joining NATO. We can observe that both countries have sought to strike a balance between the effectiveness of the defence and security sector and the effectiveness of democratic and civilian control.

In terms of progress with democratisation, we found that the socialist legacy has hindered the democratisation and related reforms of the defence and security sectors in both countries. We noted problems like the unclear institutional role, lack of transparency, overuse of secrecy, elements of corruption, ineffective parliamentary control and the chronic lack of military expertise. However, the democratisation of defence and security benefited immensely from the very structured process of joining NATO. Ratification of their membership by all member states' parliaments means no political objection was raised against the state of democracy in relation to their national defence and security systems. Both countries have shown clear progress in adopting joint values and norms, the ability to resolve conflicts peacefully, respect for human rights, adopting the NATO acquis, organising appropriate civil control over the security sector, functional armed forces that can contribute to allied foreign operations, relatively reliable secrecy-protection systems etc. Threat perceptions in both countries have moved from military to non-military, creating space for many democratic reforms in the security sector. Still, both countries have started to perceive hybrid threats (military and non-military threat combinations) in light of the deteriorating relations between Russia and the West. Slovenia and Montenegro established new armed forces after achieving their independence under a civilian defence minister, with a relatively large number of civilian staff responsible for defence issues in the MoD, new parliamentary committees to control the armed forces and the entire security sector. Moreover, the tasks of the armed forces are defined sufficiently narrowly or broadly in the two countries. A major change was seen in both countries just prior to joining NATO in terms of adding the defence of allied territory to their existing constitutions and legislation. The defence budgets in the two countries reflect a democratic redistribution of resources from military to other sectors (in the form of lower defence budgets), yet both countries plan to raise their military funding in light

of the growing uncertainty in the international security environment. The trend of reducing the total number of active soldiers and shifting from a conscript to a fully professional force (in 2003 by Slovenia, in 2006 by Montenegro) is evident in both countries. Democratic representativeness is reflected in both countries by the relatively large share of women in the armed forces (16.5% in Slovenia, 10.69% in Montenegro), with women training and graduating alongside men and taking up important command positions. The deployment of the armed forces to foreign operations shows both countries have developed from being a security consumer to a security provider. The two countries have also considerably increased their participation in such operations.

In terms of differences between the countries, the biggest one is the timing of the democratic changes. Slovenia achieved independence much sooner than Montenegro and thus most changes came sooner. This enabled Slovenia to play a special mentoring role in the area of defence reforms in Montenegro. We should also mention that Montenegro suffered tougher post-socialist issues during the time under Slobodan Milošević in the joint state union with Serbia, while Slovenia was already free. Perhaps the most obvious differences are structural, such as the existence of only one comprehensive parliamentary monitoring committee in Montenegro instead of two in Slovenia and the existence of the Council for Defence and Security as a collective decision-making body in Montenegro. There is no such body in Slovenia (at least in peace time). It is evident that Montenegro as a smaller and economically less developed country than Slovenia dedicates significantly more funding to defence as a share of GDP. Slovenia probably has one of the most feminised armed forces in the world with women at the top of the armed forces and also at the top of the country's police force. While Montenegro still does not send many soldiers to international operations in the SEE region, this will improve in the future as happened in the Slovenian case.

The SSR concept suggests that no society can ever achieve perfection when it comes to democratisation. Obviously, the transformation of defence institutions in both countries is continuing and sometimes lags behind the progress already achieved in other democratic institutions. The most serious challenges perhaps relate to the effectiveness of the parliamentary control over the armed forces and intelligence services in both countries. The key lesson here is that the two countries have done a lot, but more still needs to be done to improve the nexus of democratic and security culture for all stakeholders, such as parliamentarians, ministers, directors of defence and security agencies, employees, the media etc.

Our results should also be considered from the perspective of the division between external and internal factors that has added to the quality of democracy in the two countries. The factors identified above are both internal and external in origin. Yet it seems that the biggest drivers of democratic change in these countries have been external, such as the collapse of Communism in other Eu-

ropean countries, the associated end of the East–West conflict and reduction of military threats in Europe's security environment. This external 'confusion' was bridged by the NATO enlargement policy that appears to be the strongest external factor contributing to the democratic changes in both countries. These external factors enabled internal factors to play an important role. The shift in threat perceptions paved the way for several internal structural reforms, such as civilian defence ministers, a large number of civilians in defence establishments, reducing defence budgets and the total number of soldiers (accompanied by a change from a conscript to a professional armed force) etc. The greater democratic representativeness in terms of the percentage of women in the armed forces seems to be equally driven by the external and internal trends of women's growing rights across Europe.

Another question is the significance of the above factors from the perspective of the resilience of democracy in the two states. We see two main threats to democracy in the field of defence and security in both countries. The first threat stems from the major deterioration of the security situation in wider Europe (e.g. Russia–West) or in the Western Balkans. Both democracies could swiftly encounter the need to change their threat perception and reverse the above-mentioned trends (e.g. an increase in defence and security budgets, an increase in soldiers etc.). This scenario would lead to increased security powers of the whole security apparatus that could seriously test and shake the resilience of both democracies. Another related threat coming from within each country is the major weakness of the democratic political system in the shape of a democratically elected authoritarian state leader who seeks to gradually start breaking up the democratic elements of each state or at least reduce their efficiency. Let us simply recall the acts of Hitler and Mussolini who integrated German and Italian societies in relation to perceived internal and external threats and at the expense of democracy in both states. Modern democracies remain weak in this scenario.

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Contributors of review essays should meet the following requirements:

- A review essay should not exceed 6,000 words. It should also comply with all of the above requirements for book reviews
- Authors may either review several books related to a common topic, or provide a review essay of a single book considered to provide an exceptional contribution to the knowledge in a given field of research
- While a review essay should primarily deal with the contents of the book(s) under review, *Politics in Central Europe* encourages authors to use the reviewed material as a springboard for their own ideas and thoughts on the subject.