The difficulties in the recognition of small differences: The role of language politics with regard to minority policy making in the Serbia of the early 2000's

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ABSTRACT

In the beginning of the new millennium, Serbian minority politics accomplished institutional results that are significant even on an international scale. By this, we mean primarily the forming of personal autonomy, the system of the national so-called councils. This attracted the attention of both academics and policy makers who face similar challenges. Ethnical conditions and recent historical events of the West-Balkan have created complicated minority-political situations. These involve usual inequity issues but also new problems, belonging to the field between minority research and socio-linguistics. These problems are mostly connected to cultural self-expression and identity.

Our work assesses the politico-historic and socio-linguistic origins of this situation and its minority and language-political aspects. After this, we elaborate on the political solution options of the problems within the present legal framework.

Our goal is to start an interdisciplinary discourse of sociolinguistics and minority research, where our starting point is the situation emerging from the Montenegrins' becoming minority.

Keywords: minorities, personal autonomy, national councils, sociolinguistics, language politics

1. Introduction

In the beginning of the new millennium, Serbian minority politics accomplished institutional results that are significant even on an international scale. By this, we mean primarily the forming of 'personal autonomy', the system of the national councils (c.f. Sarnyai-Pap, 2010). This have attracted the attention of both academics and policy makers who face similar challenges. Ethnic conditions and recent historical events of the West-Balkan have created complicated minority-political situations. These involve usual inequity issues but also new problems that belong to the field between minority research and socio-linguistics. These problems are mostly connected to cultural self-expression and identity. - and they are quite much characterized by language-political games of symbolic power (these were recognized long ago by academic literature, See Bourdieu 1991, Kontra 2010).

The splitting of the so-called Serbo-Croatian language began in the '90s. This politically based process seems to have ended, since spatial isolation is now accomplished with the separation of Serbia-Montenegro. However, this apparently clear situation involves a new problem with regard to language politics and minority language use, because Montenegrin became a minority language in Serbia. It is an important change even if we know that this does not necessarily mean an explicit disadvantage in the symbolic competition of language variants: new stakes and new supposed profits have appeared in the 'market' of language use.

The process has consequences both in party and language politics. The autonomous Montenegro (Crna Gora) is linguistically varied, yet ethnic and linguistic identities do not coincide within the state. In other words: issues like which ethnicity one belongs to and which language one uses are neither obvious nor self-evident. The not-so-euro-conform discourse in the Balkan has aggravated the situation even more. Instead of facilitating the understanding of the new situation and relevantly handling the resulting language-political issues, Serbia (even if it has been pioneering in the personal aspects of minority institutions) is reluctant to support Montenegrins' rights for their linguistic and political self-organization, basically questioning the pragmatic value of these. This can be the effect of Serbians' century-long handling Montenegrins as their 'little brother' nation - therefore, they may be unwilling to face a loss of linguistic market share.

Our work assesses the politico-historic and socio-linguistic origins of this situation and its minority and language-political aspects. After this, we elaborate on the political solution options of the problems within the present legal framework. The results of the academic minority research discourse which are borrowed from the generally accepted system of linguistic theses and concepts will also be inspected. We also use these results to describe the minority situation and the formation of minority-political methods. However, we do not fail to express the occasional points of criticism concerning these methods. Mostly, these are based in the normative nature of the language-political issues of the so-called human rights paradigm. We see their prescriptive and persuasive aspects as contra-productive with regard to our topic. Our goal is to start an interdisciplinary discourse of sociolinguistics and minority research, and while doing so, our starting point is the situation that emerges from the Montenegrins' becoming minority.

2. The politico-historical relations of Serbia and Montenegro

2.1 The Romantic socio-geography of the Southern Slavic peoples
First of all, let us take a look at the symbolic history-image of the Southern Slavic political thought. According to the mythical and classicist parallels of this, among the Southern Slavic large groups (substantially connected in ethnic regards), Serbians and Montenegrins are the closest to each other.

More or less[1], they fall into the same category in the religious and linguistic dimensions of minority identity. The Serbian authors and politicians of the 19th century worked out an analogy for the interpretation of historical, regional separation and the connected state-form differences. This approach uses Greek parallels to present the historical connectedness of Southern Slavic peoples, including Serbians and Montenegrins. Two points of this system of parallels are to be highlighted here. On the one hand, in this approach of romantic retrospection, Serbians in the Carpathian basin are manifestations of culture, while Montenegrins are those of heroism, Novi Sad being the Serbian Athens and Montenegro the Serbian(!) Sparta. (See: Mikavica, 2006, pp. 128-144.; and Mikacavica, 2007, pp. 42-49.) The work of Jovan Cvijić transferred this public idea in the academic discourse of the first third of the 20th century, also intending to create foundations for political efforts (Cf. Cvijic, 2009). Nothing demonstrates the closeness of the connection more than the fact that, during the Southern Slavic separation process of the last twenty years, the longest lasting connection was that of the so-called asymmetric confederation of Serbia and Montenegro (separated in 2006). As of today, political discourse also includes contents in opposition with the originally supposed togetherness. For the defenders of the Serbian union-state, Voivodina and its minorities became one of the symbolic inhibitors of the Serbian national unity. Among these minorities, it is Montenegrins who last received an institutional status.

2.2 The characteristic completion of the Southern Slavic political program after the two world wars
In the dimension of projecting back onto the past, the plan of the Southern Slavic union-state considered Montenegro as an autonomous entity. The politico-theoretical program viewed it as a highlighted entity of the past, since it maintained its own state more or less continuously. Cvijic allocated a separate book to the socio-geographic foundation of the form-construct to achieve. In this, he made great effort to present the temporally parallel, but spatially isolated movements of the Southern Slavic peoples, labeling these movements with the concept of metanastasis. Basically, the proposition states that these Southern Slavic peoples had migrated from the same core region. In addition, the further formation of the collective soul was informed by the conditions of the given regions where they had settled. This is the cause of the different variants of Southern Slavic types. By these arguments, he intended to support the socio-geographical[2] necessity[3] of forming a legal framework

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[1]   This remark is indispensable today. Unity/separation, beside the issue of state and federation, are the most highlighted fields of symbolic conflicts. The authority of churches and the regionalization of languages/dialects raises from them. The Pravoslavic-orthodox religion has had, according to its historical traditions, a concept of state religion. A more detailed interpretation of religions/churches is unnecessary here. Linguistic issues, however, will be further elaborated upon later in the text.

[2]   Cvijic uses the term anthropogeography (human geography), also included in the book's subtitle, indicating a paradigm shift: *The foundations of anthropogeography*.

[3]   The work was originally written in French, for a Sorbonne lecture between 1916 and 1918 and was first published in 1918, entitled *Le Péninsule Balkanique, Geograhie humaine.* The spontaneous (to use a present term: pirated) translation was the basis of a Serbian publication, a *post festa* version. This is the basis for the Hungarian version referred to here. The French version already reached its social goal, since almost synchronously with its publication, the first from of the union state of the Southern Slavs, the Serbian-Croatian-Slovenian Kingdom was created. A Serbian publication was

dominated by the Southern Slavic primary majority. For the realization of the above political program, Montenegro had to pay with losing its state autonomy in the first half of the 20th century. However, the so-called-federalists (also including Montenegrin individuals among them) criticized the Serbian-dominated mode of the realized program, but the actual shaping of the Zeitgeist marginalized their concepts (as well)[4] The problem was visible not only from the inside, observers abroad were also aware of it. This includes a 1927 paper of József Bajza, a 20th-century Hungarian scholar of Slavistics, *'The question of Montenegro'*[5]

> *"What do we mean by the question of Montenegro? The problems whether there is and was a Montenegrin nation, whether there is and was a Montenegrin (concept of) state, whether there is a justification of these national and state ideas and, consequently, whether there is a possibility for Montenegro to be resurrected to its new national and political life* (Bajza, 2006/1926, p 322.)"

The formed Southern Slavic state had the program of centralization, ignoring those elements (useful during the formation of the union idea) that could have supported federalist efforts. The Montenegrin identity-construct, too close to the Serbian one in many regards, suffered the most from this fact. The basic problem of the Montenegrin identity-construct is the academically insufficient clarification (becoming a "game without consequences", C.f. Bourdieu 1991, 57) of the language issue[6]. To demonstrate the linguistic aspect of political identity, we quote Bajza:

> *"Language is undoubtedly an important, sometimes the most important factor of nation and state formation, but it is not the only one. Geography, economy, anthropology and ethnography, and the national and state identity that results from these are often as efficient factors in the formation of the national and state individualities as language is. Thus, even if one language were spoken both in Serbia and Montenegro, this would not mean that Serbians and Montenegrins are the same nation.* (Bajza, 2006/1926, p 322.)"

His thesis is that political integration will fail if it is not aware of the characteristics of those to be integrated. The events of the new millennium seem to prove this thought. The issue of language already emerged during the political attempts of isolation in the final years of the last millennium (the Southern Slavic civil wars)[7]. It became clear already in the second half of the '90s that the process could not be controlled centrally, thus it cannot be stopped by command[8]. This cannot happen even if the results deemed sufficient by its creators and supporters are reached. Indeed, the self-movement of the separation ignored the original plans of the initiators. This plan was the creation of the Serbian union state, a new and explicitly Serbian-dominated regional power(sic!). The change of system in 2000 could not direct the remains of Yugoslavia (consisting of only Serbia and Montenegro) on the planned course. The 2003 state of affairs, the (asymmetric) confederation of Serbia and Montenegro could not last either. In 2006, a public referendum in Montenegro brought the victory of those supporting separation. By this, the political history of the Southern Slavic union state came to an end.

However, this 'solved' only the form-historical question of state (federal vs. union state). The situation of political large groups within the structures remained unaddressed and additional waves appeared in the discourse space of symbolic politics. This is because Montenegrins in Serbia and Serbians in Montenegro became minorities formally as well. As a result, a part(!) of Montenegrins in Voivodina have begun political self-organization, too (and not only culturally). Before turning to this, we briefly discuss how Montenegrins had appeared in Voivodina.

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needed in the semantic struggles to neutralize forces against the new state. The clash of political theories in connection with the new state is discussed in detail in .[Janković—Mirković, 1997.].)

[4]   Not to mention a united state to be created by the Southern Slavs within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

[5]   The text was published in the 1927 December issue of the Budapesti Szemle, vol 207. pp 321-372. The bilingual publication cited here is a facsimile version, therefore the original page numbers apply.

[6]   In this, Bajza explicates his point in a way that is relevant and correct even today, both from politico-theoretical and comparative politological perspectives.

[7]   See Pap 2002, Regio

[8]   As Mikós Kontra claims: "His final conclusion is that speakers are much more important than their languages, the latter being destroyed by the communicative practice of their own speakers. Agreeing with Bourdieu (1991) he states that linguistic behavior is a profit-oriented behavior. Language speakers invest in the acquisition of not only those linguistic forms and structures that maximize their linguistic capital, but also into the acquisition of the language that is useful to them:" (Kontra 2010, 21)

3. Montenegrins in Voivodina

3.1. Voivodina after WW2

With the end of the Second World War, new conditions were created Europe-wide. From a socio-geographical perspective, the most significant of these (in Voivodina) was the near-complete disappearance of Germans in the period of 1944-48. In the first phase, those people left who viewed themselves as negatively involved in war events, along with those who did not wish to encounter the approaching Soviet troops[9]. The German propaganda during the war had a great role in the negative attitude toward the Soviets[10]. The partisan administration that was built up after the liberation/occupation enclosed most of the remaining German population, under the pretext of war collaborations. It was clear that serious population structure changes were to be expected in all Yugoslavia. This population reform was connected to the radical reshaping of the economical structure of society: to the land reform and nationalization/secularization. These two tendencies enable colonization that included Voivodina. It was more significant here than in other regions of the country. The process meant the collective and systematic resettling of Southern Slavic settlers into agricultural areas, changing the proportions of the Serbian-German-Hungarian population structure. These proportions had been created by the colonization politics of the Habsburg rule that had taken the place of the Turkish control after the end of the 17th century. Until then, no people had been present as an absolute majority. This three-way situation did not change even between the world wars to the benefit of the state-forming Southern Slavs, only by the organized and large-scale relocations after WW2. This is when a primary political majority came to be in Voivodina. The monarchic dictatorship of the interwar period had only been able to grant this by the so-called 'salamandrization'[11] of the administrative geography. (c.f Gulyás, 2010.).

The problem is that due to the formal nature of the newly formed rule, Southern Slavic dominance (ever craved since 1848) lost its legitimacy. This issue appeared at the 1848 proclamation of Serbian Voivodina (see. Pap 2009) and in the period between 1868 and 1941. This was required (Pap, 2010) so that Southern Slavic interests could dominate in Voivodina, due to the power structure based on the principles of majority representation. However, this was not to be incorporated neither in the politico-theoretical principles of the Hungarian nation, nor in the ethnical relationships of the area. By the time it could be enforced on the basis of population figures in 1948, the rule form of majority representation was done away with. The new federative state, the so-called Tito-ian Yugoslavia can be seen in politico-theoretical parallel with the absolutist form of the Habsburg Monarchy. Both is a state form that conforms to the master/subject value dualism, quite dissimilar to both the monarchic Yugoslavia and the dualist Austro-Hungarian Empire. The political solutions of the proletarian dictatorship and the enlightened absolutism (politically deliberately 'emptied' regional forms) are more similar to each other than to the slowly democratized solutions of the constitutionally based majority representation. Even if in some historical periods, constitutional majority representation possessed serious practical democracy deficits. The nation card as the method of forming policies was also used in the Tito era, but it had only a function against internal tensions and did not involve the systematic or practical circumventing of the anomalies within the political system. The first and exclusive issue was the acceptance/refusal of the class-based doctrine. Evidently, those refusing were forced outside the borders or into a long internal emigration.

3.2. Montenegrins as colonists

Many relevant academic papers address the "emitting" nature of the Montenegrin region. The low population-sustaining capacities of the mountainous area continuously forced the (mostly agro-proletarian) population surplus to migrate[12]. Montenegrins happened to appear in Voivodina even before 1945[13], but an organized and

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[9]   Voivodina was liberated by the Red Army during the autumn of 1944.

[10]   The first wave of those fleeing was 5.5 million in 1946 and 7.5 million by 1950. The number of Germans driven from Eastern Europe is estimated to be 12 million (See Görtemaker 2003, p 26.) Around 300,000 is the number of those fleeing from Southern Slavic countries, with Voivodina having the greatest rate. According to Duric, the net sum of 'collaborants' leaving the province is 250,000 (See Duric 1996, p 44-45.)

[11]   A so-called Danube-Bánság was created in order to form the population rates with a Serbian relative and a Southern Slavic absolute majority. This explicitly centralist program of the dictatorship was directed against not only ethnical/national minorities but also the federalist movements inside the primary majority. The Danube-bánság granted an institutional foundation for this.

[12]   A recently published book by Nenad Stevovic, a political leader of the Montenegrins in Voivodina, deals with the overseas and even more exotic (yet undiscussed) East-Balkan (Bulgarian) aspects of this (Stevovic 2010.)

[13]   Danilo Kis, born in Subotica from a Hungarian father and Montenegrin mother, is to be mentioned here, standing in the

large-scale immigration took place only after the leaving of Germans, when the conditions of such a restructuring were met. These include and have always included two factors: the radical change in possession affairs and the significant decrease of population. Usually, these appear after rather intensive social conflicts (wars). The Trianon decisions, though, did not involve the radical possession shifts and population transfers were also relatively balanced, so no such immigration could take place before 1945 that would conform to the intentions of the Southern Slavic state. The land distributions and the settling of the so-called dobrovoljac (war volunteers) between the two wars did not cause a social restructuring[14] to subvert the social relations of the region fundamentally. Political reforms were experienced by both Germans and Hungarians as difficult, but not in the same way. The self-organization of Germans improved quickly in the period after the First World War, while Hungarians did not really recover either culturally or politically.

The intensity of colonization is the highest in Voivodina, According to the 1948 state of affairs, 36.1% of the population had not been born in the province, the nation-wide rate was then 19.5%. The lowest population uptake is in Bosnia (10.6%), with Montenegro and Macedonia close (11.9% and 11.8%). These are more regions to emit and not to take up population. In Voivodina, this rate increases by only 10.5% until the peak period in 1971. So, the reshaping of population is in this first period the most definitive[15]. Industrialization shaped the social structure of Voivodina to a much lesser extent than agricultural restructuring.

Land-owning structures in Voivodina after WW2 have the disproportions characteristic to the era of dualism. 6.4% of the landowners possess 38.2% of the lands bigger than 20 ha. (200.000m2) A middle landowner group is also significant: almost 33% of the landowners use lands between 5-20 ha (almost half of the summed agricultural lands). Agro-proletariat above 60% possesses only 17% of the whole land area (C.f. Popov, 2002). Without doubt, this is not really balanced in terms of social equity but is done away with by the actions of the proletarian dictatorship.

First a 668.412ha land foundation was created, with nearly third of it 213.526ha distributed. Land was received by the agro-proletariat already living there and by colonists. The latter group also received an additional 70.000 habitat and 50.000 farming buildings. (Cf. Durdev, 1997, p 62-63.)

During the colonization, 253.97 people arrived at the area of historical Voivodina (including the areas around today's Beograd). According to the data of Jelena Popov (Popov, 2002, p. 15), nearly 72% of these were Serbian and 18% Montenegrin. The remaining 10% is mostly Macedonian. We do not claim that non-Southern-Slavic peoples were only losers in this process. From the nearly 90.000 families that received land, almost 25.000 were Hungarian[16], and Slovakian and Rusin agro-proletarians can also be found among the rest.

Montenegrin population participated in the process with 34.393 capita in 6105 families[17].

The process of agricultural reform also had a severe effect on the middle-peasant stratum of the Southern Slavic population that had already lived on and adapted (in the Cvijic-ian sense) to the region, mostly Serbians(colloquially called *láló*) and Croatians[18].

Another connection that is relevant even today is the following:

Today, Montenegrins were able become a locally relevant minority in those villages where:

a)mostly Germans had lived before

b)they contributed to the majority of colonizers.

To support the above, we refer to Durdev's data. According to the book, there was a Montenegrin majority of colonizers only in the three regions of Middle-Bácska, originally with German majority.[19] Each of these has the

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convergence of Montengrin-Hungarian literary fields.

[14] Nearly 20,000 settled in Voivodina before 1931. They can be seen as the subjects of controlled migration, the first colonization attempt. 100,000 of these are Dobrovoljac, 4,000 other colonist and fifteen hundred Southern Slavic immigrants. The rest is internal migration. In addition to the controlled migration, an additional 80,000 moved into the economically evolved region of Voivodina in this period, a 5.7% of the population (See Durdev, 1997, 31-32.)

[15] As opposed to this, the great restructuring of population is connected to the first phase of socialist industrialization in Slovenia (1953-1961) During this, the rate of those born outside the member republic increases by 25.4%

[16] Within this, Hungarian was the biggest minority group: more than 18,000 families.

[17] A 10% of the original immigrants made up their mind and moved from Voivodina in the very beginning (Cf. Durdev, 1997, p 77)

[18] Popov uses the expression 'drama' in the title of his work: „The drama of villages in Voivodina between 1945 and 1952)

[19] See the chart in p 85 and the summary chart in pp 87-93.

Montenegrin majority of its settlements even today. Though the colonization of the ethnicity was concentrated here, only a half of Montenegrins in Voivodina live here.

4. The language-political antecedents of the Serbian-Montenegrin separation[20]

Some considered the state of Montenegro only as the proof of their ethnic identity. In the '90s, when their member state was pondering complete separation and autonomy, they would have seen the lack of their own language (explicit, able to represent their national identity) as the infringement of their identity. Nyomárkay cites the post-socialist model according to which "not the state defines the language, but the language defines the state" (Nyomárkay, 2002). So, the autonomy efforts of the newly formed (after the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc) states are justified by the arguments for linguistic autonomy. The market relationships of language use has been restructured: "linguistic products (including languages, language varieties, utterances, accents) are signs of wealth or capital, which receive their value only in relation to a market, characterized by a particular law of price formation" (Bourdieu 1991, 66-67).To paraphrase Bugarski: if not linguist, then language users make – linguo-politically relevant – decisions in these issues[21]. This is represented by *language planning*, operating/manipulating with otherwise already utilized methods(e.g.. purism).

From a linguistic perspective, Ranko Bugarski did not find the distinction between Serbo-Croatian and Crotian-Serbian. Others intended to found the creation of autonomous nation states by this. On the one hand, he admits that a language is a historically created, (occasionally) disappearing social/cultural product which has three basic conditions: (1) structural, (2) genealogical and (3) pragmatic (socio-psychological). If the first two is more ore less granted, then renaming or redefinition is not necessary (from an academic viewpoint) until it meets the condition of mutual understanding (without structural mediation, that is, translation). This sort of linguistic 'tunnel vision' of his seemed to put him outside the mainstream, which reflects the post-Yugoslavian discourse quite well[22].

As to the socio-psychological dimension, he was also aware of the social needs that are behind the (re)naming issues. Between 1991 and 1995, these needs reappeared as constitutional and linguistic questions. The seemingly linguistically homogenous country/block carried out its separation processes through civil war in this period. In the resulting conditions, beside Croatian (accepted since the 1974 member republic constitution) it was Bosnian (since 1993) that possessed the highest level of legal codification[23]. The fourth segment, Montenegrin was declared as an autonomous language only on "lower levels". Montenegro, as a member republic, marked and codified its (linguistic) autonomy (or perhaps even "took it to the stock market", so to speak) through the formation of its writer's association[24].

5. The relationship of Serbia and Montenegro after the change of system

The separatist movements of the civil war periods also affected the two member states (with orthodox majority) most close to each other (see Pap 2010a). Their relationship gained a new dimension after the late '90s, the actual starting of system change process. This appeared with some phase delay and different intensity in the two member states. Some democratization processes started in Montenegro already in the last phase of the Milosevic-era. However, in Serbia the system maintained itself even after the 1999 NATO-intervention.

October 5 of 2000(the symbolic beginning of system change in Serbian public thought) already provisioned the inevitable changes in the federal relation system. This was clear to both laymen and professionals, but was not experience d with the same intensity. Professionals emphasized differing issues and interpreted the possible solutions by visioning differing scenarios. Here we assess the competing horizons of interpretations in the beginning of 2001. This seems to be also relevant because the approaches show regional connections, which is

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[20]   See Pap 2004, 2005 for details of the issue in 'Regio'.

[21]   Which may be legitimate without being supported from a linguistic viewpoint C f. Bugarski 2000

[22]   With regard to processes of Serbo-Croatian language, see a more „outsider" but nevertheless professional approach of professor Nyomárkay in Magyar Nyelv (See Nyomárkay 2002).

[23]   The question arises that who and how decided in the issue, given the contemporary pre-dayton war circumstances.

[24]   It must be also noted that the Serbian Academy of Arts explicated its national strategy in a so-called Memorandum in 1986, also proving an ideological basis for the civil wars.

the form-historical medium of the majority-principled representation (necessitating regional isolation). On 2-3 of March, 2001, an academic conference was held in Beograd, entitled „*Socijalno-ekonomske promene u Srbiji/Jugoslaviji: perspektive i ograničenja.*" (perspectives and limits of the social-economic changes in Serbia/Yugoslavia)[25]. The delivered lectures assessed the possible directions of the processes that started from the change of system in the previous year. The following subchapters intend to organize the relevant notions of these.

5.1. The structural requirements of maintaining the asymmetrical confederation

According to the politological explanation of Slobodan Samardzic[26], the 1992-2000 history of the confederation involves almost every phenomenon that should not ever take place between two member republics. The Serbian system change in 2000 further aggravated the situation between them. On the Montenegrin part, only the softer version of separatist efforts, the confederation was considered during the era of Milosevic, but these efforts were strengthened with democratization processes. As a functional alternative to this, (in his opinion) only the complete revision of the federal relationship can exist. So the relationship of the two member republics is defined by the functional deficit of the valid procedural rules[27].

Such obvious disproportions as area size, population number, economic power, level of democratization that also ever inform daily political discourses of "How now?" are only secondary. The primary goal is the internal, structural sustainability of the federation.

> "It is true that federalism in its classic form and its basic realizations presents only the distribution of power along the regional principle, but it cannot be reduced in essence to this dimension. Every actually functioning federate state forms a structural design to represent the cultural-historical, economic, political and ethnical internal heterogeneity of its own units (constituent parts). Thus, each of these is, beyond the mathematical summation of regional constituents, the expression of the variety within."

If the future federation of Serbia and Montenegro is to be created by the democratic articulation of will on the part of the citizens of both member states, then the process itself needs to be build up in a democratic way. This enables the pluralizing effects of internal variety to be built into the process of sustainable cooperation of their constituting member states. Political agents can find a stable solution for the challenge in front of them - the problem of the modern federal state – only by following such a procedure."
Samardzic, Slobodan (2001) Can an agreement be reached between Serbia and Montenegro about the federation? p. 266.

But, as it was proved five years later, political agents were unable to step beyond their own short-.term interests in this issue as well.

5.2. The context of staying together/divergence from the perspective of public will

As expected by everyone, the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia could not be stopped after the turn, The separation was realized along the so-called administrative (republic) borders, even if neither pro-federalist nor separatist had a sure base in Montenegro in the early 200s. In Serbia, the necessity to maintain the federation was beyond dispute, even if the importance of the question transcended itself. Even the mentioning of the dissolution was seen as a waypoint toward the separation of Kosovo, which was to be avoided at all costs.

Mladen Lazic had participated in a larger Montenegrin public opinion survey before the Serbian turn. The federation-related parts of this survey were analyzed at the mentioned conference (Cf. Lazic, 2001.) It seems that the affiliations of voters can note really follow the interest- and opinion articulations of the representatives, tending toward separation. Based on empirical data collected from 1053 surveyed people, his analysis shows that public will does not possess a clear and well definable direction concerning the fate of the federation. Thus, politics was need so that one version could prevail. That is, the separation of Montenegro was not a decided

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[25]   See SPASIĆ—SUBOTIĆ (eds): R/Evolucija i poredak – O dinamici i promena u Srbiji. Order and R/Evolution – the changes and their intensity in Serbia] Institut za filosofiju I društvenu teoriju, Beograd, 2001, p 377).

[26]   Later he became minister of Kosovo issues in the Kostunica-government.

[27]   In spite of the belated transition process, no followable „separation model" is available. The case of Czechoslovakia can be a guideline at most, inasmuch as it shows the compulsion to get rid of the socialist past. (Cf. Samardzic 2011, p 264).

issues even after the Serbian turn, however much we tend to think so after the actual separation.

The present challenges can be understood more clearly after discussing the past conditions, this is why we find their analysis important and necessary here.

The task of the political elite was even more difficult than expected, because no substantial social differences were to be found between those supporting federation and separation, so the target audience was especially hard to define for either the pro or contra parties. Only one such indicator was found: ethnic self-identity (See: Lazic, 2001. 281.)[28] Yet, this is not so easy in the Balkan as one would think. With respect to federation/autonomy, 46.1% supported the strengthening of bonds in their answer to the question of "*the desirable level of the relationship between Serbia and Montenegro*" (N=1024). 4.8% thought it desirable to maintain the then current (early 2000) relation. So the two groups together formed a minimal majority. (See.: Lazic, 2001, p 286).[29]

The turn to enable the separation came in the one year between the survey and the aforementioned conference. If the democratization of Serbia had been achieved, an even bigger proportion of answerers would have preferred the federation (this process was then already going on in Montenegro). The supporters of a common state were ¾ majority among those claiming to be Serbian and 2/3 in the case of Yugoslavians. It is to be noted that a good third of pure Montenegrins could also agree with the maintenance of the federate framework, but these latter did not really believe in the true democratization of the Serbian (member) Republic. Only those claiming to be Albanian did categorically refuse (75.5%) the federalist idea. A third factor, the political elite had the biggest role in the fact that public mood did not follow the above figures.

5.3. The Montenegrin political elite and Serbia
As we know from the Hungarian political folklore, faithfulness is not a political category. This thesis seems to be proved by the events in Montenegro. In his text included in the conference volume, Srdan Vukadinovic explains about this (Vukadinovic, 2001). The Montenegrin elite had begun to distance itself from the system of Milosevic even before their democratization processes (the republic elections in 1998). This is especially true for the political approaches of autocratic rule and military economical solutions. Local actors, not so much connected to the Serbian political elite and the federative nomenclature, tried to change direction and repertoire as soon as possible. This is how they fit to the broader region's transition models of economy and politics.

A common feature of the Eastern European political elites is that those in power strive to convert their political, power into economical. IN this region, politics is nothing else than the tool for getting rich quickly and easily. (…) In the case of the local elite, the attitude toward Montenegro's political status is also primary formed by an approach driven by personal advantages.

In Montenegro, the political elite and some closely related individuals hold key positions in economic sense as well. Both their political and economic powers are based on the close connection to the state. Thus, this elite can exist only as a state elite. **They are able to sustain themselves only within the state framework. In the lack of close connections with the state, they could not even exist. That is why this elite prefers separation** (our highlights: PT-SCSM) The smaller the space to rule is, the better such kind of rule can be perfected. They would not be so witty in the case of broader opportunities. The chance of self-realization is reduced by the expansion of space. By the appearance of economic and political competition, their chances to maintain their power would diminish. As a result, the economic elite's interest is Montenegro's autonomy. A regionally well-isolated social framework is the most preferable for it.

Sedan Vukadinovic (2001): Social-political changes in Serbia/Yugoslavia and the situation in Montenegro, p. 300
Considering the above motivational basis and the minimal difference discussed in the pervious subchapter, the task of the elite was self-evident. If it intends to continue to exist, it has to shift public thought toward autonomy. It was considerably helped in the is effort by the centre-arrogance emerging from the euphoric mist of the

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[28]   In the following categories of the spectrum from Serbian to Montenegrin: Montenegrin 44.2%, Serbian with a Montenegrin identity 13.5%, Serbian in Montenegro 13.1%, Yugoslavian 7.4%, Serbian 2.7%. A further complication is that 8.7% claimed to be Muslim, 6% Montenegrin Muslim and 4.8% Albanian.

[29]   While 16.2% of the answerers would make it more loose, almost a third of them 32.9% did not think that any sort of state law bonds with Serbia (ibid.)

Serbian change of system. Practically, the relationship of Serbia and Montenegro functioned well below the level of federacy even before the 2000s. In the Milosevic-era this was able to legitimate the efforts of the local elite in the eyes of everyday voters. In order to counterbalance the war games of the nominally shared army in Montenegro, the Montenegrin government had 20,000 standing by within the police[30]. However, Serbian power also converted its army in Kosovo (designed for internal regulation) into police troops. But the Serbian arrogance level does not seem to decrease even after the establishment of the new order of power. The most characteristic expressions of this were the constant reminders to asymmetry. Such a behavior was noticeable not only in Serbian political, but intellectual spheres as well (Cf. Vukadinovic, 2001, p 302.)

6. The autonomous Montenegro

According to Vukadinovic's 2001 standpoint, the political elite in Montenegro intended to use separation as a strategic tool for maintaining it power (See Vukadinovic, 2001, 306.) But we cannot ignore the fact that the Serbian elite was also mostly insensitive with regard to the problems of the Montenegrins. In a short while, this situation strengthened the separatist idea, instead of confederation, union or a sort of commonwealth. The legal act named Law on the referendum to decide the status of Montenegro was eventually accepted by the Montenegrin Parliament on March 2, 2006.

The referendum was finally held on May 21, 2006.
From the 419,240 voters, 404,840 placed their votes personally and 14,400 otherwise. From the 415,663 valid votes (3,577 was invalid) 230.661 were 'yes'[31] and 185,002 'no'. Thus, with a participation rate of 86.5%, 55.5% of the voter voted for(30) the autonomy of Montenegro" – as the Report of the Referendum Committee states (See. Izvestaj, 2006.) The autonomy of Montenegro was recognized first by Iceland, by Serbia as the 34th. It became the 192nd member of the UN in June 28, 2006.

According to the 2003 census, the ethnical constitution of the state with a total population of 650.575 is as follows: Montenegrin 267,669 (43.16%); Serbian 198.414 (31.99%). By the same source, there are 264,000 Montenegrins living in Serbia, form whom 69,000 consider themselves of Montenegrin identity. This latter population constitutes almost 1% of the Serbian society.

With regard to linguistic identity, the situation is even more complicated: Serbian 393.740 (63.49%), Montenegrin 136.208 (21.96%). So the state-forming community is in minority in this regard. This show quite well the sophisticated nature of linguistic and political dimensions of identity in the Balkan.

7. The minority and language-political aims of Montenegrins in Voivodina

7.1. The characteristics of the situation after the 2006 referendum
Montenegrins in Voivodina were put in a new, previously unknown situation, due to the continuously declining Serbian-Montenegrin relations. Now they are clearly minority as well. Similarly to the internal ethnic diversity of the autonomous Montenegro, the 35,513 Montenegrins who constitute the 2% of Voivodina (according to 2002 census) do not interpret the new situation (and the resulting language-political action field) in a univocal or convergent way.

In the time of the census, the relation between Serbians and Montenegrins was not so tense, and attitudes to (confessing, displaying/hiding) identity were less influenced by political shifts than today.[32] So we can assume that the results are representative in nature. The data show that most of the Montenegrins are concentrated in the three towns in Bácska: Novi Sad, Subotica and Zombor but their internal proportions are minimal there. They form majority in some settlements (in so-called local communities), this means absolute majority in Lovcenac and Sekitsch, this latter being a 4000-population settlements once populated almost exclusively by Germans. By comparison with the 2012 data, we can assess the effects of the Serbian-Montenegrin relations to the claiming of

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[30] 'Za svaki slucaj' : just to consider every possibility, as the Serbian/Montenegrin phrase goes.
[31] During the debate before the decision, the opposing party managed to have the limit raised from 50% to 55%, considering the results of preliminary surveys.
[32] The residual (and historically outdated) identity category of 'Yugoslavian' was still in existence, offering a less conflict-involving identity alternative for people with mixed origins. At that time, nearly 50.000 people, 3% of Voivodina labeled themselves as such. (We cannot know how many of them had Montenegrin background.)

Montenegrin identity in Serbia.

The local majorities of their communities must face the generally repressive tendencies of the centralizing Serbian politics. It must be noted here that in our opinion (detailed and discussed elsewhere), majority-principled representation will repress or at least marginalize local initiatives, since its ideal subject of rule is the homogenous society of a so-called unified political nation.

In the villages mentioned in the second part (once parts of the German block in Middle-Bácska: Verbász, Kúla, Kishegyes), Montenegrins face a decision. Whom do they identify with:
A) Their parent society, now in its own autonomous state
B) With the Serbian majority society, which does not show irreconcilable differences neither culturally, nor linguistically?

The dilemma cannot be solved with minority or language political tools. Probably, the first case have more opportunity for creating a political alternative that is able to represent the interests of the local and more narrow majority, but in the second case, individual political careers have greater perspectives.

Thus the conflict is concentrated within the community, which is a less frequent yet historically not unprecedented situation. Those who are willing to do politics in these communities of local majorities can and often have to choose between these(now intentionally simplified) alternatives. Such compulsions do not serve well the Serbian spreading of consensual decision-making.

7.2. The opportunities of Montenegrins in large-scale politics
The Montenegrin Party (Crnagorska partija) also appeared in the 2008 (general provincial and pre-schedule national) elections. On the level of Serbia, they formed a so-called residual minority. (on their own, they could not elect representatives within the current system, not even in absolutely unequivocal cases)[33] The situation is somewhat different in Voivodina, for two main reasons:
a) the mixed nature of the provincial election system[34]
b) most of the Montenegrins being locally concentrated

Because of these, Montenegrins do not have to be residual minority in theory. However, as we mentioned in the previous subchapter, identity conflicts manifest themselves within the community, appearing primarily in party preference. (To be somewhat oversimplifying: those who prefer ethnic and linguistic identity would vote the Montenegrin Party, while those with more practical ambitions vote to Serbian majority parties.)

A characteristic internal formation of the representation system in Voivodina is the Council of National Communities[35] of 120 representatives, elected on parity basis(15 majority, 15 minority). This can but presently does not include Montenegrin representatives. Here, the problems of such communities can also be discussed who do not have other institutional forms, like National Councils.[36]

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[33]   This is true with the following restriction. In theory, with certain participation rates when relatively few majority Serbians and almost all Montenegrins participate, they could elect one person into the Skupstina of 250 members.

[34]   60 persons are elected into the provincial house of representatives proportionally (listed) and 60 in individual districts, in two-turn majority-principled elections

[35]   See the link http://www.skupstinavojvodine.gov.rs/?s=SavetNacionalnihZajednica&j=EN for details.

[36]   Council of National Communities is a separate Assembly body comprising 30 members.
When deciding on matters in the Assembly's scope of competences that are directly or indirectly related to the exercise of rights of national communities constituting a numerical minority in the total population of AP Vojvodina, it shall be required to obtain the opinion of the Council of National Communities in the field of culture, education, public information and official use of languages and scripts in particular.
Members of the Council of National Communities shall be elected by the Assembly upon its establishment, at the proposal of the Committee on Administrative and Mandate-Immunity Issues.
One half of members shall be elected from among the deputies who have declared themselves to belong to the Serbian national community, while the other half of the council members shall be elected from among the deputies who have declared themselves to belong to any of the national communities constituting a numerical minority in the total population of the AP Vojvodina.
The Council shall have its President, Vice-President and Secretary. The decisions shall be made based on the majority of the total number of its members, providing more than 50% of members of Serbian nation and more than 50% of

In the Serbian and provincial election, their attempt itself was considered as an achievement. They are more able to follow large-scale politics than to form it. (C.f. http://www.crnogorskapartija.rs/vijesti2008.html with regard to the news on the activities of the party.) The Montenegrin Party mainly has results on local levels. In Kishegyes, it is in a local government position, forming majority together with the members of the Hungarian Coalition.

This is where their first language-political efforts were fruitful: in the December of 2010, they managed to make Montenegrin as an official language in the village. The decision entered the *statutum* of the village as Entry 54.[37] Thus, in the sessions of the body, remarks in Montenegrin language are official and valid, and administration in the village can be carried out in this language.[38]

7.3. Krstaš, the organization to define the politics of Montenegrins

The goals[39] of this association of Montenegrins in Serbia(with Lovcenac and Sekitsch as its center):
a) the struggle for the complete equity of the ethnic community of Montenegrins with the other communities living in Voivodina and Serbia.
b) having the historical, religious, cultural and other distinctive features recognized and accepted.
In spite of its short time in existence, the organization has been able to involve most of the Montenegrins in its area of functioning (Serbia, Voivodina) and to provide identity-maintaining programs and events to them.

From these, the struggle for the education of *Montenegrin language and culture* as an optional subject is highlighted. According to the data of the provincial education secretariat, nearly 2500 children claimed themselves Montenegrin. They intend to start the above subject already in autumn in the three towns of Bácska, but mainly in the core villages of Verbász, Kúla and Kishegyes.[40] If this cannot begin within public education, they are willing to submit their own association rooms for the duration of the education.

Conclusion

By presenting the minority and language-political efforts of Montenegrins in Serbia, we intended to demonstrate two things. Firstly, minority situation is a historical phenomenon in which anyone can find themselves through political and demographical shifts. Secondly, even though this situation can not be resolved by the present democratic decision making, but can be handled in a way that helps to maintain identities.

In this case, our subject was a minority that (due to the cultural and linguistic closeness of the two communities) is relatively less afflicted by repressions coming from the majority (often unconscious and rarely revised, its

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[37] members belonging to a minority national community have voted in favor of the decision. (ibid.)

54.

На основу члана 113. Статута општине Мали Иђош („Сл. лист општине Мали Иђош" бр.13/2008 - пречишћени текст) и на основу Одлуке о приступању промени Статута општине Мали Иђош („Сл.лист општине Мали Иђош" 6/2010), Скупштина општине Мали Иђош на седници дана 06.12.2010. године доноси

О Д Л У К У
О ИЗМЕНАМА И ДОПУНАМА СТАТУТА ОПШТИНЕ МАЛИ ИЂОШ

Члан 1.

У члану 7. Статута општине Мали Иђош („Сл.лист општине Мали Иђош" бр. 13/2008 - пречишћен текст) после речи „на мађарском језику" додају се речи „и на црногорском језику".

Члан 2.

У члану 8. Статута општине Мали Иђош, после речи „мађарски језик и писмо" додају се речи „и црногорски језик и писмо".

Члан 3.

Ова Одлука о изменама и допунама Одлуке ступа на снагу осмог дана од дана објављивања и објављује се у „Службеном листу општине Мали Иђош".

СКУПШТИНА ОПШТИНЕ МАЛИ ИЂОШ   **Председник Скупштине општине**
Број:06-2-18-1/2010-02   **Пал Карољ, с.р.**
Дана:06.12.2010.
М а л и И ђ о ш

[38] This is a symbolic act (since, as we mentioned, Montenegrin language does not differ from Serbian to an extent which would hinder communication), really significant only in maintaining identity.

[39] C.f.: http://www.krstas.rs/o_nama.html.

[40] At the moment, assessment of demands is in progress, having gained the support of the Hungarian Coalition co-governing Kishegyes.

existence owing to the majority-principled decision making).

The differences between the basic social indicators of the different large groups necessitate the creation of adaptive minority and language-political procedures; we also consider this the largest problem of the present Europe (and not only the EU-region), soon to be solved effectively. Though the problems are different in the case of every community and every state/region, in order to handle them in a mutually satisfying way we (at least we, experts of minority and language politics) have to understand that the problems are caused by the form-historical anomalies of power and of majority-principled decision making, by the unintentionally oppressive nature of the majority.

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