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**MODES OF INDIVIDUAL MIGRATIONS OF MONTENEGRINS TO SERBIA
BETWEEN 1955 AND 2007**

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Modes of Individual Migrations of Montenegrins to Serbia between 1955 and 2007

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Ethnic and national conflicts in the territory of the Western Balkans, as well as the growing global internationalization and institutionalization of interethnic relations, have created a need to redefine the factors, subjects and entities that constituted the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), as well as their mutual relations. Many of these relations have called for serious rethinking and systematization in the past few decades. The modern, rational, and civic perspective on interethnic relations has taken the place of the emotional vision that for so long prevailed in the Balkans. The problem of ethnic and national relations between Serbs and Montenegrins is very indicative in that respect. Many people in Montenegro declare themselves as Serbs, whereas many citizens of Serbia originally come from Montenegro. The centuries-long connection and identification of Montenegrins with Serbs, constant migrations to Serbia and the very specific problem of acculturation, has rendered the status of Montenegrins substantially different from the status of other minorities. The question of whether Montenegrins in contemporary Serbia are to be taken as a minority, or even a distinct group, is open for debate. The formal legal standards are, in that respect, in conflict with ethno-anthropological criteria. However, there has been no systematic research on the ethnic and/or national identity of Montenegrins in Serbian cities until now. Rather than anthropological research, knowledge about this issue has been primarily based on presumptions and prejudices, thus reflecting institutional developments.

Montenegrins have been settling in Serbia for centuries, adapting to the new environment quickly and easily, and playing a significant and active role in social and political processes. They were always perceived as “the Other”, but almost the same as Serbs: they share the same faith and speak the same (or very similar) language. Over the course of long periods of history, they were part of the same political entity as Serbs, and they also frequently perceived themselves as a branch of the Serbian people. Their treatment was therefore never specifically regulated in Serbia, and they enjoyed the same treatment as Serbs. Today, following the independence of the state of Montenegro, there is a practical need for institutionalizing the status of Montenegrins in Serbia. However, there is

resistance on both sides. Among the obstacles is the declaration of Montenegrins. Some declare themselves as Montenegrin, others as Serb and others as Serbo-Montenegrin. In some cases these divisions even cut through families. This situation has brought to light old divides within Montenegro, present ever since the Pre-Ottoman and Ottoman period with, for example, the territorial division between Montenegro and the Highlands, administrative division, ethnic division between clans and fraternities etc. There is also a tendency in Serbia to differentiate between people from Montenegro who declare themselves as Serb and those who declare themselves as Montenegrin.

One of the important aspects of the problem of redefining ethnic and national relations is the kind and the degree of relations between spatial mobility and the construction of national identity. The aim of my research is therefore to investigate the modes of migration of Montenegrins into Serbia after the Second World War. This demands an investigation of the conceptualization of the living space of Montenegrins, the causes of migrations, their modes and consequences. The first phase encompasses the analysis of modes of individual migrations, namely the research of the individual level of identification through the analysis of narratives. This was conducted by interviewing a number of people who were born in Montenegro, but have during the course of their lives migrated to Serbia. In some cases the biographical method was used, in others interviews with narrowly formulated questions, supplemented by observation. In the next phase of the research, the focus will shift to the institutional level of identification and towards the second generation of immigrants. After that, the research will concentrate on the parts of Montenegrin population that came in mass migration to rural environments, and these will be investigated through participant observation.

It is impossible to determine the exact number of Montenegrins in Serbia. Many are declared as Serbs. Several are not registered and have no formal Serbian citizenship, despite the fact that they have been living in Serbia for quite some time. The number also fluctuates each year due to the flow of students and seasonal workers. In the last census (2002), 69.049 inhabitants of Serbia claimed to be of Montenegrin nationality. They are concentrated around the cities of Belgrade and Niš, in the region of Bačka and in the districts of Kragujevac and Kraljevo. Among them, are a number of Catholics and Muslims, which points to the problem of the classification of the Montenegrin nation, as sometimes it shows facets of the civil, and at others, of the ethnic type of nation. Until recently, Orthodox Christianity was one of the chief Montenegrin national traits; the difference between the ethnic and territorial Montenegrins was primarily seen in the Or-

thodox faith. This problem is increased as Montenegrins who declare themselves as Serbs are increasingly becoming territorial Montenegrins, and they shy away from the ethnic aspect of the term "Montenegrin". Regarding the characteristics of the Montenegrin community in Serbia, it should be pointed out that they are the seventh largest community in Serbia. More than sixteen percent of Montenegrins have a higher education, placing them among the highest educated in Serbia, preceded only by the Jewish, German, Russian, and Tzintzar communities. Montenegrins encompass a high percentage of people from the strata of lawmakers, managers, and executives in Serbia, almost doubling that of Serbs (8,9% to 4,2% according to the "Ethnic mosaic of Serbia" [Etnički mozaik Srbije] 2004: 202).

Due to the complex situation regarding the declaration of nationality, for the purpose of this research, I interviewed people of Orthodox faith, born in Montenegro, who in any sense (national or territorial) see themselves as Montenegrins. In the period between April and June 2007, thirty-seven people who were born and lived in Montenegro, and who had permanently or temporarily settled in Serbia, were interviewed. Of course, this is not a representative sample, but members of all social strata, both sexes and all the regions in Montenegro were encompassed, with the idea of being able to discern the basic trends. Informants were chosen by random sampling. Although many were reluctant to enter conversation, they seemed to respond with frank answers to the questions.

The structure of the sample interviewed: 25 informants were male (67,5%), 12 female (32,5%). The average age of informants is 33,5. 35% have high or higher education, 35% have completed high school and 30% are studying. They originate from different regions of Montenegro (Kotor, Bar, Bijelo Polje, Podgorica, Cetinje, Herceg Novi, Kolašin, Vilusi, Šavnik, Nikšić, Pljevlja, Andrijevica, Tivat, Mojkovac, Berane), and have mainly settled in Belgrade, although some settled in other, smaller Serbian cities (Zrenjanin, Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Paraćin, Valjevo). Some of them are from rural, others from urban parts of Montenegro. A smaller portion were born outside Montenegro (e.g. in Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, Novi Sad), and have moved in the course of their childhood with their families to Montenegro, deciding later to settle in Serbia.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE LIVING SPACE

The first problem to be researched was the conceptualization of living space, that is, the mapping of the ethnic and national space of Montenegrins. This problem was

approached through the attempt to discern how the informants understood the term “living space“, where the borders of this space were, where the main migrations started from and to which direction, how this living space was organized and how different parts of that space were invented, described, and evaluated. The intention was to investigate the extent to which informants’ interests, perspectives and long-term goals remain within or transgress political and administrative borders.

It can be inferred on the basis of collected data that the informants consider the living space of Montenegrins after the Second World War to be Montenegro and certain parts of Serbia (above all Belgrade, Vojvodina and Šumadija)¹. That living space is occasionally and partially enlarged, especially by inhabitants of certain regions or/and members of some minority groups to encompass parts of Croatia (mainly Zagreb and sometimes Dubrovnik), Slovenia (Ljubljana and Maribor), Bosnia-Herzegovina (above all Sarajevo and Trebinje), Macedonia (Skopje), and Kosovo (Peć). The older generations conceptualize the living space as wider and more flexible (due to the experience of SFRY), while the new generations have a more narrow experience, confined more and more to the official borders of the Montenegrin state. Out of the territories outside SFRY that stand for desirable and realistic destination, Italy is often mentioned. Many of the individual migrations are oriented towards Italy, which in turn has had a great impact on the cultural context of Montenegro (learning the Italian language, the way of dressing, the criminal subculture etc).

The largest number of informants generally distinguishes between the northern part of Montenegro, its central part, and the southern part, which is the seaside. However, there is no general accord on the exact stretch of those regions and their inner division. The criteria used in differentiation are geographical, cultural, and commercial-economic. The informants tend to make simple divisions that would include all three criteria. In other words, the informants maintain that the three criteria are intertwined. The northern part(s) is/are divided into the one predominantly inhabited by Serbs and Montenegrins (the municipalities of Berane, Mojkovac, Kolašin, and even Nikšić), and the ones in which Bosniaks or Muslims constitute the majority (the municipalities of Plav, Rožaje, Murino, Pljevlja, Bijelo Polje). It is difficult to distinguish between those parts spatially

¹ One of the informants (aged 50), described his impressions of the living space in the following manner: “I grew up on this Serbian-Montenegrin myth, it was natural for me (to come to Serbia)... In Belgrade, Novi Sad, in Cetinje, Sremski Karlovci (even Gračanica)... There is a spiritual and historical line, regardless of the differences I like to bear witness very much... both environments are different... it was natural to go to study in Belgrade, for Belgrade is the main city of our language and culture. Back then, it was our role-model. In my education I belong to the Serbian culture. And to the Montenegrin, that is a part of it...”

and geographically, but they are nonetheless clearly ideologically divided in the informants' consciousness. The central part, from their viewpoint, consists of Podgorica and Cetinje, although some consider it to be joined with the southern. Daily migrations between the central and southern parts are indeed so frequent, especially during the summer, that it substantiates this point. Podgorica is also frequently considered to be a special region, a state within the state that has recently developed, unlike Cetinje. The southern part of Montenegro is the Adriatic coast, within which there are segments like Budva, Kotor, Herceg Novi, Ulcinj, Bar; most informants consider Ulcinj to be rather different from the rest of the cities, as it is almost completely inhabited by Albanians and has its own dynamics of development, ethnically and economically directed towards Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The central and southern parts are considered to be much more developed than the northern part, which is reflected in the budget allocations on the state level, as well as the utter undesirability of the northern part and its ongoing emigration.

According to the informants, the differences between those regions have their cultural dimensions, with the specificities located in mentality, speech, and dress. The most characteristic from that point of view are the inhabitants of Cetinje, Podgorica (some of the elderly informants claim different dialects are spoken in different parts of Podgorica); they are followed by the inhabitants of Nikšić, the Coast, Rožaje, Berane, Budva, Bar etc. There is a characterization or stereotypization of both the regions and their inhabitants; it is, of course, not always generally shared, and varies across localities and informants. The northern part of Montenegro is usually associated with a number of stereotypes that go along the lines of underdevelopment, naturalness, unspoiledness, unculturedness, courage, pro-Serbian orientation, and ambitiousness. Some parts of this region, despite their relative underdevelopment, are considered to be potentially significant winter sports centers. In the informants' consciousness, this region is still seen as mountainous and inhabited by cattle-herders. The central part of Montenegro cannot be easily described, since it is constituted of entirely different divisions: on the one hand there is Podgorica, which in the recent years has developed into an industrial and university center and has hence attracted the majority of inter-Montenegrin migrations, while on the other hand, Cetinje is declining and losing its significance. The southern part of Montenegro is mostly constituted of summer tourist resorts, is very lively in the season, but almost completely inactive during the winter months.

The picture that can be deduced from informants' answers and narratives indicates that the Montenegrin territory is seen as very differentiated, and its population as rather culturally heterogeneous. Generalizations referring to Montenegro as a whole are rarely encountered². Generalizations exist principally at the level of region or town. Stereotypes about people from different regions can be divided into those concerning physical characteristics, those concerning character or mentality, and those referring to cultural traits³. There are stereotypical representations relating to the inhabitants of smaller towns as well⁴. Podgorica's inhabitants claim that there are not many of them in Serbia, which is mostly inhabited by "northerners", who are spoiling the image of Montenegrins in Serbia, because they are less cultured.⁵ As to the capability of discerning differences between inhabitants of different regions, it ranges from extremely great (an informant claims that he can tell any Montenegrin's place of birth in less than a minute; some people attempt to guess one's background just for fun) to minimal (an informant cannot ascertain any regional affiliation of his fellow-dwellers). The majority of informants are somewhere in the middle, that is they can recognize the inhabitants of some of the most typical regions: Cetinje, Podgorica, Bar, and the "Northerners". The population of Serbia is also stereotyped in different ways: there are those who think of Montenegrins and Serbs from Serbia as the same people, seeing no difference save for the accent and the dialect; and there are those who maintain strict divisions and strive to underpin the major differences (Montenegrins are much lazier etc.)

The informants are not at ease with the Serbian tendency to consider all Montenegrins the same (the ones from Podgorica and the seaside resent being equated with the Northerners). Similarly, many Montenegrins are identifying themselves with the population of the southwestern parts of Serbia (Ibarski Kolašin, Novi Pazar, Tutin, Sjenica), finding no major differences, understanding the propulsive nature and relativity

² „All the stereotypes about us are true. We are lazy... We like to show off, cars, influence, connections... We are very patriarchal...”

³ „People from the seaside are simply waiting for the summer to grab cash in two to three months“; „People from the North are mainly unspoiled folks who used to raise cattle“; „I can recognize some Northerner from Žabljak, all red in the face, with a large head, bulky, dressed simply, and if one meets somebody from Podgorica, for example, he looks as if he is from Italy, tidied up, in fancy shows like other Italians“; „Northerners are rather clumsy, tall... one can immediately see where they come from due to the lack of culture. And people from the seaside, for instance, are much nicer and well-cultured. Cetinje is cultured as well, Podgorica is cultured, Nikšić is not cultured.“; „My highlanders are much tougher, fiercer, and consider themselves braver. Those from the seaside are our *Lale* (the regional Serbian nick-name for inhabitants of Vojvodina, who are known for their mild temper, *trans*), peaceful by nature“ „Northerners are dangerous, they have connections. One comes, becomes a manager and then drags his whole family with him and they spread across the town.”

⁴ „People of Cetinje are good folks“, or „People of Cetinje changed for the worse“, „Citizens of St. Stephen are rich“, „People from Berane are good hosts.”

⁵ „I do not have a single friend from the North... when I hear them it gives me shivers...”

of the cultural border between Montenegro and Serbia. This is confirmed not just by ascription, but also by description, for Serbs from Serbia frequently confuse populations from the two different sides of the border (chiefly due to the dialectical differences, and sometimes due to their declared nationality)⁶. The border of Montenegro towards Herzegovina is also problematic, leading to the greater degree of identification between the population from the Montenegrin and Bosnian part of Herzegovina.

Besides this prevailing spatial systematization, one often encounters a systematization derived from the old Turkish division into districts (*nahije*), and even reflecting the belonging to clans. Although those divisions appeared during Ottoman rule, they still have certain functions. In that respect, the elderly informants usually divide Montenegro into districts of Katun, Rijeka, Lješan i Crmnica, or according to clans and fraternities (Rovčani, Moračani, Piperi, Vasojevići, Durmitorci, Crmničani, Bjelopavlići, Kući). These informants are sometimes not able to define the space of Montenegro in any other way.. Younger informants have heard about this division and are partially aware of it, but are not putting it to use. They perceive space in a more practical and contemporary manner. Quite a few are unaware of the tribal division, and do not even know the name of the clan that they or their forefathers are descended from. In some cases the informants did not know their tribal belonging, but could identify themselves with the *nahija* division.

The older informants are well acquainted with the Serbian space; they can distinguish narrow specificities of the regions and of particular cities as well. They make clear distinctions between inhabitants of Čačak, Valjevo, Kragujevac, Kraljevo etc. They divide Serbian space into Vojvodina, Beograd, Šumadija and the southeastern part (Niš, Pirot, Vranje). The southern part of Serbia is defined according to larger cities (Pirot, Niš, Vranje), and sometimes only through the definition of its northern border.⁷ Šumadija is perceived as very close and desirable, and Vojvodina is (besides Belgrade) considered to be the most desirable area for immigration (due to the mild mentality of people and a more peaceful life in comparison to Belgrade). Inhabitants of different regions of Serbia are also stereotyped.⁸ The representations of Serbs from Serbia as a whole are not frequent.⁹

⁶ „They speak half *ekavica* half *ijekavica*, and by some customs, mentality, and ways of thinking, they resemble Montenegrins more than the Serbs.”

⁷ „Below Kruševac, Aleksinac, is this southern part...”

⁸ „People of Novi Sad have a very mild temperament, they are easy-going and relaxed“. „I thought it a phrase for people of Pirot, but they are really ready to gauge your eyes out for 10 dinars“.

⁹ „I mind the coldness of a certain number of people.“

Some, and in particular elderly informants, differentiate between the choice of place for studying and the choice of place to live. They completed their studies in smaller centers (Sarajevo or Novi Sad, for example), but have chosen Belgrade for their living space. The informants often attempt to translate the geographical references of the informants into the language more understandable to Serbians (“Seaside people are our *Lale*”). Besides the mentioned references (Vojvodina, Šumadija, Beograd), the Serbian space is defined, albeit rarely, through the expressions like „Podrinje“ and „Pomoravlje“.

The migrations in Montenegro were flowing in different directions in the past, as they were conditioned by the period and cultural and economic processes. The movements of informants’ ancestors had different causes (colonization, flight from blood-feuds etc). Recent migrations, both permanent and seasonal, are mainly directed towards Podgorica and the seaside. The northern part of Montenegro is structurally mainly emigrational, and the seaside and Podgorica are regions of destination. Many seasonal workers come to the seaside from Serbia. Many Montenegrins spend summers at the Montenegrin seaside, and winters in Belgrade. Immigrants to Belgrade think, on the basis of their experience, that the best people from Montenegro moved to Belgrade, whereas less capable and less educated people migrated to other cities of Montenegro („Mostly people of low qualifications“). The change in perceptions and evaluation of certain regions of Montenegro is mostly reflected in the notion of the disintegration of the northern part, quite looked-down upon by the informants. They also notice the transition of the power and the cultural institutions from Cetinje (formerly the main part of the Principality of Montenegro) to Podgorica.

CAUSES AND CONDUCT OF MIGRATIONS

Six groups of causes of migrations can be distinguished: the first group is of an economic nature¹⁰, the second is cultural¹¹, the third is in connection with individual emancipation¹², the fourth is political¹³, the fifth is emotional (conceiving a marriage), and the sixth is

¹⁰ „Now I am overcome with sorrow when I visit my city in the summer.... All the enterprises in Nikšić have collapsed, everything is dead“; „People of Mojkovac migrate, mostly to Podgorica. Many of them are in Serbia. They have nothing to do, factories are closed.“

¹¹ „I always wanted to move to Belgrade, mostly because I am a poet by occupation. I knew that Belgrade is the metropolis that opens itself towards art and people interested in it.“

¹² „Long live the liberty.... For the first time I was separated from the parents – freedom, going out, no burden, no control on your return“ „They would slow me when I was with them, everything is so tied up down there, those relations are too entangled, here everything is much more free.“

¹³ „I was just giving one lady a lift in Montenegro the other day, and after I told her I was from Serbia, she said ‘Is there a house in Serbia, somewhere in the country, for those of us who declare ourselves as Serbs? With the policies of the current government in Montenegro, we can’t live here anymore’“.

simply caused by following someone's example.¹⁴ The majority of the informants draw a motive for migration from a perception of the old environment as being unfavorable towards their development and further advancement. Informants perceive the old space as being deprived of proper conditions for studying, improvement and employment. Serbia is perceived as more civic and multicultural.¹⁵ The phrase "better living conditions" which denotes Serbia, does not necessarily evoke a higher standard, but rather, a better context for cultural development, and for achieving independence and individualization¹⁶. Some of the informants claim that although they would have obtained a better salary if they remained at home, Serbia gives them something they could not find in Montenegro. In this respect there is a significant generational difference. Elderly informants mention as advantages the economic reasons and the possibilities of professional advancement and improvement. They strive for independence and liberation from the constraints of the old environment is more evident in the younger generation. Older generations feel that in terms of career and advancement, they had almost no choice, as Montenegro was very underdeveloped, had no universities, tourist centers and strong cultural institutions. Younger generations see things differently, as Podgorica and the towns at the seaside are now rather developed, they offer a larger job market and better conditions to live and work.

Almost all the informants agree that through the migrations to Serbia, Montenegro is losing the most qualified component of its population, and that "everyone that is worthy" has left. According to the older informants, until the Second World War mostly men were leaving, whereas after the Second World War women joined the migration. The most frequent cause for migration to Serbia was enrollment into high schools or universities. The political causes of migration are rarely mentioned directly, but are rather present in an indirect manner: Serbs from Montenegro think that they are in some sense endangered and would be better off moving to Serbia. The cases regarding the means of conduct of migration are also very specific. In the times of the SFRY, when Belgrade was the capital, each republic used to send staff to work in the institutions of the federal government. Such individuals frequently did not return to their republic after the end of

¹⁴ „From the beginning I intended to enroll in School of Law in Podgorica, but one of my sisters had already enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine in Kragujevac. Since a friend of mine decided to go to Kragujevac as well, and we already had many acquaintances there, I also opted for this city.“

¹⁵ „I feel completely different in Belgrade, there are a lot of Montenegrins there and people from outside in general, it does not really matter where you come from“

¹⁶ „It is roughly clear when one outgrows a given surrounding, it does not satisfy one, can not give you a thing, nothing could have pleased me there.“ „People here are much more independent, they rely on their own abilities, and they are allowed to think with their own head.“

their term, but have remained in Belgrade by obtaining another occupation (becoming, for example, lower executives or managers in companies). Only one of my informants came to Belgrade in such a way, and remained after the expiration of his political engagement. Some of the cases of migrations were inspired by the example of friends or relatives.

Immigrants gathered information about the new place they were about to settle to, in various ways: through relatives already living in Serbia, through direct contact during travels (excursions, weekends or visits to relatives). Most of them had heard positive things about Serbia, and particularly about Belgrade and for the most part they had already reached a definite decision about permanent settlement before they even arrived in Serbia. The majority of the informants started contemplating migration at a relatively early stage, as the university enrolment years were approaching. The older generations started thinking about it during high school. Some of the informants wanted to leave so badly, that they did not give much thought about the conditions and the expectations of the new environment. First contact and accommodation was specific in each case: some stayed with their relatives for some time, and others went directly to the dormitories or rented apartments. Almost all the informants had the support of their families and friends in their decision. Even if the support of one of the parents was not wholehearted, there were no obstructions or dramatic encounters. In some examples the parents made decisions on behalf of their children. One informant came to Serbia as her parents decided to send her off to Belgrade when she was old enough for high school. Another one had to move to Serbia with her parents as her father, who was an officer, was relocated to Serbia. There are contrasting examples, in which the informants delayed leaving for Belgrade to avoid possible disputes with their parents.¹⁷ Although the majority denies parental influence on their decision, there is no doubt about its importance.¹⁸ Although the first impression conveyed is that the largest part of informants made the decision independently and willingly, one can notice in the background that the process could hardly be seen as completely individual: Montenegro has more or less, until recently, been characterized by an atmosphere which was directing and encouraging people to emigrate, and there were many examples of migration to Serbia that migrants

¹⁷ „I have been thinking about it since I was 18. I wanted to come even then, but I was hindered by emotions stemming from my patriarchal upbringing. I did not want to quarrel with my folks, I was younger then.“

¹⁸ „They said: ‘Go, son, it will be better for you there’“; „Of course, like everyone else, I asked for the parental approval and got it.“ „My parents supported me, but it was easier for them when they found out I was not going alone -that I had friends, my sister, and that it would be easier for me to find my way.“.

were taking as role models. Therefore, I think that those migrations were socially generated, and not a matter of individual decision. We can even say that those mass migrations with individual conduct have been going on continuously since the end of the Second World War. There were interesting attempts from the researcher to obtain responses from some of the middle-aged informants on how and why the decision to move came about. The inclination towards Belgrade and Serbia as a whole was considered only natural. It was taken for granted by everybody who aimed to “do something with their lives”, and who had leanings towards the sciences or the arts. One can frequently hear about Montenegrins’ inclination towards Belgrade “in blood” and “in sub-consciousness”. The few that contemplated whether to move or not came up with the same outcome as the ones who did not give it much thought. Through the “empirical” research and inductive reasoning they came to the conclusion that Serbia is better and that they should go there.¹⁹

The important factors that influenced the decision to move to Serbia were the modes of declaring national and regional origin. The informants who declare themselves as Serbs and the ones from Pro-Serbian regions (Northern Montenegro) were more inclined and directed towards Serbia. However, one cannot establish a rule or infer a correlate: national identity and readiness to migrate are not in a one-dimensional logical connection. People from all parts of Montenegro and of all nationalities were moving to Serbia. There is prejudice that people from the seaside are not likely to leave their homeland and thus move less frequently to Belgrade²⁰. My research does not support that prejudice. However, the fact that many evaluate Podgorica highly, due to its closeness to the seaside, attests that the seaside is a generally desirable environment, influencing the recent perception and evaluation of other parts of Montenegro.

The very act of moving did not have a deeper influence on the consciousness of the informants, and it can be inferred that it went effortlessly and without much stress. There was no fear of the new surrounding; the relative proximity and good contact with the homeland, cultural resemblance with the new surrounding and the great number of countrymen to associate with, all gave migrants a sense of safety and the feeling that they were not abroad. Still, many emphasize that it took an amount of courage to do so. Some of the migrants who came quite young (in high school) have strong and mixed feelings:

¹⁹ „When I went to the shop and asked myself where all those products come from, I saw that out of all the articles - there were only two from Montenegro, and hundreds, thousands were from here (from Serbia, S.N).“

²⁰ „Give them double of what they have, they would not take it, they would rather go back down»

this ambivalence did not concern the country they were leaving, but the country of destination²¹.

Consequences of Migrations

The problem of the integration of Montenegrins in Serbia opens up a question on the applicability and consistency of the present criteria of social classification and stratification. The example of Montenegrins is problematic even if we use the criteria called “the level of ethnic incorporation”, that relates to the cohesion within the group and integration (cf. Handelman 1977, in Eriksen 1993: 41-), and if we aim to look at this case through the classic division into dominant and subordinated groups, regarding the position and possibilities of a specific group in a larger social system. (cf. Schermerhorn 1996: 17-18). In accordance to the first criteria, Montenegrins as a group are to be located along the lines of ethnic category - ethnic network – ethnic association – ethnic community. In accordance with other criteria, Montenegrins are to be defined regarding to their number and the power they have in the society. Firstly, we need to establish whether Montenegrins can be considered as a community in Serbia, and secondly if this community has an ethnic character. Only then can we move to the question of whether this is an ethnic/national minority and what its specificities are.

The pioneer analyses indicate a couple of problems that seek further attention. They include the ways of maintaining inter-group communication, the issue of double belonging, and ethnic solidarity.

The first motive to be found in stories told by informants, regarding the reasons for their easy accommodation to the conditions in Serbia, is their self-perception as the inhabitants of both states – meaning that the possibility of return to Montenegro is always open. Psychologically, that makes their situation in Serbia less insecure. Consequently, I observed strong feelings of nostalgia only with one informant; with the others, particularly younger ones, who have not yet started their own families, the idea of possibly returning in a couple of years is there, but only sporadically, on the level of fuzzy representations. Among the informants who had been in Belgrade for a significant number of years there is no feeling of nostalgia, partly due to the attractiveness of the new surrounding and partly due to the possibility of permanent contact with the old

²¹ “In the beginning, my feelings shifted between fear and exaltation. Fear about how I would fit in, how I would find my way, would I adjust, would the children mock my accent... Exaltation for the opportunity to put the ugly things aside and start all over in a new situation- to make something out of myself.”

environment. Not a single informant exhibited regret – on the contrary, they mostly consider moving to Serbia as being the right decision.

The consequences of migration could be divided into several syndromes, depending on the change of status and the role of migrants in the old and new environment. From the statements of the informants it can be inferred that in their old environment, migrants are taken as the people who “made it”, who represent a positive example and a certain authority. When they return to visit their old homes, relatives frequently gather around them to ask about news from Serbia. They are envied or highly revered; in only one case the informant’s friends thought it foolish of him to have wanted to move. In that respect, migrants to Serbia bare some resemblance to *gastarbeiters*. Such a model of behavior is more frequent among the older informants, who moved a couple of decades ago, whereas it’s rare with the younger ones. The other consequence concerns status achievement in the new environment. Contrary to the usual trends when it comes to minorities, Montenegrins in Serbia have a favorable status due to at least two reasons: a high percentage have a higher education, which qualifies them to take up much-appreciated professions, and family and local ties give them a preferential treatment in comparison to their competitors from Serbia. The ways in which immigrants are connecting and recognizing their compatriots is interesting. The recognition is mostly on the basis of family name and dialect,²² but the reaction is not always positive; some are ashamed of their compatriots and have no wish at all to be familiar with them, and some are proud of them in all contexts and are always trying to establish contacts. Solidarity based on regional identity is far stronger than that deriving from the national. This ethnic, or national, solidarity is reflected in many situations and can even acquire funny overtones, such as when a teacher in a school recognizes a child of his compatriot and tries to help him, to the doctor who offers special services or better treatment to his compatriots.

The level of integration of Montenegrins into the Serbian society is so high that there is a lack of interest in creating a national association of Montenegrins; therefore, we can say that there is no single organization that could deal with the issues concerning Montenegrins in Serbia on the institutional level. Great differentiation among the Montenegrin population in Serbia contributes to such a setting. The majority of informants never visited the social events of Montenegrins in Serbia, nor have they ever heard of such manifestations. I only found out from one elderly informant that there is a

²² „...all of us Montenegrins catch the eye quickly by the way we talk and stand.“.

branch of Matica Crnogorska in Serbia, and that the congregations of the countrymen (from Pljevlje, Durmitor and Podgorica) are still taking place. Only one elderly informant took part in such a manifestation, but had no idea what it was about. I discovered later that it was the traditional commemoration of 19 December, Liberation Day in Podgorica. On this occasion people from Podgorica living in Belgrade gather at the Russian House in Belgrade, usually marking it with an exhibition of paintings, a concert of some kind, and a friendly gathering in which usually older, well-educated people take part.

Regarding the narrow circle of friends, informants are not turning exclusively to their countrymen or relatives. The Montenegrin background of a spouse is never a condition for marriage, and there are a proportionally small number of inter-Montenegrin marriages. Notably, almost all the informants show strong (although allegedly unintentional) resistance to accepting *ekavica*, and they maintain a strong Montenegrin accent. They know their origins dating five generations back, and there are examples of thirteen generations or more. Almost all of them come from the clans that have in the past moved from other parts of Montenegro and Herzegovina. The informants' vacation is almost exclusively in Montenegro, partly in the homeland, partly at the Montenegrin seaside. Although they are in constant contact with relatives and countrymen, rarely do informants show strong tribal or fraternal identity. The ones I visited in their homes almost regularly had a book on the origin of their fraternity or tribe, although some of them had not yet read it. Almost all of them possess some of the works of Petar II Petrović Njegoš, who is in a way thought to be the father of the Montenegrin nation. A small number of them have some of the symbols or insignias of Montenegro: the only such example was the picture of the Sveti Vasilije Ostroški monastery on the wall.

Regarding plans to return to Montenegro, the responses are divided. The majority has no intent to go back permanently, while the minority feels great emotional attachment towards the country and the people and is contemplating their return with a degree of intensity.²³ There was only one case where I encountered the idea of returning to the old environment due to the need to get back to "the roots". This behavior is affected with the understanding that the return to Montenegro would be a sort of acknowledgment of defeat. It is believed that the opportunities that Serbia offers are accompanied with a

²³ „I do not know when, but it will fill my heart, I am extremely attached and like Montenegro so very much. Sometimes I go wild with the emotions, I don't even know what it means - I simply love it - very much. I love the country, the people as well, all of them are down there, you get it?»

stronger competition, so that it is the ones who cannot handle the challenge that return to the easier life.²⁴

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the gathered data it is clear that the issue concerning the identity of Montenegrins in Serbia is very complex. The results indicate that the immigrants who individually migrated to Serbian cities have a clouded concept of Montenegrin national consciousness. Their solidarity usually revolves around the narrower ethnic and regional identities (that of belonging to the *gens*, fraternity and clan). Group identification is also narrow and directed towards closest relatives. It is difficult to speak about the Montenegrin population in Serbian cities as such, because their relations towards Serbhood and Serbia display great variety in regards to the generation and the region they belong to. In that respect, there is a problem of determining the Montenegrin minority, regarding its inner group dynamics. If we are to use Handelman's typology for the degree of ethnic cohesion, Montenegrins in Serbian cities occasionally show the characteristics of the ethnic category, and sometimes they show the characteristic of the ethnic network: the degree of the ethnic association is almost never reached, apart from the sporadic and culturally determined attempts on the level of narrower regional groups (people from Durmitor, Pljevlja, Podgorica). Montenegrins recognize one another and frequently favor their countrymen in the job market, but that cannot be considered to be a rule. One of the main factors that make Serbia attractive to Montenegrins is a lack of cultural and economical discrimination. Functionally, Montenegrins show some resemblance with the minorities of middlemen (such as Jews), although there are important differences: they usually obtain higher social positions, well-qualified jobs and have the potential to enter high politics.

Minorities are usually considered to be in the last in the stratification of the social groups, according to number and power. However, Montenegrins occasionally show the traits of an elite, flirting with the majority and renouncing the possibility of their institutional definition; on the other hand, they develop a certain inner-group solidarity, stemming from fear, but also from the wish to acquire and maintain the status of the favored group. They use their identity on a situational level: when necessary, large numbers of

²⁴ „They expected too much. They thought that you are all simply waiting for them to come and that everything will happen by itself. Mostly they return because their parents find them an easier job where they can get away with contributing less and their position will not beat such a risk.“

them equate Serbhood and Montenegrinhood, but they maintain the borders of their groups through inner ethnic solidarity.

Montenegrins who came through individual migrations usually live in the cities, which is not a favorable environment for maintaining and manifesting their national identity. Whereas on the institutional level there is neither desire nor need to manifest national identity, on the individual level and on the level of interpersonal relations, things are different. Great numbers of male migrants are proud of their origin one way or another, they express it, and do not blend with the majority completely²⁵. Most of the immigrants maintain their accent and dialect, as well as a somewhat specific vocabulary. In their own words, they do it unintentionally. Many are, in spite of the great effort to change, still easily distinguishable by the way they speak. Also, the majority maintain regular contact with friends and relatives, in Serbia as well as in the homeland. The second generation of immigrants shows signs of a complete absorption into majority; the loss of linguistic specificities, and the connection to the homeland grows weaker; the feeling of national identity remains largely beyond definition, so one can hear many of them speaking about Montenegrins in third person (“they”).

This research has shown one other, until now quite unknown, unclear and sidetracked cause of migrations of Montenegrins to Serbia. It regards the need for individual emancipation. The large percentage of informants saw the movement to Serbia as a possibility to free themselves of the old, narrow ethnic patterns and to start a free, independent life in a larger setting where the relations could be maintained on the basis of interest. It might be that this aspect will be given special attention in further research.

Although incomplete, this research pointed to a number of particular issues to be given special attention to in the following period. By that I chiefly mean the identification within the group and community, in which the following levels are identifiable: intergenerational connection and the connection between strata that declare differently in the ethnic and national sense. In future research, I will devote special attention to the second generation of informants and to the problems of ethnic identity within the families with one or both parents from Montenegro. The aim of the current research was to reveal the main ideas and discourses, while future research will also encompass

²⁵ An individual who came back from Serbia to Montenegro showed an interesting, but not so rare model of behavior. Father of one of the informants kept his Montenegrinhood as the need to differentiate from the rest of the Serbs, but came very close to the Serbhood once back in Montenegro when encountering negative aspects of the Montenegrin identity: „While I was in Serbia, I was a great Montenegrin, but when I came to Montenegro, I eased up.“ His son says that he always declared himself as Montenegrin, but if he were now in Montenegro he would probably declare himself as a Serb.

statistical analysis. I expect the picture I will get on Montenegrins settled in rural parts of Serbia to be very different.

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