

**Research Project: New and Ambiguous Nation-Building Processes
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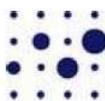
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**MUSIC EVENTS IN THE FUNCTION OF PROMOTING MONTENEGRO
AS (ELITE) TOURIST DESTINATION**

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Music events in the function of promoting Montenegro as (elite) tourist destination

Lidija Vujacic

The subject of this thesis is focused on large pop and rock concerts as the new segment of tourist supply of Montenegro, which throughout 2007 and 2008 encompassed performers such as Rolling Stones, Lenny Kravitz and Madonna, whose concert was officially proclaimed as the most significant event in terms of promotion of tourism in Montenegro. Aforesaid concerts have, by all means, drawn attention to Montenegro, being a small country, while triggering controversial effects in Montenegro's public. Those effects can be analyzed from various aspects, starting from the aspect of entertainment to tourist-economic and political-ideological ones.

Introduction

In recent years, and especially since the declaration of independence in 2006, Montenegro strived to be presented as a tourist country, on both domestic and foreign level, it being a segment of official economic-cultural strategy. However, tourist projection and its implementation have changed their forms over time, from massive tourism to those of elite tourism, which is lately seen as the main development goal of this country. The national policy's aim of "glamourization" of Montenegro and its transformation into elite tourist destination has been most evident in the last two years. Having in mind this particular aim, as well some others, certain number of music events was organized. It included performances of some greatest contemporary pop and rock stars, and this practice is to be continued. Thus, small country, such as Montenegro, hosted glamorous events and performers, and, in terms of marketing, drew attention to itself as being an attractive point on the tourist map of the world.

Nevertheless, besides mapping the country on an international level, concerts by performers aforementioned caused other effects of diverse significance, especially in country's public. Therefore, this thesis will consider these events on many levels, from

the “authentic“ tourist (commercial-marketing) level, to ideological-political one. Events, namely the discourses on these that were introduced in the public, may basically also be regarded as cross-section-metaphor of current socio-economic and political situation in the country, taking into account the organization, financiers, representation in media etc.

Madonna’s concert is particularly inspirational for analysis, for it was officially proclaimed (in the annual World Beauty Award) the most significant event in terms of promotion of tourism in Montenegro.

In fact, having in mind that aforementioned events contain manifested and latent meaning, as well as external and internal “purpose“, we can interpret them through two aspects perceived in the public:

- as the new segment of Montenegro’s tourist supply – the so-called pop/rock tourism, i.e. the contribution to country’s presentation and its image of elite tourist destination (on an external level);
- and through the level of (un)intentionally induced political-ideological aspects of these events (on an internal level).

The subject of research

Hence, the subject of research are music events in Montenegro that, in the last two years, hosted some of the world’s greatest and, at the same time, most expensive contemporary pop and rock stars (Rolling Stones’ concert in 2007, Lenny Kravitz and Madonna’s concerts in 2008 ¹). All the concerts were held on the same location – beach Jaz near Budva, which, after the music event, became not only the most popular beach in Montenegro, but also the most prominent “symbol“ of country’s tourist supply for foreigners (as the advertisement for beautiful nature, especially beaches, that can obviously be valorized in diverse ways ²). Glamourous stars, pompous advertising of these events, great number of visitors, celebrities attending the event, ascribed to Jaz, and to Montenegro, a certain dose of glamour, which was one of the essential goals of the sponsors and organizers of the concerts. These effects were most present in the

1 In the unofficial information broadcasted by IN TV (programme *Indigo*) on Jan, 21st 2009, Tina Turner’s concert was announced to be held as a part of *Live Fest*, which is to take place from 5. to 7. August this year, on beach Jaz (Budva). This event would affirm Montenegro’s continuity in being country that offers eminent pop-rock tourism as a part of its tourist supply.

2 “Montenegro’s coast is 293,5 km long, with 117 beaches measuring 73 km“ - http://www.turizamcg.com/mont/montenegro/crna_gora.html

atmosphere before and after Madonna's concert, and it is therefore going to be analyzed with special regard, doing so from three quite illustrative "features" of events. The first is, as was previously mentioned, its official proclamation (given by state authorities) as the most significant event in terms of promotion of tourism in Montenegro... The second is its objectively being the event that surpassed all other events in terms of number of visitors, including the political ones that, until that point, attracted most "audience" in Montenegro. The third one is that Madonna's management team picked Montenegro among many other locations as a part of her tour, even though several neighbouring countries were competing (it is logical to assume that this choice was "bolstered" by the largest fee).

Material for analysis was collected on the actual location, through observation of events and conversations with participants, and statements given by the organizers of the concert, which could be heard in official announcements, that were considered as technical information. Nevertheless, various and diverse media discourses are especially significant for this analysis, for it is based on them that it is most possible to see the controversial (economic and political-ideological) interpretation of events by the public, especially the domestic one. Terms public, glamour(ization), image, are also very important for the broader context of the topic. Besides briefly reviewing their general meanings, their categorial implementation will be presented hereinafter.

General meanings of terms public, glamour and image and their application in this thesis

Public– The meaning of term public relates to area in which sphere of society and sphere of state are intertwined, and which enables free information exchange among people. In addition, democratic milieu is necessary for the existence of public.³ For this reason, in theory and practice, the term public is interpreted as subject (i.e. intermediary instance between society and the state, which enables creation of audience that serves as

³ However, original meaning of the term public transformed with broader social changes, i.e during different phases of social development, as the audience's status was being changed, from critical to manipulative instance of public, and of social milieu that creates appearance of public (see: Habermas, 1969) . With enormous power of mass communications, the public becomes area of sociality where relations of power in a society are most visible. Hence the controlling of public institutions, mass media in particular, is the essential means of social domination, because it enables the possibility of managing, structuring and controlling of public opinion.

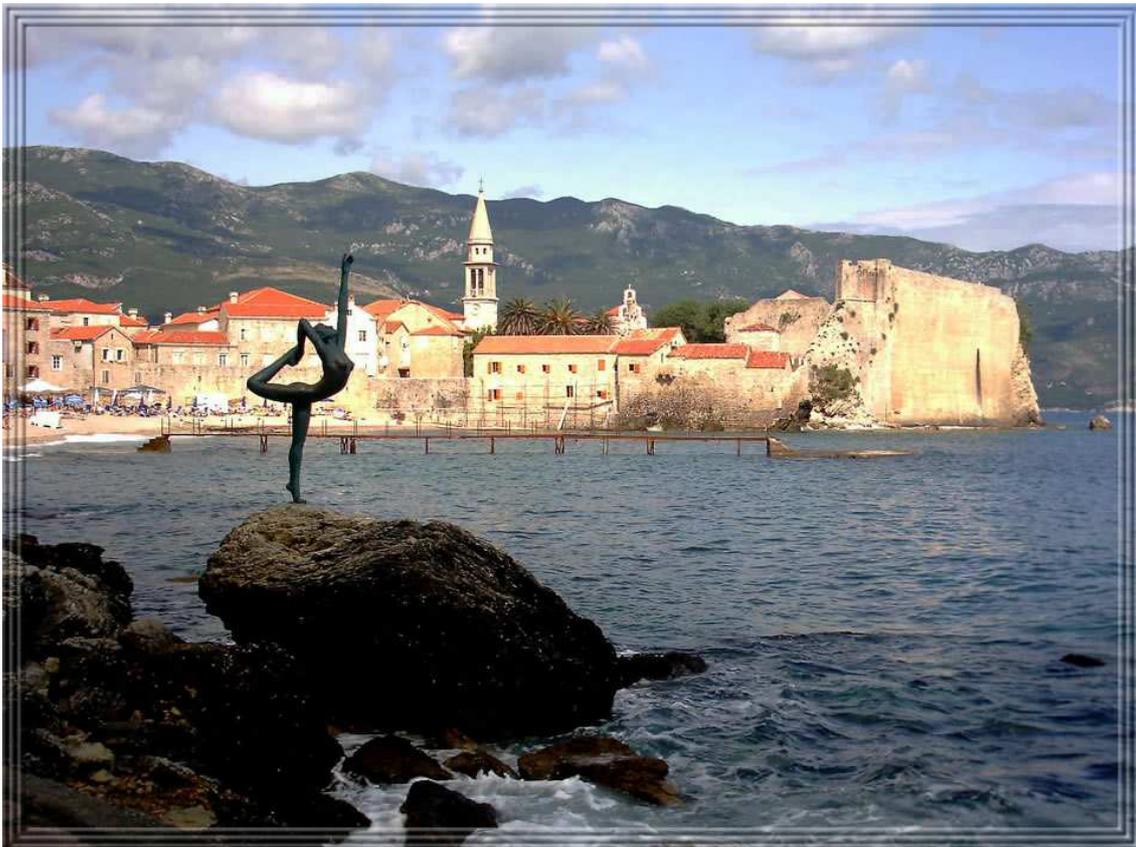
pillar of public opinion) and as social communication area. Previous text includes implication of public being related to external sphere of social life, which “unlike private, institutional or political party-related, becomes the basis for criteria evaluation of society’s decision making that affect interests of all members of society“ (Tomić 2007: 90).

In fact, public is colloquially determined as detection of opinion regarding a specific issue. It is an informal collectivity which emerges and transforms during debate on a specific important or controversial issue. The features of public include existence i.e. raising the issue, discussion and differentiation of public opinion (Blumer, H. 1946. In: Berelson, Janovitz, 1953), which „implies predominant collective stances of members of a society or a social group regarding certain problem or issue or problem which is of “general significance“ (Tomić, 2007: 141). It is precisely the way in which these terms will be interpreted in the handling the discourse that arose in public, regarding music events (questioning of taking place of Madonna’s concert, its significance for the image of economy and the country, economy effects, political implications and similar).

Glamour – The term glamour is also widely exploited in contemporary culture. It significantly gained profit as a socio-consumerist phenomenon owing to development of consumerist society, visual and media culture. In fact, it gained its material dimension owing to the sphere of imagination in which it was originally designed.⁴ Glamour is related to extravagance and beauty, with the inevitable dose of exaggeration, for the purpose of inspiring interest and maintaining superiority over all that is described as “usual” i.e. not glamorous. As a phenomenon, it is an embellished version of reality, or, better yet, intentionally designed external effect a person or object reflects on their surroundings. Its role is to blind us, to enchant us, and it is therefore consisted

⁴ Etymologically, the word has two origins. According to the first one, it was related to Scottish word *grammar* (the study of the occult, magic) and to old French word, *grimoire*, (book of witchcraft) because it was once believed that grammar and its rules are only understood by special people, the chosen ones. Later, when the word was introduced into standard English language, word glamour, as well as *splendour*, was defined as “charm, grace, magic or fictitious beauty attributed to a person or an object” (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989) and was attributed similar characteristics less related to the skills of the occult, and more to their consequences– delusion, obsession. In the 20th century the word was widely applied to denote charm or physical attraction of a person, especially female (attraction is often related to emphasis of femininity, and therefore J. Basinger writes that woman is more “determined by fashion and glamour than by her job”- 1993: 129). In the course of time, the term maintained and expanded its meanings and adapted them to contemporary interpretation which links it to false, embellished reality, illusion. The term is related to various spheres of life, starting with art, human body, dress style, as well as style of behaviour.

of complex language of colours, materials and visual effects.⁵ The aura of glamour is ascribed to people, but also to objects, places, events, institutions, and, in broader sense, to countries. Creation of glamour on a national „level“ is in fact appearance of Jaz-Budva (small town with approximately 15 000 citizens) on the list of fourteen European metropolises (which includes London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Athens etc.) that hosted global pop star Madonna. From the perspective of the hosting country, the world received a message that a country with only several hundred thousand citizens has technical and financial potentials to organize such first-rate event.



We can say that, in the current constellation of cultural and economical relations, glamour, beside social (as an issue of prestige), it is mostly a consumerist phenomenon, for it creates new notions and, most importantly, it has a tendency of stimulating consumerism. As Gandl and Castelli have observed, it is a stylized “version of reality

⁵ Glamour is “elusive, mysterious, exciting and often illusory attraction that stimulates imagination and soothes the desire for the unconventional, unexpected and exotic” (Wester’s Third New Internnatioal Dictionary, 1961)

that stimulates consumerism” (Gandl and Castelli 2007: 15).⁶ Basically, glamour operates most with its associations to spectacularity, luxury, entertainment, erotic. Unlike, for example, image, which is built in a more consistent manner and usually, has stronger value connotations, the effect of glamour is faster to achieve but it is also faster to take effect. It is obvious, especially having in mind that everything that is currently considered to be glamorous, was not so in some of the previous phases of its existence. Objects, participants, or events are transformed from usual to glamorous, by means of various mechanisms. Budva seems to be the perfect example (or at least it is presented as such). Madonna’s concert promotes Montenegro as a glamorous tourist destination by using entertainment as its calling card, more than politics or real economy. Thus, we can speak of processes, institutions and persons that produce and maintain glamour, such as “glamourization” of tourist supply, and that of the country, through which Montenegro, by organizing the events that included glamorous people, aimed to make tourist supply more elite. That is the essence of using the phenomenon of glamour in current conditions - commercial seduction of the audience (consumers, tourists).

Image – By glamourization of the country, Montenegro also contributed to its presentation and image on a national, but more importantly, on an international level. The country, through Madonna’s concert, sends a message that it has the will and the means to invest in the entertainment industry and in the new type of tourism (pop-rock tourism). In doing so, it ensures very important advantage for contract closure with other global stars in the future. It is of utmost importance that, through patronage of such exclusive event, it projects appearance of modern European atmosphere that the surrounds the event.

Country’s image (or image of its economy, politics, positioning) is here observed as important social and communicational principle emitted to the surroundings, i.e. to others - the observers. In contemporary society, our dependence on opinion of others gains more and more importance, and therefore significance of image building is proportionally increased. The areas of media and entertainment are those that produce most models and role-models for shaping of one’s image (which is very flexible, but still limited with the existing offer within the boundaries of one consumerist culture).

⁶ Glamour affects imagination more than quality, for people and objects it is attributed to as their feature, manipulate visual fascination that they inspire in the beholder.

It is clear that image is a social and therefore highly variable category that makes room for innovation. Because of the instability of perimeters in categorical determination of this term, a certain dose of fabrication of reality as a feature of entity's image, is emphasized (Skoko, 2006). Criteria each image is based on are susceptible, in symbolic sense, to changes and thus enable the possibility of manipulative effects. Therefore, notions of a subject, an institution, and even industry or event, can be formed spontaneously in public, as the consequence of attribution gained from real facts, or, vice versa, these notions can be formed when image is strategically conceived in various discourses. Enhancement of its marketing plays a significant part, as well as support of media and of public institutions (or powerful individuals, that, as in the example of Madonna's concert, emerged as sponsors and financiers). Obviously, image can be constructed intentionally, when speaking of collective aspect, and, in this particular case, it is economy image of Montenegro. There is a tendency here to institutionally (or informally, with strong levers of power and control of institutions, especially of the capital) introduce innovation into segments of tourism and cultural-entertainment atmosphere, in accordance with the concept of country's economy prospect, and also with the ideology that projects new image.



“Madonnization” of Montenegro

As was previously mentioned, in the past two years, some of the greatest music performers of today held concerts in Montenegro, such as legendary rock band Rolling Stones, Julio Iglesias, Lenny Kravitz, and, finally, Montenegrin “hospitality“ reached dizzy heights with the arrival of American pop diva Madonna, as a part of her European *Sticky&Sweet* tour.

Concert's business card – From the moment the exact date of concert was announced (25th September 2008, at beach Jaz near Budva), Madonna's concert had

large promotional campaign. During its two months' time of duration, "55 000 promotional video clips were broadcasted on almost all televisions in the region, and announcements of this event were made in almost all the media".⁷ Approximately 200 representatives of local and international media were monitoring the concert. This first-rate event drew attention in the whole region, as was expected, and it therefore attracted great number of spectators from ex-Yugoslavian countries, but also those from Albania, Greece, Italy and Russia. Something over 60000 tickets was sold (which is the figure announced by the organizers, and generally perceived as the average value out of several alternatives. For example, in the broader context of this event, which is to be explored hereinafter, daily paper *Vijesti* mentioned the number of 50, *Dan* 60, whereas *Pobjeda* stated the number of 70 000 guests).



The event was still breaking news on the day after Madonna's concert, appearing on each local TV station (and on many stations in the region). It was present in informative broadcasts, and in print media. Concert stills were on newspaper front pages, as well as its success and its effects, interesting details from during and after the

⁷ The statement given by director of TO Budva in the press conference held in Budva prior to the concert, Sept 25 th 2008.

concert (Madonna's stay in hotel *Splendid* in Bečići, with her suite⁸). In fact, this the inevitable part of entertainment industry that developed the system of so-called "stars" in which they are being "reshaped" into becoming stereotypical interesting individuals, whose looks, purchasing power and controversial biographies mesmerize the audience. In popular culture theories, in the minds of consuming audience "the very public is being privatized and becomes the sphere of publishing private life stories" (Tomić 2007: 116). In this particular case, Madonna's private life gains publicity, and not critical but manipulative one, because it controls the audience as much as it legitimizes itself to it. The main mechanism that "seduces", whether gender-related or related to masses, audiences and glamorous stars, is glamour. Apart from the glamour of the star herself, the set was symbolically, among other things, glamorous as well (the stage with two video-beams was set between two letters M which were embroidered on gigantic canvases with *Swarovski* crystals).



⁸ Thus, we were informed about Madonna's private life habits, her delight with national cuisine, and similar information in the entertainment section of the yellow press, as well about the cost of her one-night stay in hotel *Splendid* (for which she paid 7500 euros, while her company stayed in suites costing 4500 euros per night) – the statement given by Ž. Radulović in one of concert-related public appearances



The opening show was by Swedish indie-electronic-pop singer Robyn Miriam Carlsson, after which Madonna gave her performance. The direction of this event was truly spectacular. It included excellent production and sound, attractive choreography, video-production that monitored each song on screens and divided large sections of the stage. During her performance, Madonna was accompanied by 20 dancers and 12 band members. In famous Madonna's style, the concert was divided into several themes, which included variety of concepts, starting with promoting her new album, *Hard Candy*, followed by homage to the twenties, reinterpretation of her own past, gypsy style theme, and also ecologically and politically engaged part of the concert. After the concert, only the praises were to be heard, in both media and informal comments of those who attended the concert. Statements to be heard were "*the greatest music event in the region of all times*" or "*spectacular show, as was never seen in Montenegro*" and similar.

However, apart from the excitement of fans and profit gained by the organizers in commercial, and especially marketing-symbolic sense, the aim of the event was (on an institutional level) to symbolically raise Montenegro's rating, in tourist sense, by using spectacularity (and therefore glamour). Statements made by the organizers went to the length of the event being so significant to the point of „marking a whole epoch in

the development of Montenegro as a prestige tourist destination.⁹ For similar reasons, the concert was officially proclaimed “event with greatest promotional impact“ in annual *Wild Beauty Award*, tourism awards (held on 13th Dec.2008 in Žabljak). The argument for this award is that these annual awards are given for “contribution to improvement of Montenegro’s tourist supply quality, and for affirmation and promoting Montenegro’s tourist supply“ (*Vijesti*, 14. 12. 2008: 11). WBA awards are held for four years in succession, sponsored by the President of Montenegro, in the organization of Tourist Organization of Montenegro.

However, expectedly or not, the concert initiated a whole mass of controversial debates in the country. As for Madonna’s concert, the public, as the pillar of publicity, exposed its critical (or manipulative) instance, depending on what the previous initiating argument of debate was. The first controversy started several months before the concert, including topics such as the accuracy of the information that one, probably most expensive star in the world today, was coming to Montenegro. It was only when media presented more precise information given by the organizers, that Budva turned out to be the one, out of competition with several metropolises and cities in the region, to “attract“ Madonna, who was on her European tour. Commercial reasons prevailed (i.e. 7, 5 million euro fee).¹⁰

Apart from extremely high fee, controversy trigger was the issue of who was organizing and financing this event, which opened a potentially political connotation of the concert, or its „use“, not just in tourist-commercial sense, but also for political marketing of currents that were behind the event. Organizers listed were municipality of Budva and local tourist organization. The producers were world concert agency *Live Nation* and *Komuna* from Belgrade. After numerous speculations, more concrete information on identity of sponsors emerged. Those were: *Mirax* group, the Government of Montenegro, *Prva banka Crne Gore*. In terms of organization and sponsorship of the event, some specific names from the political milieu were mentioned (among whom was the vice president of the ruling party), and were said to have participated in the negotiations and organization of the event, which the public

⁹ Statement given by S. Radović, director of National Tourist organization, at a press conference in hotel Avala in Budva, on the day of the concert. On same occasion, he proclaimed, on behalf of his organization, “that Montenegro, in order to be prestigious tourist destination, must host world famous stars, but must not make compromises, and should only host those greatest ones”.

¹⁰ It beat the amount of 5 million euros offered by, for example, Zagreb and Belgrade.

interpreted as the act of personal and political i.e. party-related promoting. Such participation in the event informally institutionalized property over the event. For subjects having patronage over such event can have the possibility of spontaneously or intentionally projecting notions of themselves or of the event. It is clear that in marketing, the advertisement is not isolated from the broader context, but its effects encompass all of the participants included (in this particular case, the city, the country, a particular political current, individuals “of merit“, as all those whose participation is within the same identity whole. Spectacle, in itself, is a social and consumerist phenomenon, very appropriate for introduction of new symbols and notions on a level where they are (un)intentionally projected. In this case, the government has propriety over the event, as a participant in its organization, and therefore, government has the greatest share of responsibility in the building of constructive nature of country’s image (Frisby 1985), namely of its cultural-economical identity.

As for financial support of the concert, the announcement that caused most controversy was that one of the financiers was *Mirax*, Russian Construction Company, conducting its business in Montenegro for several years. Introduction of Russian capital and influence is one of main political topics in government-opposition relation, and a subject of broader divergent attitudes on whether Montenegro’s development and ideological background would benefit more from closer ties to Russia, or to the EU and NATO alliance (these being obviously confronted and exclusive of one another in Montenegro’s political scene and in the public opinion). Thus *Mirax*’s share in sponsorship of the concert caused bitter remarks and comments by some local media, which said that Madonna’s concert was “paid for by the construction cartel“ (*Construction lobby pays accounts*, Monitor: 921); in highly critical tone, the comment suggested that the concert was return favour to local government for allowing foreign (Russian) investors to uncontrollably buy propriety and set up construction works around Montenegro, especially in its most valuable area - the coast. Similar comment could be read in *Vijesti* (27th Sept 2008, column *More than words*): „we use Russian money (partly, at least) to bring Madonna, who is undoubtedly the symbol of the west, to Montenegro. This critical tone is directed at the government of Montenegro (which determined the amount of money for the concert), and therefore inspired in some the impression of being “a unique example of a government organizing the event that is ultra commercial“, while not financing its own music and theatre events that existed for

decades. The same critical comment includes harsh political comparison to the amount of compensation that Supreme Court of Montenegro appointed to Bosnian Muslims who were victims of deportation, which occurred in the early '90s of the previous century. Survived victims or family members, 196 of them that were given this compensation, were appointed total amount of only 4 million euros, which is only half the amount of Madonna's fee (claims *Monitor's* text of the same title *Less than Madonna*, issue No 948). Financially speaking, this event is therefore qualified as "the best" marketing and business move of the Montenegrin-Russian state-private capital (*Madonnization of Montenegro*, *Monitor*: 937).¹¹

On the other hand, representatives of governmental institutions state tourist effects of the event only. They also claim that Montenegro earned 6 to 7 million euros, some of it from tickets sale, some from 80-90000 stays in hotels (all hotel capacities were said to be occupied in the days prior to the concert, and not only in Budva, but in neighbouring towns as well, in spite of increased prices in the period out of season), while certain sum was made from sales of plane tickets, and expenditure out of board limits – the statement given by the director of National tourist organization (*Pobjeda*, 27.09.2008, column *Society*).

However, the event caused intrigue in the public, and confronted it with the organizer in another aspect. The guests will, apart from the spectacle, remember the concert for its lack of organization and traffic collapse. The comments given by the media on the day after the concert were those of the event's significance and number of guests, unlike those given in the following days which pointed to organization's failure and inspired newspaper headlines such as *Spectacle with circus-like organization*, *Organizers think differently than most* etc. Organizers disagree, and find this event to be "one of the spectacles ever seen in our country" (*Vijesti*, 27.09.2008, column *Society*), and they ascribe oversights to "audience that is concert-wise uneducated, in terms of timely arrival to such event."

Interestingly enough, some political parties gave statements concerning this situation, for example, the announcement made by the Liberal party says, among other

¹¹ In the case of Rolling Stones concert, political discourses were initiated as well. It is interesting that a slogan from the '90s, being a powerful emotional-political slogan of the liberal anti-war orientation, was used in a humorous way, so the original form slogan *From Lovcen a fairy is heard to speak Forgive us Dubrovnik*, was rephrased „in the honour“ of Rolling Stones as *From Lovcen a fairy is heard to speak Welcome into our midst, Jagger Mick*.

things, that “organizational fiasco showed the country to be brutally divided in the first and second rank citizens, and, unfortunately, managed to place the concert of this globally famous singer into background, even though it was supposed to affirm Montenegro as an interesting tourist destination.” (Podgorica, MINA agency, Sept 27th).

Conclusion

We are lead to an essential conclusion that tourist industry is the basis from which Montenegro gets ideas and potential for its representation on a local and international level. Different kinds of marketing are used for this purpose, such as advertising of nature resources and beauties, and, as was presented in this work, organizing of expensive music events as the new kind of tourist supply (so-called pop-rock tourism).

The concert of American pop star, Madonna, turned out to be the most effective of all events whose purpose (or intention, at least) was to map Montenegro as elite tourist destination. Her concert was intended to have, apart from aspect of entertainment and commerce, a symbolic aspect as well, which would glamourize not only the tourist supply, but also the location of the event. The intention of the “hosts“ were to, by hypertrophization of this event, create new presentations of beach Jaz (as a representative of natural beauties), and then Budva (the town that made it to the list of global music events locations), and finally of Montenegro, which creates new presentations and identity on its own, in the scope of mentioned economical-cultural reference area (Mugnani 1997: 168).

However, in the conditions of extremely politicised social atmosphere in Montenegro, the spectacle, apart from commercial and symbolic, gained political and ideological connotations. Organizers and financiers had their share in this, and so did numerous discourses in the public and event’s interpretation in the media. The former (organizers and financiers) for the reason of turning music event into institutional product, but not in a classical bureaucracy manner, whose main “set” was, ultimately, determined by the state (some of its subjects and governing political groups were also the participants and had formal power or monopoly over the capital, and therefore over

the event)¹². The latter (public and media) debated for months on different segments of the concert, in accordance with their beliefs or governing policy, using it as a parameter for financial, cultural and ideological classification, namely of those who were “running” it. Thus, Madonna’s concert (which truly was something as never seen before in Montenegro) could ultimately be treated as the metaphor of current socio-economical and political situation in the country.

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¹² In fact, even though in different forms, in almost each case “genesis and transformation manifested themselves through oligarchy of event’s management - priests, notable peasants...” (Lukić-Krstanović 2004: 56).

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