



Faculty of Political Science

**Multicultural minority rights policies' effects on minority
segregation: Evidence from Albanians in Montenegro`s
post-Independence period**

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ABSTRACT

Since its independence of 2006, Montenegro has brought multiculturalism in its constitutional and legal frameworks with the aim of integrating its Albanian national minority. And while the framework itself got praised by domestic politicians, European Union and Council of Europe, its results are unquestionably limited: In nearly three decades of expanding and altering of policies, Albanians maintained a perception of being discriminated against, have grown to perceive Montenegrins more distant to them annually and remain objectively to exist in a parallel society. The aim of this paper is to explain how this outcome came to be. Hinted by the existing literature of the potential opposite effects of multiculturalism in integration, which suggests that multiculturalism in practice could potentially backfire and contribute to the establishment of a parallel society, a causal mechanism was developed that attempts to explain how Montenegrin multicultural policies failed at integrating Albanians. The causal mechanism was driven by updating theoretical expectations with empirical observations. With gathered data from already published primary sources, interviews and public statements of actors, and analysed by case-centric outcome explaining process tracing, the study came up with a sufficient explanation of the failed multicultural framework. It found that multicultural policies demanded by Albanian national minority parties aimed at their better representation in the parliament and performance in elections, were met when the ruling Democratic Party of Socialists needed their support in the elections. Initial provisions, dictated by Democratic Party of Socialist, like lowering of the elections threshold backfired and caused a fragmentation of Albanian national minority parties. This occurred at a time when Democratic Party of Socialists was at its prime, and multicultural demands could no longer be made or sustained. However, in a decline of popularity, Democratic Party of Socialists was again drawn to the now consolidated and ethno-nationalist grievance discourse reliant Albanian national minority parties. Lastly, ethno-nationalist discourse manifested itself, putting national separation of Albanians into salience and alternative positive framing to multiculturalism and integration into the Montenegrin society.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Failed integration, National minority parties, Parallel society, Albanians in Montenegro

ABSTRAKT

Që prej shpalljes së pavarësisë në vitin 2006, Mali i Zi e ka përfshirë multikulturalizmin në kornizat e tij kushtetuese dhe ligjore me synimin për të integruar pakicën e vet kombëtare shqiptare. Dhe megjithëse vetë korniza është lavdëruar nga politikanët vendas, Bashkimi Evropian dhe Këshilli i Evropës, rezultatet e saj janë padiskutim të kufizuara: Në gati tre dekada të zgjerimit dhe ndryshimit të politikave, shqiptarët kanë ruajtur perceptimin e të qenit të diskriminuar, kanë ardhur duke i ndjerë malazezët si çdo vit e më të largët dhe mbeten objektivisht ekzistent në një shoqëri paralele. Qëllimi i këtij punimi është të shpjegojë se si u arrit deri në këtë rezultat. E lënë të kuptohet nga literatura ekzistuese për efektet e mundshme të kundërta të multikulturalizmit në integrim, e cila sugjeron se multikulturalizmi në praktikë mund të ketë efektin e kundërt dhe të kontribuojë në krijimin e një shoqërie paralele, u zhvillua një mekanizëm shkakësor që përpiqet të shpjegojë se si politikat multikulturore të Malit të Zi dështuan në integrimin e shqiptarëve. Mekanizmi shkakësor u ndërtua duke përditësuar pritshmëritë teorike me vëzhgime empirike. Me të dhënat e mblendhura nga burime parësore tashmë të publikuara, intervista dhe deklaratat publike të aktorëve, dhe të analizuar nga të dhënat shpjeguese të nxjerra nga procesi i gjurmimit në studimin e përqendruar të rasti, studimi arriti një shpjegim të mjaftueshëm mbi dështimin e kornizës multikulturore. U zbulua se politikat multikulturore të kërkuara nga partitë e pakicës kombëtare shqiptare, të cilat synonin përfaqësim më të mirë në parlament dhe performancë në zgjedhje, u plotësuan kur Partia Demokratike e Socialistëve kishte nevojë për mbështetjen e tyre në zgjedhje. Dispozitat fillestare, të diktuar nga Partia Demokratike e Socialistëve, si ulja e pragut zgjedhor, patën efekt të kundërt dhe shkaktuan copëzim të partive të pakicës kombëtare shqiptare. Kjo ndodhi në një kohë kur Partia Demokratike e Socialistëve ishte në kulmin e saj, dhe kërkesat rreth multikulturalizmit nuk mund të bëheshin më apo të mbaheshin. Megjithatë, me rënien e popullaritetit, Partia Demokratike e Socialistëve u tërhoq sërish drejt partive tashmë të konsoliduara dhe që mbështeteshin në diskursin e ankesave etno-nacionaliste të partive të pakicës kombëtare shqiptare. Së fundi, diskursi etno-nacionalist manifestoi veten, duke e spikatur ndarjen kombëtare të shqiptarëve dhe duke ofruar një kornizë alternative pozitive përballë multikulturalizmit dhe integrimin në shoqërinë malazeze.

Fjalë kyçe: Multikulturalizëm, Integrim i dështuar, Partitë e pakicave kombëtare, Shoqëri paralele, Shqiptarët në Mal të Zi.

Multicultural minority rights policies' effects on minority segregation: Evidence from Albanians in Montenegro's post-Independence period

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No one shall be freed from taxes! It doesn't go to my pocket; all of it goes to my suffering and brave Montenegro. We must return our debts to the fat Italy, as if I haven't given them a daughter, then to big Austria, then to Serbia, then to some others... Were it not for the debt, we wouldn't be European - we would be like these Albanians. And one's Europeanness must be paid. What is Montenegro but people and a hill? The hill won't return the debt – the people must then. Where else to get money?! Where?! What do you want from me, shall I sell my palace?!¹

— King Nicolas Petrović-Njegoš to his secretary in: Laza Ristovski, “Long trip to Europe”, 1995

Intro

Between 1878 and 1912, then Principality (and later Kingdom) of Montenegro acquired Ottoman lands inhabited by Albanians and other non-titular groups. The gargantuan challenge of administrating these new lands and integrating the non-titular peoples into the broader society was cut short by the events that led to the unification of Yugoslavia. The “first” Yugoslavia's² policies towards Montenegrin Albanians largely “left the group the way they found it”³, which is to say – illiterate, insular and largely marginalized by the state⁴

¹“(…)poreza se nećeniko oslobađat'! Ne ide to men' u džep, sve to ide na ovu moju napaćenu i 'rabru Crnu Goru. Moramo dugove da vratimo onoj izjeličkoj Italiji, ka da im nisam šćer da, pa veljoj Austro-Ugarskoj, pa onda Srbiji, pa jošte nekima. Da nije duga, mi ne bi bili Jevropa, no bi bili ka ovi Arbanasi. A jevropejstvo se mora platit'. Što je Crna Gora nego narod i brdo? Brdo duga neće vraćat', narod mora. Okle pare?! Okle?! Što ću ja, oću li dvor da prodam?!”

² This includes the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSHS), Kingdom of Yugoslavs & Kingdom of Yugoslavia (KYU).

(Šćekić, 2024, p. 4). Montenegrin Albanians were largely spared of the much more dramatic events that this group faced in other areas of the new country. Assimilation was limited, largely corresponding to just as limited institutional capacities – i.e. one cannot assimilate if there isn't even a school to go to (Šćekić, 2024). They haven't however received any attention from the new authorities towards integrating them in one way or another. The “second” Yugoslavia's⁵ attitude towards Albanians of Montenegro was keener on having them integrated into the society. Elementary education became mandatory, but it was conducted in Serbian, that is to say – republic's official language, with goals of enabling Albanians to take part in Montenegro's political, social and economic life (2024, p. 253). Minority instead resisted and resented this, harboring instead feelings that the new state was trying to actively assimilate them (2024, p. 253). But aside from raising literacy levels from pre-war era (usually by providing education in Serbian language) they also failed at this task (Šćekić, 2024, p. 253). Finally, the “third” Yugoslavia⁶ represented by far the worst relative time-span for the rights of Albanians living in Montenegro, as they were in essence collectively treated as a domestic enemy⁷ (Cilevics, 1998).

With the dissolution of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (Further in text: SFRY) the post-Yugoslav political space was left with half-a dozen new states by 2008. All of these have spent the following years in state-building and have committed themselves towards EU integrations. And while some states, like Slovenia and Croatia, succeeded in establishing stronger institutions and have managed to accomplish EU memberships by 2004 and 2013

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⁵ This includes the Federative Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY) and Socialist People Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

⁶ This includes the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and State Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

⁷ Possibly as late as 2006, as seen in *Operation Eagle Flight*

respectively – the rest of the region, typically called “West Balkans”⁸ by EU and academics, struggled.

A common characteristic for each of them, apart from Slovenia, which was and remains - largely ethnically homogenous, is that they have at least one national minority, which seems to live in a parallel society – an existence that can be best understood as opposite of having the said minority integrated. Groups living in parallel society, as demanded by the definition explored further in the text, have nation-specific institutions (social, cultural, economic) that enable them to live in voluntary separation from the dominant society – i.e. via separation in language, education, media consumption, social networks and legal framework (Heitmeyer, 1993; 2009).

Obvious background behind this can be found in the turbulent dissolution of SFRY, where all but one of the former republics that were ethnically heterogeneous, experienced ethnic wars, where the minority groups and dominant societies conflicted. The said odd-case here is that of Montenegro, which was involved in conflicts outside of its territory, but remained the only former Yugoslav republic that had no internal civil war whatsoever, despite being ethnically heterogeneous like others.

Montenegro`s national minorities also had a relatively high level of integration compared to the rest of post-Yugoslav West Balkans that goes back before SFRY – and at least as early as the Kingdom of Montenegro period (Rastoder, 1998); (Baćović, 2021); (Šćekić, 2024, pp. 16-46). Religious and non-Slavic minorities already present in the borders, were protected by the Kingdom`s constitution, and in newly conquered lands of 1912, these subjects weren`t expelled (Ibidem). They were instead recognized, and to the limits of institutional capacities integrated, as is evident from Muslim and Albanian officers and notable public officials with actual powers (Rastoder, 1998); (Baćović, 2021) and the introduction of few schools in

⁸ West Balkans usually includes the Republic of Albania which isn`t in post-Yugoslav space.

Albanian inhabited territories that had a relative success in raising literacy levels amongst Albanians. Only a handful of schools existed between 1878-1918 in territories inhabited by Albanians, all of whom had very limited attendance (voluntary) and curriculum. Only one had the entire curriculum available in Albanian, and still Montenegrin state produced a little bit higher level of literacy amongst Albanians than this was the case in Ottoman governed areas inhabited by Albanians that joined Montenegro later (Šćekić, 2024, pp. 4-5). The said literacy endeavour surpassed in success the ones conducted by the Albanian State (Italian Second World War puppet regime that occupied these areas between 1941-1943) and Austrian occupational authorities of the Great War. (Šćekić, 2024, pp. 4-5; pp. 37-38).

Following the Second World War, and the reinstatement of Montenegro as a federal entity of FPRY, its minorities were subjected to a new overarching Montenegrin nationalism which sought to create a “viable”⁹ society by removing all Albanian language from the curriculum due to its limited use in Montenegro, whilst also introducing mandatory elementary education (Šćekić, 2024, pp. 252-253).

The same strategy of national integration was inherited by the now non-socialist Republic of Montenegro, Serbia’s last partner in the rump Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, until the independence of 2006, when suddenly, a new constitution brought in multiculturalism in its stead. The new integration strategy was aimed at establishing a civil – non nation-state like country that will integrate everyone and will prevent ethno nationalism.

⁹ While the concern of socialist era authorities is well justified

Upon its independence in 2006, Montenegro's new constitution (Constitution of Montenegro, 2007) officially designated that "Multiculturalism" shall be an official state value. Accordingly, in the following two decades constitutional and legal provisions were introduced, under the claim of following Multiculturalism, which were aimed at protecting and integrating the country's minorities, and especially ones that were until that moment subjected to discriminatory if not outright repressive minority policies in the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (Further in text: CS) and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Further in text: FRY). Introduction and continuous expansion of these policies were hailed with optimism and praise by virtually all Montenegrin and/or Serb politicians. In fact, in recent years, there were at least three accounts when a different Montenegrin/Serb major party leader¹⁰ stated, rather specifically, that Montenegro aspires (since it hasn't after 20 years of independence...) to become "Switzerland of the Balkans" when it comes to ethnic harmony (Vijesti, 2023; Martić, 2020; Danas, 2024).

That multiculturalism framework is substantial in Montenegro is also the official position of the European Commission, as per their country report (2022), where they stated, amongst other things:

"Montenegro is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state. The 2007 Constitution acknowledges Montenegrins, Serbs, Bosnians, Albanians, Muslims, Croats, and others, and the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms guarantees the preservation and expression of their identities."

¹⁰ Prime Minister Milojković ("Movement Europe Now" party) said in 2023: "Our vision is Montenegro as the Switzerland of the Balkans and the Singapore of Europe". President of Parliament, Andrija Mandić ("New Serb Democracy" party) said in 2024: "Montenegro has aspirations to become the Switzerland of the Balkans when it comes to economic standard and the harmonious coexistence of different peoples within one country." And lastly, former President of Parliament, Aleksa Bečić ("Democrats" party), said in 2020: „We wrote down history – Montenegro shall be Switzerland of Balkans”.

In their 5th report on Montenegro's compliance with the European Charter For Regional Or Minority Languages, Council of Europe's executive summary states (2020, p. 4): *“The overall situation of Albanian [language] is satisfactory.”*

Yet these claims seem to be contested by those for whom the policies were designed for – Albanian citizens of Montenegro and Albanian minority party leaders. Nik Gjeshaj, mayor of Tuzi, and leader of an Albanian national minority party in Montenegro, held a press conference that debated the state budget and related minority rights, where he stated (Kajosevic, 2021):

“The government discriminates against Albanians and does not cooperate with our municipality. The reasons are various but it's mostly because of the hatred they have for the people who live in this area. (...) I have informed all international partners about that, all the way to the US State Department.”

This isn't a lonesome thought – Albanians, seem to agree with it rather than the one about living in a Balkan Switzerland: Each year, since 2007, Center for democracy and human rights (CEDEM), together with Ministry of Human Rights (or equivalent ministry) conducts a research on ethnic distance of people in Montenegro. The questionnaire presented to individuals, who are asked about their ethnicity upon collecting data, contains questions concerning their willingness to engage themselves in socializing with a member of another, specific national group, e.g. “Would you marry to a spouse of that nationality?”, “ Would you trust your children to a babysitter of that nationality?” etc. The end result of 18 such

researches over the years is that in Montenegro – the ethnic distancing is normally decreasing, except in case of Albanians, where it grew (CEDEM, 2019¹¹).

CEDEM (2023) also found out in researching perceived discrimination amongst Albanians, where over 2/3 of Albanians feel discrimination in employment and over 1/3 in education, whereas only about 13% of Serbs feels that way, by comparison, in employment, and 15% in education – yet per data on ethnic structure of public employees concluded by the Ministry of human rights, both groups are about equally underrepresented in the public sector.

Thus the mentioned feeling is justified, but obviously over exaggerated in Albanian perception. The data also seems to be reliable – given that aforementioned Nik Gjelošhaj is actually a member of the government whose ministry supported this research.

Another notorious change is a regression in knowledge of Montenegrin (Country`s official language) amongst Albanians from 2011 and 2023, where the number of Albanians who don`t understand Montenegrin doubled¹².

This demonstrates that policies of Multiculturalism didn`t have a desired effect, and that Albanian parallel society intensified over the years. In order to determine why such an outcome could`ve happened, one doesn`t need to venture far either – there is a contested and evolving debate on the undesired effects of Multiculturalism in some settings, including its

¹¹ „What followed was a general decrease until 2013, followed by major growth until 2018, when in 2019, finally we stopped the trend where it was last year“

¹² From about 2000 to 4000, or from about 6.5% to 13%.

contribution towards generating a parallel society-like conditions for a group that it ought to integrate.

When it comes to Albanians of Montenegro, these parallel society like conditions nearly immediately start striking out: Multiculturalism brought mandatory elementary and secondary schools that operate partially (by using language-segregated “Montenegrin” and “Albanian” programs) or fully in Albanian language¹³ (CoE, 2020, p. 35). A Report by the Council of Europe (2020) warned of the disintegrative role that this plays in everyday lives of Albanians and Montenegrins in Ulcinj¹⁴.

Also, in 2017 Parliament adopted amendments to the Law on Minority Rights and Freedoms (Official Gazette of Montenegro No. 031/2017), changes that clarified rights, re-established a state Fund for minority rights, and tightened definitions and thresholds relevant for minority language use and other targeted measures. These weren't simple updates: they dramatically changed how and where minority languages and institutions could be used and financed by the state.

This meant introduction of nation-specific laws that guarantee increased relative decentralized governance in municipalities that have Albanian minorities in them. Formally recognized national symbols¹⁵, to be used in official services, public buildings and spaces, oftentimes at the expense of outright forgoing the mandated use of Montenegrin ones beside

¹³ “In practice, Albanian is the only language provided in “bilingual” or other formats in the education system. This “bilingual” system in effect allows students to study either in Montenegrin or in Albanian languages, meaning the institution as such is bilingual, but the teaching is not carried out in bilingual format.”

¹⁴ “lack of knowledge of the official language(s) can limit possibilities of equal participation in society, of access to higher education and access to employment. [...] Therefore, minority language schools must provide an adequate development of the speakers’ proficiency of the official language(s).”

¹⁵ Including a flag, identical to the one used by the neighboring Republic of Albania, and an anthem that doesn't mention Montenegro, but does Republic of Albania.

these. Likewise the official use of Albanian language in all four Albanian minority municipalities, beside Montenegrin, has basically made established conditions that when an Albanian is born, raised, educated and employed in Ulcinj – he may theoretically do so, without ever talking to a single Montenegrin, despite sharing the same building (CoE, 2020, p. 34)¹⁶.

All of this, when applied to a population of some 30 000 people that represent the entire Albanian population of Montenegro, leaves individuals obviously disincentivized in taking part in a broader Montenegrin society (CoE, 2020, p.34)¹⁷.

The fact that these policies were demanded by Albanian national minority parties further confirms that such separation is voluntary and more complex than typical forms of exclusion. A question brought by this thesis is how did this happen? How can multicultural policies fail in practice? What explains Montenegro? What was the role of Albanian minority parties in this?

The research that will be presented in the central discussion chapter answers by outcome-explaining process tracing, where data gathered from publicly available sources supported an established causal mechanism that the failure of Multiculturalism framework of Montenegro

¹⁶ “ the promotion of tolerance and respect for diversity must not only be taught as a subject in class but must be lived through the organisation of joint classes wherever possible, as well as through the respectful accommodation of the various cultures and languages present in the schools.”

¹⁷ “There is a lack of support, guidance and supervision of this from the authorities, and a lack of systematisation of such activities within curricula and the organisation of schools to bridge any potential divides in these “bilingual” schools. Equally, amidst reports of interlocutors about the declining knowledge of Montenegrin language among some students, and in the context of a need for increased intercultural dialogue, there is a need to ensure knowledge of the Montenegrin language is adequate for effective participation in society, and equally, that the Albanian language is valorised and hence learned by majorities too.”

largely occurred due to its dependence on DPS' need for Albanian national minority parties' support, and their resulting drift towards ethno-nationalism.

In the following chapter, a theoretical framework with an overview and justification of the empirical case shall be given. There key concepts of multiculturalism and parallel society shall be explained, along with their contested theoretical relationship. Then, theoretical expectations will be laid out and justified. Methods chapter will thus handle the aforementioned theoretical expectations, and provide insight into how this was done, and justify the opted approach. A central discussion will embed the results in itself – as here the results presented and analyzed. Last chapter will constitute a RERUN-model conclusion. Notes will provide for additional information on sources, and serve as an addendum provided at the end, which can help reader into reading the text with a glossary of abbreviations and lesser known empirical proper nouns.

Theoretical framework

In this chapter a literature review and as well as a conceptual section will be provided, which guided towards the formulation of the problem, the research questions and the central argument of the thesis. The contents of its first sub-chapter will deal with the key outcome that is to be explained. This will be followed by empirical case justification from perspective of the theoretical contribution of the solution of the problem researched. A scope of literature on multiculturalism, used as theoretical backbone for the outcome will be given, with a disambiguation, and theorized effects of its practical implementation. Drawing from this, a proposed causal mechanism is developed and justified, constituting the theoretical expectations for the research.

Failed multicultural integration of Albanians in Montenegro

The key outcome that is explained in this paper is the failure of Multiculturalism to integrate Albanians in Montenegro between 1998 and 2025. ...

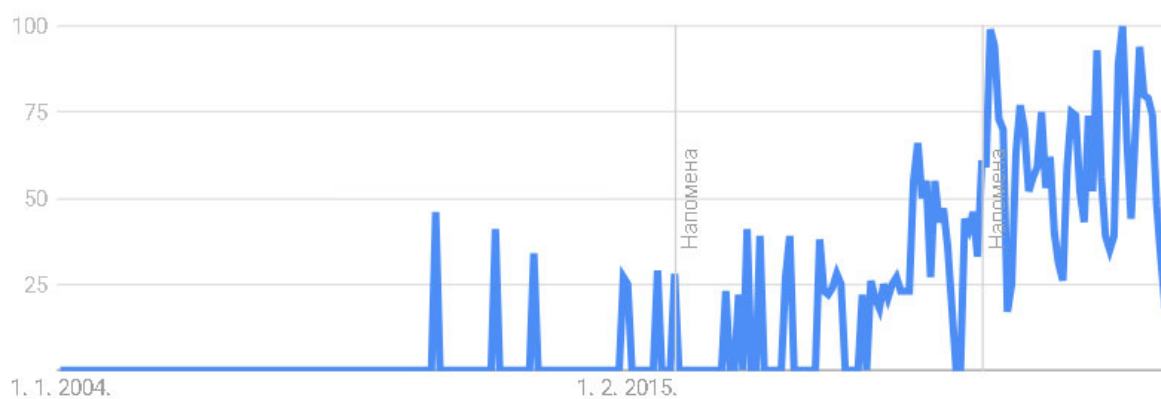
This case is particularly relevant because Montenegro had a mixed bag of claims about the successes of its multicultural framework. While some international organizations praised the efforts, others and Albanian national minority parties warned of their shortcomings.

In addition, Montenegro is the only post-Yugoslav republic that didn't have a war on its own territory in spite of its heterogeneous ethnic makeup being so diverse, that the country doesn't have an ethnic majority.

Multiculturalism and disambiguation thereof

As it happens in social sciences, often-used and morally contested terms don't end up with an overarching consensus over their meaning (Gallie, 1956). This is especially true for the ones with highly positive or negative normative valence (e.g. democracy). Multiculturalism is not the exception for neither of these norms. Increased use of the term by laymen, as well as interest in its meaning, as can be attested per Google Trends (2025)¹⁸ naturally drives the debate over said meaning in non-scientific use, but influences how the term evolves in the scientific community as well.

Graph: Searching Google trends for “Multiculturalism what is it”



Source: Google Trends, 2025.

Further, differences arising from scientists of different areas (sociologists and political philosophers chiefly) dealing with any term is also bound to generate conceptual confusion. This can be beautifully seen by observing the definitions provided by the Sociology webpage

¹⁸ Google Trends listed the word as having tremendous growth in appearance since 2004.

of Encyclopedia Britannica and by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (further in text – “SEP”):

Encyclopedia Britannica (Eagan, 2024) defines multiculturalism in sociology as “[Multiculturalism –] *the view that cultures, races, and ethnicities, particularly those of minority groups, deserve special acknowledgment of their differences within a dominant political culture*”.

While SEP (2024) writes:

“The term “multicultural” is often used as a descriptive term to characterize the fact of diversity in a society, but in what follows [speaking of a rather lengthy debate over its anatomy], the focus is on multiculturalism as a normative ideal in the context of Western liberal democratic societies (...) in which members of minority groups can maintain their distinctive collective identities and practices”.

The term itself originated from the time when the former British Commonwealth nations (chiefly Canada and Australia) were about to redefine their identity and more notably, their relationship with their non-titular minorities over the course of 1970s (Taylor, 1994); (Joppke& Lukes, 1999).

Since then, many (De Ruijter, 1997; Joppke & Lukes, 1999; Kincheole & Steinberg, 1997; Kymlicka, 1995; Lubisi, 2001; Okin, 1999; Taylor, 1994) have strived to provide a working definition for the theory.

Theoretical characteristics of multiculturalism

Relaying on feminist literature about the dangers of misrecognition of subaltern groups, Charles Taylor (1994, pp. 25-26) notes that multiculturalism arises as one of many alternative moral commitments when discussing how human identities are to be best represented. He compares it to Rawlsian and Dworkian liberalist attitudes and their emphasis on the necessity of the triumph of individual over collective rights (pp. 56-58). In his views, societies like that of Quebec¹⁹ violate these “procedural liberal” principles (pp. 58-60): The territory of Canada²⁰, has had language legislation enacted during the 1970s, which made French the official language in it. They later put into place various anti-discriminatory laws into motion to provide official services (like hospitals, schools etc.) in English and aboriginal languages. Such regional decision making and equality payments to Quebec came out of Canada’s Laurentian alliance of Trudeau senior in hopes of avoiding the breakup of the country. In sum, this author (ibidem) gives us important insight into multiculturalist policies in practice – from official recognition in constitutional and legal decisions to special core of rights that allow a recognized subaltern group to protect and nurture their collective identity, culture, language and govern the territory they are recognized to inhabit.

It is apparent, from here on that the vague encyclopedic definitions from paper’s conceptualizing words fall short at representing multiculturalism as a view that is simply

¹⁹ Which he considers to be a separate society from Anglophone Canada and provides good justification for that as well.

²⁰ Primarily colonized by those with French-European origin as opposed to Anglophone Canada, whose main colonist’s origin is from loyalist American expulsions following the independence of the British 13 colonies.

“recognizing others”. What happened in Quebec and elsewhere in the world (under a different name perhaps²¹) is also about matters of economic interests and political power – the subjects to which Taylor (1996, p. 60) referred to when he spoke of liberal skepticism²² towards it.

Through his analysis of Rousseau, Harderian and Hegelian philosophy of “us” and the “other”, Taylor effectively states his views on what is it that constitutes this holistic identity: “(...) we define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us (...)” (1994, p. 33). To a social scientist keener on studying identities and in particular ethnic ones, we can surely state that this viewpoint aligns best with Weberian interactionism – which establishes that nations primarily appear around various interactive factors of differences: as Filip Tesar (2019) points to the example of Albanians, who, despite not counting even 200 literate individuals, industry or a strong bourgeoisie modernist elite in 19th century, had all what they needed to become “Albanian” – they knew they weren’t Romans or Slavs, and that was what made them *Shqiptar*²³. Baudrillard’s (1983) structuralism comes to mind here, and presents that this way of thinking actually makes sense in general for humans, as we recognize concepts in their empirical manifestations only through its relationship with other concepts. Taylor (p. 58) specifically stresses that distinct minority language (and the same logic could be applied for other interactionist factors) is not merely a resource as procedural liberals would see it²⁴, but a

²¹ See e.g. *Korenizatsiya* in Soviet Union – an effort to empower former Russian Empire’s now recognized national minorities through nominally broader autonomy, self-governance and encouragement of official usage of own language, clothing etc.

²² He specifically states that liberal politics of equal respect is: “inhospitable to difference, because (a) it insists on uniform application of the rules defining these rights, without exception, and (b) it is suspicious of collective goals” p. 60. The “b” here is important because it comes with a simple question: why would (“we liberals”) believe that this isn’t a basic kind of nationalist ploy of corresponding minority elite to secure more power?

²³ *Shqiptar*(Alb.) – an endonym for an Albanian. Most likely derived from *Shqipoj*(Alb.) – “to speak”.

²⁴ Then it would be obviously less valuable when compared to the majority language, which has far more use for more people – why bother keeping dozens of Uralic languages alive, when nearly 90% of other Russian citizens speak and run about their lives in Russian. Why introduce Spanish, as large as that community is in US

collective good (intrinsically) that should be preserved because it guarantees that future generations would maintain using it, ensuring the survival of the collective identity.

A more liberal theory of Multiculturalism is offered by Will Kymlicka, who in his work (1989); (1995); (2001) has synthesized autonomy and equality of liberalism with a third value – one of cultural membership. To him there is an instrumental value of culture for individuals, for cultural membership conditions both individual autonomy and self-identity. While this has persisted in his writings, his conceptualization and points of stress have evolved:

Initially influenced by Rawlsian (1971, p. 62) ideas about justice, where he frames cultural memberships into the realm of “primary good” (Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, 1989), he later abandons such attitude and influenced by Joseph Raz and Avishai Margalit, he presents culture as an “context of choice”, where individuals can pursue their rational goals (Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 1995). When discussing culture’s role in self-identity, Kymlicka (1995, p. 89) writes that it provides individuals with an “anchor for their self-identification and the safety of effortless secure belonging”. Throughout the work he cites Taylor’s influential text (1996), reviewed earlier in this paper, as it can be detected here. To sum up – for Kymlicka, the perceived respect that a cultural group has (largely accorded to it by others), in realities of individuals works like a coefficient for their self-respect. Keeping this coefficient positive and meaningfully impactful is what he means when he speaks of securing the culture and ultimately said individual’s context of choice and self-respect.

into their states official correspondence, when its plainly cheaper and more efficient to keep all matters of the state in one language etc.

His views continue to evolve when he largely forgoes the idea of cultural membership being of instrumental value and adopts an (“luck”²⁵) egalitarian attitude (same logic that drives social liberalism in its distinction from conservative liberalism). Authors like Dworkin and Rakowski explain how individuals can only be responsible for their own choices and deserving of equal starting position and inequalities arising from this sort of arrangement, and not be responsible for their starting circumstances and inequalities arising from such an arrangement – hence “positive discrimination” is needed. Kymlicka notes that due to their unchosen circumstances of being socially disadvantaged, members of any minority culture require society’s aid and protection. He writes that minority rights are thus “within a liberal egalitarian theory (...) which emphasizes the importance of rectifying un-chosen inequalities” (Kymlicka 1995, p. 109).

Kymlicka (1995, p. 111) and others (Carens, 2000, pp. 77-78; Patten, Alain & Tully, 2001, p. 693), starting with a view that a state can never be indifferent and truly neutral in aspect of culture, claim that these laws aren’t egalitarian enough, as all states in fact have to establish an official language for schools and other state services – i.e. state institutionalizes linguistic advantages which ultimately result with economic and political inequalities.

There is an underlying symbolic advantage present here as well, as it has been recognized (Billing, 1995), where when a state chooses its official language, flag, holidays etc. that align with those of the perceived titular majority, minorities suffer at the apparent devaluation of their own customs when compared to that of the majority. In order to avoid this it seems reasonable for a minority group to be able to locally institutionalize their own culture and self-governance to the same extent as the majority group has it like Quebec.

²⁵ Critics, like Anderson (1999) and Scheffler (2003) named this way the social-liberal logic of where inequalities stemming from circumstances such as being born into poverty drastically impedes individuals from the “fair game” of capitalism. Same can be said about being born into a national minority according to Kymlicka.

Kymlicka's logic seem to align with Canadian empirical multiculturalism: He falls into the group of multiculturalists who treat different groups with different rights, based on their context. Thus according to his theory (Kymlicka, 1995, pp. 113-115), self-governance is granted to indigenous people (e.g. Huron), and national minorities (people who weren't say Anglo-phone when Canada was founded, like Quebecois), as their circumstances brought them to be a minority in a country of majority Anglophone Canadians. Those who immigrated to Canada after its founding, have chosen to arrive there voluntarily, hence it is reasonable to expect them to adjust to the new cultural surroundings where they arrived. They are entitled to "polyethnic rights", which is to say those that grant them fairer opportunities to integrate, and don't grant them rejection of integrating or collective self-determination like in the first case.

But while Canada used this logic to justify the initial expansion of the rights given to its French speakers, it persisted in disenfranchising its aboriginal population long after, who in truth have the longest spanning inhabitation of their lands. This was so due to the relative insignificance of the aborigines, and sudden and important rise in importance of francophone Canadians for the political success of the left leaning political current in Canada (Weissenberger, 2019), a relationship called the Laurentian consensus²⁶.

Critical of multiculturalists' viewpoints, Chandran Kukathas (1995; 2003) insists on the exclusivity of individual and on the non-existence of group rights. He is in particular concerned for the freedoms of association and conscience, which, in his view, are under assault by multiculturalists idea of group rights. According to him, the state, whose purpose is to ensure civility has to ignore minorities, should it wish to not endanger individual rights of

²⁶ An understanding that general governing political coalition of Canada (of Left and Quebecois) originates due to the Laurentian elite from the Confederation, until the end of 20th century.

association – hence he writes “politics of indifference” with its minorities, is what a state needs to pursue, and not “cultural integration” and/or “cultural engineering” (2003, p. 15).

But this non-intervening seems to come with a tradeoff: Respecting individual rights for association are gained, but autonomy and equality are sacrificed (also key liberal values) since the state lacks foundation to interfere in intra-group discrimination, breaches of autonomy (including bodily autonomy), we would indeed be tolerating “communities which bring up children unschooled and illiterate; which enforce arranged marriages; which deny conventional medical care to their members (including children); and which inflict cruel and ‘unusual’ punishment” (Kukathas, 2003, p. 134).

2.3. Multiculturalism policies

In an heavily commented interview of Former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek, the commentators (Will Kymlicka, Keith Banting, Tariq Modood and Jennifer Jackson-Preece) generally agree in a broader sense that the meaning behind the theory at work is understood as “(...) the positive recognition and accommodation of ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the public sphere (...)” (Udrea, 2016, p. 34). In the same commentary, Kymlicka (Udrea, 2016, p. 42) notably says: “In particular, we agree that it is unhelpful to obsess about the semantics of the word ‘multiculturalism’, or to fight over whether the word ‘interculturalism’ is or is not preferable. The real issue, as [former High Commissioner] Vollebaek says, is to test the impact of actual policies on ‘practical realities’. We need evidence-based arguments, not semantic quibbles or rhetoric.”

In the underlined syntagma of the paragraph above, lays one the purposes of this study: These “actual policies” and “practical realities” that are determined by them, is what constitutes the narrowing of the concepts explored here.

The first concept won't be too difficult to sketch out, or name for that matter.

As Colombo (2015) points out, multiculturalism presents a polysemous term, that can be used as a name for the normative political theories (e.g. Kymlicka's liberal multiculturalism), various practical policies (e.g. education in minority language) or to describe the state of society comprised of heterogeneous cultures living together (e.g. phrase “large ancient empires, tended to be multicultural” should be understood as they tend to be comprised of many nations and cultures, rather than that they tend to provide education in minority language).

“*Practical policies* [of multiculturalism]” here is the same what Kymlicka has in mind when he speaks of the “*actual policies* [of multiculturalism]”. In another co-authored article (Banting & Kymlicka), he, as well as other authors, like Heath and Demireva (2013), simply speak of “*multicultural policies*”, and all abbreviate the term to “MCPs”. Point being – what separates multiculturalism as a theory and as a practice is its existence in legislation and implementation by a political entity (i.e. a state), which is to say: Multicultural policies are real legislative implementations of recognition and support of cultural diversity.

In a quantitative study about the prevalence of MPCs in the 21st century, Kymlicka & Banting (2013) still used their “Multiculturalism Policy Index” (further in text MPI), which they generated over the years prior (MPI; Banting & Kymlicka, 2006-2012), providing an interesting beacon for the theorization used in this literature review. There are three indices,

for three different types of minority group²⁷ in their theory, based on their relationship with the founding of the country (where they present at the founding, inhabited the lands prior, or came after the founding was complete). This paper cares about the national minority one (immigrant groups and indigenous peoples are both irrelevant to the case of Albanians of Montenegro).

They (MPI; Banting & Kymlicka, 2006-2012) specify their indicators, with own reflections on the rigidity of the mentioned as:

1. *Federal or Quasi-Federal Territorial Autonomy*
2. *Official Language Status, Either in the Region or Nationally*
3. *Guarantees of Representation in the Central Government or On Constitutional Courts*
4. *Public Funding of Minority-Language Universities/Schools/Media*
5. *Constitutional or Parliamentary Affirmation of "Multinationalism"*
6. *Accorded International Personality*

Rather remarkably, as this will be brought up during the analysis, when choosing cases, they claim to focus only on concentrated groups that exhibit significant forms of nationalist consciousness and mobilization, and that specifically mobilize to achieve recognition of their nationhood, either as an independent state or through enhanced territorial autonomy, for which they deem viable, only groups larger than 100 000 people (Multiculturalism Policy Index, 2021, p. 4).

²⁷ National minorities, immigrant groups & indigenous peoples. E. g. in Canada, majority would be Anglophone Canadians, a national minority the Quebecois, immigrants would be Iranians, and indigenous people would be Huron.

Berry (2016, p. 7) praises the MPI, and also (Ibidem., pp. 8-9), drawing on attitudes of the failure of the theory in cases of Netherlands, Germany and UK in the late 2000s, warns to not infer a relationship about the failure of multiculturalism as an ideology/theory to actual findings of failures of multiculturalist policies as, he argues, it's unlikely that the prior was fully implemented in the said societies.

Verily, such inferences shall not be made in this thesis, as it doesn't make attempts to disprove or prove the effectiveness of these policies (or Multiculturalism as a theory) in all or even most other cases – it merely establishes the peculiarly designed Montenegrin MCPs as a plausible cause behind a stretched out process of segregation of its Albanian national minority.

This brings us to the question of segregation, and its potential antonym, and goal of multiculturalism – integration.

After a period of domination of the theory of classical assimilation (See: Gordon, 1964) and the appearance of the theory of segmented assimilation (For more see: Portes & Zhou, 1993), a rather influential model of acculturation was presented by John Berry (1992); (1997); (2005); (2006), which he based on the maintenance of one's own culture, and his engagement with the host society's culture as its two dimensions. He then derived four acculturation strategies upon these dimensions (2005, pp. 697-712): **Integration**, which he believes is the most optimal goal (Minority group desires to keep their own culture and at the same time seek to participate in the larger society's culture which should also adapt to the minority), **Assimilation** (Minority group doesn't want their own culture, and relinquishes it, or are unable to preserve it, and molds into the unaltered larger society culture), **Separation** (Minority group wants its own, but doesn't want to take part in larger society culture) and **Marginalization** (Minority group is unable to a large extent to maintain own culture

regardless of preferences, and uninterested/prevented from taking part in larger society culture, where both are usually connected with institutional exclusion or discrimination).

Multiculturalism in both theory and policy implementation directly seeks integration – per Berry’s model, as evident from the two above given bodies of literature. It is also important to point out here that separation doesn’t necessarily occur as a result of any institutional arrangement, apart from, if seen through a socially liberal paradigm, the very lack of accommodating ones (i.e. Multiculturalist policies). The Amish come to mind, even without him mentioning (Berry, 2005, pp. 697-712), many of whom struggle with using common English all whilst living in larger societies descendants of common ancestors with whom they don’t want to interact (Kraybill, 2014). The Yiddish speaking Haredi Jews (Schwartz, 2018); (Rubin, 1996); (Heilman, 1992), regardless do they live in USA and UK or Israel, or Sami of Northern Scandinavia (Gaski, 1997); (Oskal, 2000) and Russia all qualify.

When it comes to the relationship between multiculturalism and integration of national minorities, like it was stressed before, there doesn’t seem to be a great deal of divergence.

2.4. Multiculturalism effects on integration OR Critique of Multiculturalism

The legitimacy of multiculturalism can be simply be challenged by warning of its potentially divisive role. Instead of building a common identity, multiculturalisms rejection of cultural convergence or state’s indifference prompts the question – shall not the state then effectively foster and institute broader divisions in its society? This question is particularly relevant for those states whose multiethnic makeup was the source of historical traumas like civil wars

and nationalist secessionism. It should also concern the individuals of the national minority who might face negative utilitarian side effects of multiculturalism, which could in truth outweigh its benefits if they lead to (self-imposed) segregation.

A multiculturalist response to such a critique, as Iris Young (1989, pp. 253-25) puts it, would be that societies are already in a condition of division: based on their socio-economic background, class, physical capacities, gender etc. Hence multiculturalism is desired, over utopian ideas of ignoring such divisions and their drawbacks for the non-entitled ones, to institutionalize the recognition of marginalized groups, and fix empirical divisions that way (Ibidem). She (Young, 1989) does however consider a critique of multiculturalism that Benjamin Barber expressed when he wrote: " (...) existence [of a community of citizens] depends on the common ordering of individual needs and wants into a single vision of the future in which all can share" (Barber, 1984, p. 224). Effectively saying that institutionalization of cultural (or individual for that matter) differences would undermine the unification of society (Barber, 1984).

When talking about multiculturalism's role in instigating ethnic and cultural separations, Brian Barry (2001, p. 66) presents a concern: "The notion that birth is fate – that simply in virtue of being born into a certain ethnic group one acquires the (potentially enforceable) duty to maintain 'its ancestral culture' – is continuous with a kind of ethnic nationalism that is profoundly at odds with liberalism." In his approach of protecting individual freedoms and individual equality, Barry pits his universal rights approach against multiculturalism which in his view, in reality essentializes cultural groups it ought to protect. Essentialization is here understood and explained by Barry (2001) as a false statement that all individuals belonging to some cultural group somehow have the same common needs, beliefs or practices, arising from the same thought process as stereotyping.

Same anti-essentialization argument comes from Nancy Fraser, who as a self defined post-multiculturalist, criticizes multiculturalism on the grounds of its assumptions which moralizes individuals' conformation to their respective group's culture. When group identity is imposed as such, she states (Fraser, 2001, p. 24): "[it] denies the complexity of people's lives, multiplicity of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations".

Kymlicka (2014, p. 9) later, dismisses such accusations of the essentializing role of multiculturalism, on grounds of critics not drawing a difference between extra-group protections and intra-group restrictions. According to him multiculturalism doesn't create internal restrictions for the marginalized group's individuals, as much as it establishes them with needed external protections (Ibidem). There are others who agree with this (Philips, 2010), and express worries that multiculturalism's alternatives revolved around universalist practices can potentially essentialize groups more instead. She (Ibidem, p. 8) believes that when a state incorrectly assumes if a member of cultural group expresses certain cultural behavior, then this must be a result of cultural repression and denial of individual agency (e.g. Veiled Muslim women banned by French anti-religious affiliation display legislature). In same logic, Kymlicka (2014) argues that through better understanding of individuals' needs multiculturalism can only serve to end essentialism and unite society.

2.5 Failed integration in multiculturalism and parallel society

Wilhelm Heitmeyer might be the one who popularized the term "parallel society"²⁸, which he used in his work on perceived self-segregation (accent is on voluntary character of the phenomenon) and/or separation of various national minority and migrant groups in Germany, especially Turks (Danzer & Ulku, 2011, p. 342). In his view, a parallel society exists when a

²⁸ De. *Parallelgesellschaft*

group possesses its own institutions across social, cultural and economic dimensions in a way that it results with a substantial degree of separation from the dominant society, manifested by a separation in language, education, media consumption, social networks and legal framework (Heitmeyer, 1993); (2009).

Colombo (2015) notes that critics of multiculturalism, by default, rest on the assumption that it promotes social fragmentation which can then lead to a retreat of minorities from shared norms. In his view, a parallel society is a phenomenon that is directly opposite from a well integrated minority (Ibidem, 2015).

The term parallel society is also used by Heath & Demireva (2013, pp. 161-162) to describe a supposed failed integration – a condition in which a minority (or minorities) lives isolated from the majority of the population. They (Ibidem., p. 162) quoted a speech²⁹ of David Cameron's (2011), in which he laid out his concerns of migrants, (primarily originating from Muslim majority countries) being subjected to a form of segregation due to what he called "state multiculturalism". Same authors demonstrate (Ibidem., 2013, pp. 177-178) that in spite of current state of things, the specific assumption that cultural retention is the same as segregation is an easily challenged one, and they demonstrate that in the British case, migrant minorities can maintain their ethnic identity whilst slowly adopting a national one over a period of one generation.

Unlike the aforementioned paper or David Cameron, this Master thesis isn't concerned with the likelihood of increase in terrorism arising from the speediness of integration of the new migrants, but is dully noting the conceptualization upon which both seem to agree – likewise,

²⁹ "(---) Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values. (...) This hands-off tolerance has only served to reinforce the sense that not enough is shared. And this all leaves some young Muslims feeling rootless. And the search for something to belong to and something to believe in can lead...[to]...a process of radicalisation. (---)"

neither the multicultural success affirming study nor the alarmist speech seem to bring into question whether or not the native minorities of Britain (as opposed to migrants) live in a separate society – because they clearly do not. In the British as well as other West European cases, like Netherlands and Denmark, the overall rights of native minorities (e.g. Scots, Frisians, Faroese etc.³⁰) have just been improving through mentioned “state multiculturalism” and in fact, there is basically no contestation whatsoever over the success of multiculturalist policies in that aspect (Udrea, 2016, p. 44).

This brings up the question of why should it be any different in another case, like Montenegro? Well, by assessing the regional context, one notices an elephant in the room: Serbs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who despite sharing a state with the other Bosnian nations in both *de facto* and *de jure* aspect, comply with all of the criteria that is proposed for the existence of a parallel society. The self-separation is so obscene, and institutionally enshrined (being a result of the Dayton Peace Agreement), that it makes the other examples mentioned above shy. When taken into account, it probably qualifies as the most advanced form of a separated society – one on the very fence of being a part of a larger state.

³⁰ “One can find versions of this pattern in virtually every Western European country. The backlash against immigrant multiculturalism in the Netherlands is not leading to any backlash against the rights of the Frisians; the backlash against immigrant multiculturalism in Britain is not leading to any backlash against the rights of the Welsh or the Scots or the Northern Irish; the backlash against immigrant multiculturalism in Denmark is not leading to any backlash against the rights of the Greenlanders or the Faroese, and so on. In all of these cases, the rights of national minorities have persisted—indeed strengthened—in the last 10 to 20 years, and these developments are widely seen as successes, even by those who reject immigrant multiculturalism.”

Causal mechanism

This subchapter will show a finalized causal mechanism, proposed as the theoretical expectation behind the observed empirical manifestations and about potential causal relationships for each step between.

Context: DPS had entered a schism, and pre-1997 opposition became relevant

Part 1: Albanian national minority parties' multicultural framework demands

In negotiating with DPS, Albanian national minority parties will demand multicultural policies, as they secure them more leverage in bargaining in following parliamentary/presidential and local elections (election-related positive discrimination)

Part 2: Democratic Party of Socialists implementation of the demanded multicultural framework

DPS will give Albanian national minority parties those provisions that benefit it as well, but will delay, with promises and pledges, the ones that don't benefit it

Part 3: Fragmentation of Albanian national minority parties

Albanian national minority parties' fragment because of the Multicultural framework introduced lower threshold

Part 4: The scorpion and the frog: Democratic Party of Socialist rise and decline in power role in the shaping of multicultural framework

DPS won't grant new and will take away existing multicultural policies that don't align with its interests in periods when the support of Albanian national minority parties became irrelevant

Part 5: Albanian national minority party consolidation and drift towards ethno-nationalism

Albanian national minority parties will consolidate and become transparent in demands and negotiations with DPS, and will now base their demands in ethno-nationalism

Part 6: Manifestation of the ethno-nationalist political discourse

Ethno-nationalist political discourse will cause ethnic separation of Albanians

Outcome: Multiculturalism failed to integrate Albanians of Montenegro

Methods

This chapter provides a discussion of research methods employed in the thesis. Guided by qualitative research design and Beach and Pedersen's (2013) outcome-explaining model of process tracing, and following the best-practice criteria from the literature on this particular approach (Bennett & Checkel, 2014); (Waldner, 2015); (Schimmelfennig, 2014), the study seeks to demonstrate how Montenegro's multiculturalist minority rights policies failed to integrate its Albanian minority. Alongside with a rationale behind the research design, the selection and justification of data sources, methods of data collection and analysis, ethical considerations and limitations of this research shall all be given here.

Rationale for research design

Process tracing presents a method of within-case analysis that aims to identify causal mechanisms linking causes and outcomes, with goals of (a) affirming existing theories, (b) building new ones, or, as used in this paper, (c) to explain an outcome. This is in particular more appropriate for single-case, historical, and interpretive research that deals with complex processes through which an outcome appeared. As it was discussed by Bennett and Checkel's work (2015), the primary goal of process tracing method is being focused on explaining certain outcomes, yet unlike the two alternatives (a & b), the explaining outcomes model in addition to the theoretical, provides also the inductive/bottom-up path, where the research process is empirical and on a case-specific level, but is still in touch with an overarching body of literature. In sum, it is done via observing the "facts" of the said case, and then proceeding to establish causal mechanisms which can taxonomically vary.

Such approach is chosen for this research because it seeks to construct a plausible, context-specific narrative that explains how over the three decades of Montenegro's transformation and distancing from Yugoslavia its multicultural policies have entered a complex process with an overall negative outcome – i.e. the failure to integrate said minority. This means that without a thorough examination of the intervening steps, one could hardly understand how such an outcome can be attributed to policy that is seemingly in place for amending its outcome. After all, these policies and their relative success at tackling apparent issues that Albanians could've faced in 1996, and which have, in actuality, resulted in Montenegro being often labeled as rather multicultural, and issue-less when it comes to rights of its Albanians.

Lastly, literature on multiculturalism itself suggest that such policies have lasting effects, be it positive, as aimed by it, or negative, through essentialisation, reinforced separation etc. and thus it would be counterintuitive based on existing research to limit the time span or complexity of implementation.

On the design of the Causal Mechanism

Following Waldner's (2015) logic, each node in a process chain is conceptualized as a distinct step that occurs, and must be substantiated with empirical evidence and logically coherent transitions, and it is with this that we are able to avoid inferential gaps and add support to our causal adequacy. He (Waldner, 2015, p. 151) stresses that a causal graph should include a complete inventory of the causal mechanism that connect nodes in the graph, upon which we should find empirical evidence to corroborate them in order to establish explanatory adequacy.

Data

Based on a typology of empirical materials used in qualitative case study research provided by Collier, Brady and Seawright (2010, pp. 184-188), and as is advised by Bennett and Checkel (2014, p. 72), this thesis will gather its data in a matter of “*causal process observations (CPO)*” which they define as “*an insight or piece of data that provides information about the context or mechanism and contributes a different kind of leverage in causal inference. It does not necessarily do so as part of a larger, systematized array of observations.*” (Collier, Brady & Seawright, 2010, p. 184). These observations then have to be assessed through case-specific *contextual knowledge* in order to constitute as *evidence* (Bennett and Checkel, p. 73).

Data that is gathered includes published interviews, public statements and speeches by leading party officials (e.g. Ferhat Dinosa, Nik Gjeshaj, Tahir Tahiri, Genci Nimanbegu etc.).

For *Albanian national minority parties’ multicultural framework demands*, data is collected from a published interview of a spokesperson for DUA (leading Albanian national minority party of the two from 1998) who took part in the negotiations with DPS.

For *Democratic Party of Socialists implementation of the demanded multicultural framework*, historical analysis of events backed up by changes in the laws, which is to say the Law on the Protection of National Minorities (1998); Law on the Election of Councilors and Representatives (2000, 2006, 2011 amendments), as well as election results as published by the Republic (1998-2006) or State Electoral Commission (2008-present).

Fragmentation of Albanian national minority parties sought sequential fragmentation of said parties, which was established again through the official publications of the State Electoral Commission. Causality was supported by data gathered from six available party manifestos, as published in the official pre-elections educational material for citizens from 2006.

For *Democratic Party of Socialist rise and decline in power role in the shaping of multicultural framework & Albanian national minority party consolidation and drift towards ethno-nationalism* further relied on elections data mentioned above for relevant years, a public statement for *Vijesti* newspapers given by Dritan Abazović, leader of URA, Tahir Tahiri, leader of the Albanian National Council and another interview given by then prime minister Ferhat Dinošha in 2009. It also included a Constitutional Court ruling (2011) to provide evidence for the removal of a major multicultural policy, and whose party's opinions on causality are expressed in various public statements, and whose causality is justified further by the matching with the one expressed by a US State Department report, amongst other data collected. Law of the Capital City amendments on Tuzi (2016) substantiated that claim, and Nik Gjelošhaj public addressing is noted here as well.

Manifestation of the ethno-nationalist political discourse relied on public statements made by mayor and vice-mayor of Tuzi, and same done by other actors to various media sources.

The proposed theoretical expectations are weighed by gathering data as observed material which was then put through evaluation in order to establish it as evidence for each part of the

causal mechanism explored in the subchapter about theoretical expectations, as analysis of process tracing requires.

Data collected in all cases consists of publicly available primary sources which are used to simply state the occurrence of an event, which were all later put in context of the discussion, meaning that they are largely devoid of possibilities for uncertainties in terms of reliability or validity. They are almost always dichotomous.

Shortcomings and Research limitations

Generalizability

As Bennett and Checkel (2015, p. 13); (2019, pp. 69-70) warn, generalization can be problematic with process tracing by nature of the method, and that even when used to explain the toughest case (like here, as multiculturalism seemingly worked the best in Montenegro, when compared to the region) it is still unclear to what other cases we can apply such inferences without similar ontic knowledge about those cases. In addition, the particular case-centric design of research chosen here opts for explaining the outcome of a single case rather than have ambitions to generalize beyond that case (like theory-centric variant does).

Confirmation bias

Process tracing is particularly vulnerable to confirmation bias due to its interpretive nature. As advised by Bennett (2014), this was in part alleviated by testing rival causes and by observing Bayesian standards of inference where this was feasible.

Data availability and scope of data collection

Having access to granular data and/or one that is specific for the case being studied is in almost all instances superior to available data, until one doesn't take into account the resources and time costs that such an endeavor would require in complex issues like this one.

Thus for the purposes of a MA student study that focuses on the proposing and demonstrating an complex occurrence whilst providing observable evidence towards it, that is simpler to obtain, the study naturally sacrifices in the domain of trying hard to prove or disprove every single instance of its causal mechanisms, for the sake of creating a foundation for a bigger picture. To do both, is simply an implausible task for the time scope and resources available of this study, and thus future studies with granular data and specific focus on any given causal mechanism would be required to further enhance the findings of this study.

Complexity of causal inference

The causal chain explained here is neither linear nor deterministic. Many interacting factors, like cultural preferences, political grievances and simple socio-economic trends complicate attribution significantly. This analysis attempted to address this issue through theoretical clarity of the causal mechanism and transparency in evidentiary reasoning.

Ethical consideration

Since the work doesn't rely on anything but already published data, there are no needs for ethical considerations, apart for authors positionality, which is adequate as empirical studies benefit from ontic knowledge about the subject of research, as well as understanding of language etc. Process tracing also serves to a great benefit due to the particularly complex relationship between the studied phenomena and causal mechanisms that characterize this

case. In helping overcome the language barrier in Albanian, a voluntary translator checked the content in Albanian for accuracy, as mentioned in acknowledgements.

Development and failure of multicultural policies to integrate Albanians of Montenegro

Following an outstanding result, and thus a confirmation of its undisputed rule of the country in the parliamentary elections of 1996 (Republic's Electoral Commission, 1996), the Montenegrin DPS, headed by its then president, Momir Bulatović, was faced with intra-party dissidence over country's independence and international realignment with the EU and USA. The issue that catalyzed the disunity in the party leadership was the unfavourable outcome of Federal Yugoslav interests in the neighbouring warzones. In Bosnia & Herzegovina, Pro-Yugoslav separatists were forced to remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as "Republic of Srpska", with Dayton Agreement of 1995 effectively freezing the conflict and determining the re-organization of the new country, thus ending the War in Bosnia 1992-1995. In Croatia Pro-Yugoslav separatists were defeated in the field in the War in Croatia 1991-1995, which lead to a refugee crisis of civilians from that country into the now shrunk Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Another problem, related to Yugoslav international affiliations was the Russian debacle in Chechnya. The First war in Chechnya essentially ended in Chechnya independence, signaling the limited Russian capacities to wage war on own territory – let alone for extra-regional interference (Smirnov, 2021). The majority of the party elite, gathered around its then second-man, Milo Đukanović, instigated a schism that ended in the outvoting of the then-president Momir Bulatović from the party leadership³¹. Bulatović, a staunch pro-Yugoslav and pro-Russian, was undeterred by the "coup" that he was facing – he

³¹ A conflict that is hence-forward referred to as the "Milo-Momir split".

quickly gathered support and formed a new party³², challenging the reformed DPS in the ensuing presidential elections, that were likely to set stage for the future course of the country in international relations and question of independence. Fearful of Momir's high approval amongst the country's Orthodox population, due to his existing popularity and their alignment being more akin to his positions in the schism, DPS resorted to the pre-1996 opposition for support. A round table, where DPS invited opposition leaders, which is to say the weak former pro-independence parties and two Albanian national minority parties, resulted in the "Agreement on the Minimum Principles for the Establishment of a Democratic Infrastructure in Montenegro"³³, signed in September of 1997 by all participants. It introduced the opposition demands, in exchange for their onward support for DPS against Momir's SNP. Next month, the anticipated elections were held, where DPS despite gross institutional advantages (Morrison, 2011) which it retained was defeated in the first round by Momir Bulatović (Republic's Electoral Commission, 1996). The second round however, had the voters from pro-independence and Albanian minority parties support Milo Đukanović, leading in a tight victory for him (Ibidem.). The defeat marked the historical fall of Bulatović, and rise of Đukanović in popularity, as it was evident in the Parliamentary elections of 1998 (Republic's Electoral Commission, 1998; 2001; 2002; 2006); (State Electoral Commission; 2009; 2012).

The Agreement of 1997 was the first step in building the legal and constitutional framework of Multiculturalism for Albanians of Montenegro, and its contents in relation to what did the ANMP' demanded leads us to the first part of the theorized causal mechanism.

³² Socialist People's Party.

³³ *Sporazum o minimumu principa za razvoj demokratske infrastrukture u Crnoj Gori*

Albanian national minority parties' multicultural framework demands

In the agreement with DPS, Albanian national minority parties' leaders demanded provisions that would make them fair better at the following elections, as evident from an interview of Ferhat Dinosha, then-DUA's spokesperson, from the 28th of September 1997 (Miličić, 1997). When asked how the Agreement he signed resolves issues of Albanians in Montenegro, in an interview, on the, Ferhat Dinosha stated (Ibidem):

“Moram da istaknem svoje zadovoljstvo što su svi potpisnici prihvatili i u Sporazumu ugradili dva ključna zahtjeva: Prvi se odnosi na adekvatnu proporcionalnu zastupljenost Albanaca u Parlamentu Crne Gore. (...) za Albance će se, po uzoru na mađarski, hrvatski ili slovenački model (izbora), iznići demokratski mehanizam koji će im obezbjediti vizu za republički parlament. To znači da će ubuduće Albanci stalno boraviti u parlamentu Crne Gore, što se prvi put obezbjeđuje i što je značajan demokratski iskorak Crne Gore i značajan uspjeh DUA-e s obzirom da je ona na to inicirala. Jasno je da će se proporcionalne zastupljenosti primijeniti i na druge”

“I must express my pleasure that all signatories accepted and included in the Agreement two key demands: First regards the adequate proportional representation of Albanians in the Parliament of Montenegro. (...) for Albanians, modeled by the Hungarian, Croatian or Slovenian [election laws³⁴], a new democratic mechanism shall emerge that would secure them a “visa” for the Republic's parliament. It means that in the future Albanians shall forever be in the parliament of Montenegro, which is a great step in democracy of

³⁴ He was referring to reserved seats for minorities in Slovenian and Croatian case.

Montenegro and an important achievement of DUA since it initiated this. Of course, proportional representation shall be applied to others as well”

Dinosa then spoke of the other demand of Albanian minority parties – concerning the (re)establishment of Tuzi municipality (Ibidem):

“Drugi naš zahtjev, koji takođe stoji u Sporazumu, tiče se lokalne vlasti, lokalne samouprave. Mi smo od početka isticali da smo nezadovoljni kompetencijama aktuelne lokalne vlasti i zahtijevali da se te inferencije proširuju. Stoji naš zahtjev i za stvaranjem novih opština, tamo gdje za to ima uslova i opravdanosti. Na taj način naš zahtjev za stvaranjem opštine Tuzi, odnosno vraćanjem opštine Tuzima, mjesnom centru kojem gravitira 15-ak hiljada stanovnika, biće bliži realizaciji.”

“Our second demand, also regulated by the Agreement, is about local governance; local self-governance. We in the beginning stated that we are displeased with the competencies of the local incumbents and we demand that these inferences are expanded. Our demand for the establishing of new municipalities stands, where this is possible and legitimate. That way, our demand for the creation of the Tuzi municipality, a regional center for some 15 thousand citizens, shall be closer to realization.”

Coming from a then spokesperson of DUA, this provides substantial evidence towards the theoretical expectation as expressed by the first part of the hypothesized causal mechanism – Albanian national minority parties did ask for positive discrimination in election laws and broader local governance of Albanian inhabited regions. The findings aren't surprising, considering that the expectation is well grounded logic as shown in theory on proportional

systems (Taagepera & Shugart, 1989); (Lijphart, 1994), as well as group representation theory (Chandra, 2004), where national minority parties gravitate towards lower thresholds and other forms of positive discrimination that would allow them to fare better at elections. Legitimacy for such demands is easier to be found, as these positive discriminations are framed as demands for further democratization (Kymlicka, 2004), whilst being an obvious advantage if obtained – hence parties should naturally be inclined to such policies.

Now, while these demands were accepted by DPS officially in the Agreement, their practical implementation is a question of the second part of the causal mechanism: DPS is inclined to adopt those that benefit it when they benefit it and delay those that run against interests of DPS.

Democratic Party of Socialists implementation of the demanded multicultural framework

Albanian national minority parties posed as a strategic partner for DPS, as their identity politics goes against the pro-Yugoslav and “pro-Serb” SNP, but they don’t necessarily align with policies of DPS either – in Dinosha’s own words (Miličić, 1997):

“Nećemo se opredijeliti ni za jednu od sukobljenih frakcija DPS-a (...) Mi smo pragmatičari. Čim smo shvatili da je raskol u vladajućoj partiji definitivno, počeli smo da tragamo za političkom snagom koja će u novonastalim okolnostima objektivno biti u stanju da djelotvorno doprinosi stabilizaciji političkih prilika u Crnoj Gori (...) Računali smo da će ta

snaga moći i htjeti da dâ doprinos i unapređivanju položaja Albanaca u Crnoj Gori, koji je još uvijek nezavidan. Naši kontakti sa premijerom Đukanovićem (...) i nasi zahtjevi su naišli na dobar prijem, jer su ocijenjeni objektivnim i obostrano korisnim.”

“We won’t side with either fraction of DPS (...) We are pragmatic. When we understood that the schism in the ruling party is definitive, we started looking for which political subject will, in this new reality, be objectively and effectively able to aid the stabilization of political situation in Montenegro (...) We calculated that this political force would also be able and willing to give its contribution to the improvement of the position of Albanians in Montenegro, which is now still undesirable. Our communication with Prime Minister Đukanović (...) and our demands were received well, because they are deemed objective and mutually interest-driven.”

The issue of granting Albanian national minority parties a couple more seats in the parliament consequently means more seats to a party that is guaranteed to support DPS provided that their own demands from the Agreement are fulfilled in return.

Thus in 1998 the Law on the Protection of National Minorities³⁵ (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro, no. 31/1998), guaranteed five seats of the Parliament to be reserved for Albanian national minority parties. Other minorities weren’t included – the law was in everything but its official title Albanian-party-specific. This in of itself increases the probability in the inference made here. I.e. Albanian national minority (unlike Bosniaks, Muslims, Croatians or Roma) is the only one that had a relevant political subject (parties) that

³⁵ *Zakon o zaštiti prava nacionalnih manjina.*

could be then brought into partnership by DPS, thus its natural that they are the only ones getting the guaranteed seats.

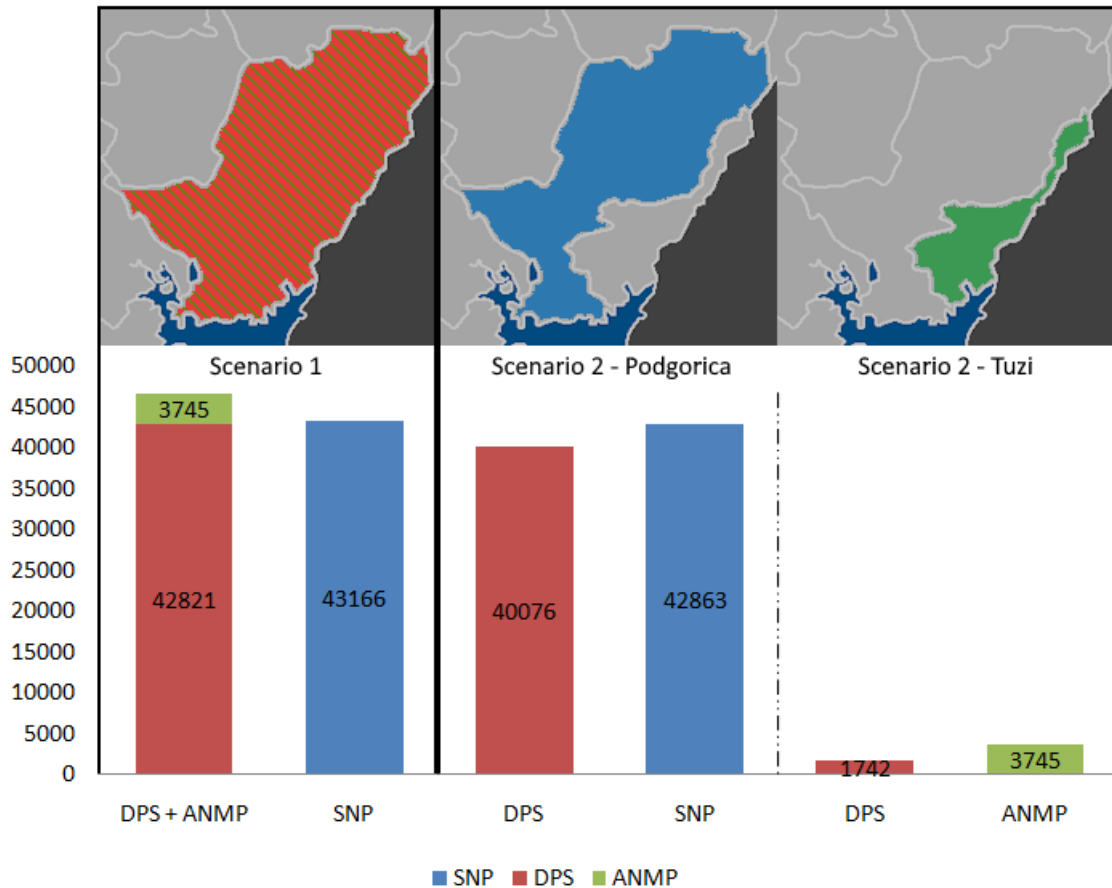
The starting number being five seats seems somewhat arbitrary, but it is of no consequence to this analysis except for the fact that it established a starting position of this type of positive discrimination. This is to say – any further reducing or increasing of this number is a legitimate and logical way of inferring the level of positive discrimination in representation in the Parliament for Albanians. Anyhow, the law outright regulated the first demand of representation in the parliament.

On the other hand, the institution of Tuzi municipality was much more problematic for DPS. Municipality of Tuzi was at the time part of Municipality of Podgorica, where its demographic makeup contributed to the election outcome of Podgorica up until then (Republic Electoral Commission, 1996; 1998). Carving it out of Podgorica, wouldn't be beneficial for DPS, as it would effectively mean an almost certain defeat in local elections in Tuzi by Albanian minority parties, and more importantly would in turn also remove said Albanians from local elections of Podgorica, where they are allies against rivalling SNS. Separation of Tuzi thus puts DPS at risk of losing both municipalities. It is unknown to this paper whether DPS was aware of this fact before making a pledge in the Agreement, but as evidence will show, there is a sequential evidence behind DPS only making further pledges or slight and gradual increases in Tuzi's municipality status with their performance in general and local elections.

Luckily, the next parliamentary elections were only half a year away from the time of signing the Agreement and could serve as a signal for how local ones would've went³⁶. Half a year after making a promise to introduce it, DPS was also faced with a reality of what would've happened if they had hastened the process.

Maps will illustrate, based on data from the parliamentary election results for Podgorica and Tuzi of 1998, how the same election results in local election setting, would've had a different outcome for DPS if Tuzi weren't included in the Podgorica Municipality. In *Scenario 1*, which actually happened later in real local elections, with Tuzi remaining a part of Podgorica – Albanian national minority parties enter a local coalition government against DPS. In *Scenario 2*, which is to say if Tuzi are excluded from Podgorica, before next local elections, then DPS's victory in the capital local elections is jeopardized, and in now detached Tuzi – DPS is certain to lose.

³⁶ Parliamentary, first-round presidential and local elections in Montenegro tend to result the same, apart from slight adjustments for Nell Noyman's spiral of silence, and related Ratchet effect increasing the odds for the winner.



It thus seems natural for DPS to delay with the institution of Tuzi, which they did – for twenty years. However in 1998, after the first parliamentary elections were passed with Albanian national minority party support – the mention of Tuzi remained absent from any official document except the Agreement of 1997 by DPS.

Dinosha was clearly right to define the relationship between his party and DPS as “mutually interest driven”, since the latter clearly developed interest for Albanian national minority rights after a prolonged period of silence, and right before the new difficult elections it faced.

In 1998, DPS had all the support it needed to win the elections. However its newest policy changes, namely ones regarding the distancing from Belgrade and Moscow, were undoubtedly going to eat away from its support – DPS did after all, started as a pro-Yugoslav, Serb nationalist party made up of the former League of Communists of Montenegro. This

was felt, indeed, as in the next round of parliamentary elections of 2001, DPS lost considerable support – from nearly 49% to barely 42%.

Not taking chances with the upcoming independence referendum, large new promises were made: First, since their poor performance in 1998 made Albanian national minority parties dissatisfied with the existing provisions, groundwork was laid, but not yet introduced due to obvious Constitutional restraints introduced in 1992, for the lowering the census for four titular minorities of Montenegro, with aimed at promoting other national minority parties (Bosniak, Croatian and Muslim) to enter parliament, and Albanian ones to increase the number of seats they take. Other nationalities were included largely on the existing logic, of counting on all of their anti-Serb sentiment to push new and weak parties towards DPS in coalitions against SNP, and to potentially provide for alternative options in coalition building, by that lowering Albanian national minority party coalition bargaining power. Second, more groundwork was done towards this, when the introduction of the Albanian National Council. This was a body that constituted a separate Albanian spatial electoral district (it included most of) out of whom five guaranteed mandates belong to the Albanian inhabited municipalities. Third, and last – DPS finally brought Tuzi's municipality status back into discussion. This time, through the Law of the Capital City in to the legal system, Tuzi gained official status as an "city's municipality", meaning that it will start to exist with all administrative duties, but its voters and ruling institutions remain entirely tied to Podgorica.

Per words of Ferhat Dinosha, who was in 2008 the Minister of Human and Minority rights, in Đukanović government – in both initial demands that he once debated with DPS in 1997, they were by 2006 still only met with alternatives, dead letters and commitments for future

deals rather than actual legal arrangements that would help Albanians, and they justified this with the standing constitution (Đurić, 2009).

Still, the Albanian national minority parties mobilized their support towards voting in favor of the referendum, which ended in a slim victory for independence, largely owed to the minorities in 2006.

After that was done, and first post-independence elections were right up, the executive introduction of the lower threshold was introduced. Another major promise made by DPS was fulfilled, when the National Council of Albanians which entered law on paper before the elections, was established in 2008.

The implementation of the lowering of the threshold before the 2006 elections is the one provision that drove actors to action in our next step of the causal mechanism – by lowering the elections threshold for national minority parties from 3% to just 0.7%, incentive was given not only for new minority parties to form, but for the complete fragmentation of the existing Albanian ones as well.

Fragmentation of Albanian national minority parties

Law on the Election of Councilors and Representatives (Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro, No. 14/2000, 54/2000, 27/2006, post-independence amendments established a lowered electoral threshold for all national minority parties.

DPS established that the policy rationale was to make sure the national minorities are represented in the parliament (Đukanović, 2015). However, as findings show, this institutional design also generated conditions for the otherwise inexplicable boom in the number of comparatively small minority parties, all competing for a rather limited voter base.

A primary source analysis of the 2011 amendment (Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 46/2011) shows that the lowered threshold was actually framed as a multiculturalism measure, as its evident from the explanatory memorandum of the amendment (Parliament of Montenegro, 2011), which clears for any alternative normative drivers of such legislation (Official Gazette of Montenegro, br. 46/2011):

“The amendment aims to enable genuine participation of national minorities in the legislative authority, respecting Montenegro’s multiethnic harmony and equality of all peoples.”³⁷

Thus its established that, based on the electoral outcomes of the Republican/pre-independence period (Republican electoral commission, 1996; 1998; 2001; 2002) and the independence period (State electoral commission, 2006; 2009; 2012; 2016; 2020), following the post-independence period’s shrinking of the voting threshold for national minority parties, there was an actual proliferation of Albanian national minority parties, as shown in the Table 1.1, providing productive continuity of the first causal mechanism.

³⁷ “Izmjena ovog zakona ima za cilj omogućiti istinsku očvešćenacionalnih manjina u zakonodavnoj vlasti, poštujući višekonfesionalnu multietničku harmoniju Crne Gore i jednakost svih naroda.”

Following this law’s introduction, sequentially evident proliferation of Albanian national minority parties occurred. From the two parties (DS and DUA) that competed prior to the law change, in 2006 there was six: FORCA, AA, PDP, and DPM all joined the elections. The number of Albanian minority parties in the two following elections (2006-2009) remained at that, with the only change being DPM leaving the national elections scene, and ACP joining. The elections of 2012 saw the addition of LDAA, and PDP running last time, and in 2020 yet another Albanian minority party joined the elections – UT.

Table 1.1: Proliferation of Albanian national minority parties over the years

Election year	Number of national minority parties that participated	Notes
1996	2	(DUA & DS)
1998	2	(DUA & DS)
2001	2	(DUA & DS)
2002	2	(DUA & DS)
Independence		
2006	6	(DUA, DS, AA, FORCA, PDP, DPM)
2009	6	(DUA, DS, AA, FORCA, PDP, ACP)
2012	7	(DUA, DS, AA, FORCA, PDP, DP, ACP)
2016	7	(DUA, DS, AA, FORCA, DP, ACP, ADL)
2020	8	(DUA, DS, AA, FORCA, DP, ACP, ADL, UT)

Source: (Republican electoral commission, 1996; 1998; 2001; 2002) & (State Electoral Commission, 2006; 2009; 2012; 2016; 2020)

This is as expected, per Kapidžić and Komar's (2022) theoretic claim³⁸, and fairly straightforward when it comes to demonstrating occurrence, but to contribute to the inference, one can look into the main alternative – which is fragmentation occurred due to real divergence of policies inside parties. From a basic text analysis of reviewed manifestos of Albanian national minority parties parliamentary coalitions, after their proliferation, as seen in Table 2.1 it seems that Albanian national parties policies overlap quite a bit in Montenegro, which demonstrates that the alternative explanation really doesn't hold water. In fact the opposite seems to be the case, beside clear congruence in policies, practically all manifestos specifically state that their primary orientation is to work together with other Albanian national minority parties in the aftermath of the elections.

³⁸ "Lower thresholds for minority parties make mobilization along ethnic lines viable ... enabling several small and minority parties to enter Parliament. It does not favor large parties leading to fragmentation through emergence, splintering, and merger (and disbanding)"

Table 2.1: Albanian national minority party manifesto`s divergence and overlap in policies in 2016

	Parliamentary coalition	FORCA – for all			The Albanian Coalition		
	Party	FORCA	ACP	DUA	DP	AA	DS
Policies	Minority rights of Albanians	1. Proportional representation in state/local bodies; 2. More than municipal competencies to Ulcinj;			1. Pressure the state for more MCPs		
	Decentralization	1. Establishment of Tuzi municipality			1. Decentralization & specifically establishment of Tuzi municipality		
	Culture	1. Support for Albanian cultural events; 2. Promotion of Albanian values via projects; 3. Cooperation with Kosovo/Albania			1. Protect Albanian heritage sites; 2. promote cultural tourism 3. Support art and sport		
	Diaspora	1. Encourage return through investments			1. Prevent youth emigration and attract diaspora through tax benefits		
	Economic	1. Sustainable development and tourism 2. Cooperation between Ulcinj and Shkoder 3. Promotion of agriculture			1. Sustainable development and tourism 2. Promotion of agriculture		

Source: FES & CGO, Parliamentary Coalition Party Programs, 2015.

Proposed alternative reasoning was also theoretically challenged by Vuković (2013) who used quantitative data to explain how all parties in the country suffer from chronically low levels of internal democracy and deliberation.

Causality is further strengthened by pattern evidence, when other national minority parties' proliferation in numbers is assessed as well. In 2006 The Bosniak Party entered the elections for the first time as a party that is representing the national minority of Bosniak people (State Electoral Commission, 2006). It got itself a double in 2016, when DF movement was organized (State Electoral Commission, 2016). The rather small Croatian national minority is claimed to be represented by HGI since 2006 (State Electoral Commission, 2006), and when Croatian-exclusive threshold which was lowered yet again in 2011 came to be, HGI broke up in two for the 2020 elections, when CRP attempted to enter the parliament due to the obnoxiously shrunk threshold – resulting in neither party actually passing it (State Electoral Commission, 2020). Both parties accused the state, which apparently took the blame when it came up with a special law that guarantees that at least one Croatian party must be in the parliament in 2021.

There was a strong expectation from theoretical knowledge that we should at least observe normal (Kymlicka, 2007) if not excessive (Kapidžić & Komar, 2022) proliferation of national minority parties following a threshold reduction. Beside sequential and pattern evidence towards this, there are no other good alternatives to explain for such high Albanian national minority party fragmentation.

This fragmentation coincided historically with DPS' rise to the peak of support, and its subsequent decline, leading to a peculiar relationship between the two actors, as discussed in the next part of the causal mechanism.

The scorpion and the frog: Democratic Party of Socialist rise and decline in power role in the shaping of multicultural framework

With the spike in their numbers, Albanian national minority parties now constituted a selection of small and individually weak parties. For DPS, this meant that bargain with them over their king-making role in future elections became much easier and cheaper due to the collective action problem. Worse of – while Albanian national minority parties’ overall support went down in the years following independence, DPS’ just grew. In fact, this was the golden age of DPS, when it not only had monstrously large³⁹ support in the parliament (Republic Electoral Commission, 2006); (State Electoral Commission, 2009), but was also able to make deals with lowest-bidding Albanian national minority parties in local election coalitions, further dividing them, again due to the collective action problem. On national level, DPS was doing so well, that after the promised and true intro intro

Finally, DPS also started to threaten Albanian national minority parties combined support even in Albanian majority municipalities.

As table 3.1 In Ulcinj, the most important municipality for all Albanian national minority parties, since independence Albanian national minority parties have continuously lost voters, whilst DPS strengthened. In addition, the number shown in the table faced against DPS represents all national minority parties – individually, each of Albanian national minority parties was weaker in Ulcinj than DPS. In Tuzi, second largest municipality, still tied to Podgorica at this time, the situation was becoming alarming – Albanian national minority parties lost so much support that in 2012, even if Tuzi was an independent municipality and all parties united, they wouldn’t have a majority against DPS, who just got stronger there as

³⁹ 51% in 2006 and almost 60% in 2009

well. In other municipalities Albanian national minority parties didn't really ever stood a chance against DPS, yet its notable that they lose voters there as well.

Table 3.1. Albanian inhabited municipalities voting base for DPS and minority parties of Albanians

	Ulcinj		Tuzi		Gusinje		Rožaje	
DPS or ANMP	DPS	ANMP	DPS	ANMP	DPS	ANMP	DPS	ANMP
2006	3246	6559	1986	3552	735	466	8221	549
2009	3793	5377	2389	3098	992	328	9126	328
2012	3844	5212	2975	2719	757	374	5965	169

Source: State Electoral Commission, 2006; 2009; 2012

Albanian national minority parties, seemingly un-alarmed or unable to do anything about this, often betrayed their fellows in these years and joined DPS in ruling Ulcinj. Thus, in the first post-independence municipal elections of 2006, DUA formed a local coalition with DPS against other Albanian national minority parties. They fell out of grace in the next elections, when FORCA, made a coalition with DPS, in 2011. In the third ones, of 2014, DPS sided this time with the Democratic Party, and yet again, in the next ones, with FORCA for the second time.

Dritan Abazović publicly criticized the Albanian national minority parties' weaknesses in disunity in 2013, calling DPS' approach towards them "blackmailing", but also blamed the Albanian national minority party leaderships for their situation (Vijesti, 2013):

"Jedva su uspjeli da uhljebe par svojih ljudi na nižim mjestima u Vladi, a potom su ekspresno zaboravili na Morsko dobro, Valdanos, imovinu, zapošljavanje manjinskih naroda i sl, isto

kao što su zaboravili da ih je ovaj isti DPS, bezboroj puta do sada prevario i da ih sada opet ucjenjuje da podrže njihovog predsjedničkog kandidata.”

“They [Albanian national minority parties] barely got to turn to *uhljeb*⁴⁰ a few of their party-men on the lower branches of the government, and they immediately forgot about Morsko dobro, Valdanos, property return, employment of minorities etc, the same way when they forgot that DPS has scammed them countless times, and that it is now blackmailing them again to support their presidential candidate.”

And...

“Premijer je pred zadnje parlamentarne izbore po ko zna koji put javno obećao formiranje nove Opštine Tuzi, stoga - bilo kakva dodatna uslovljavanja, trgovine ili konsultacije sa vrhom DPS-a nijesu potrebne, ponajviše radi čuvanja dostojanstva Albanaca”

“The prime minister has, right before the last parliamentary elections, after who knows how many times, again promised the formation of the new municipality of Tuzi, so from that – any further conditioning, bargaining or consulting with the leaders of DPS is not necessary, especially so that the dignity of Albanians is preserved”

Abazović was proven right again, when Ferhat Dinosa, Albanian leader of DUA, and then Minister of Human and Minority rights, in 2009, confirmed publicly that while they secured the legal framework for the creation of the National Council of Albanians and the institution

⁴⁰ There isn't a true translation for this word in English. It is used to describe a civil servant that is not really performing a meaningful duty and is only hired so that they receive a small wage monthly – which keeps this type of party-state employees loyal in elections.

of the municipality of Tuzi, their demands were then met with commitments for future deals rather than actual arrangements (Đurić, 2009).

And when the Councils' president Tahir Tahiri condemned the inactivity of Montenegrin state on the question of Tuzi, Ferhat Dinosha also took sides with DPS against the Albanian National Council itself, on this issue. Tahiri deemed that the Tuzi issue should be resolved by adding the municipality in the Law of municipalities already, and amendments of the Law on local Self-Government, as it doesn't follow decentralization in accordance with the European Charter on Local Self-Government (Tahiri, 2009). It's noteworthy to appreciate the Council's other multicultural role, beside providing minimal parliament representative seats – being a unified platform for Albanian politicians to express and call out on dissatisfaction in cases like this one, where collective rights are breached per multicultural standards. Dinosha, shockingly, as the most important Albanian politician of the pre-Agreement of 1997 period, and one who initialized the demand for Tuzi back then, now made an official statement for the ministry of human and minority rights, against it: He expressed how he is unsure of the economic viability of Tuzi, was unwilling to entertain the ideas proposed by other Albanian politicians of incorporating the Golubovci airport (main airport of the country) and Plantation Vineyards (largest continuous vineyards in Europe) in Tuzi undefined territory, and that in his view Tuzi as should remain a “skeleton” and wait for a “better time” (Đurić, 2009).

Dinosha's shift in thinking seems politically avant-garde, if not realistic, in either way – well placed in the proposed logic of this part of the causal mechanism: As a government coalition partner of DPS at the time when DPS didn't need to have a coalition, Dinosha couldn't hope

for more than what was achieved at that time, especially not by pressuring DPS who was then three times larger than the next largest party.

Unfortunately for his colleague Tahiri, DPS soon confirmed that Dinosha was right. The now hybridized political system of Montenegro, headed by Milo Đukanović, truly didn't need no longer the Albanian national minority parties, multiculturalism, European charters and it truly didn't need to do anything about Tuzi.

That DPS truly felt confident without Albanian national minority parties' support after 2009, says the most their actual reaction to the initiative to bring forth Tuzi finally by the Albanian National Council – DPS responded by a constitutional initiative to shut down the Council, challenging the law that they themselves brought forth just a few years prior.

During its duration, the body substantially changed the number of seats Albanian national minority parties obtained in the parliamentary elections (State Electoral Commission, 2006, 2009, 2012). In the elections of 2006, first ones after the lowering of the threshold, the Albanian national minority parties had such a bad election result that none of them scored a single mandate by themselves, and five larger ones each got one allocated guaranteed seat each, precisely due to the introduction of the Council two years after the elections (only DP didn't get one). It has now gone against the interests of DPS, resulting in its constitutional lawsuit.

The Albanian National Council was ruled out to be unconstitutional, right before 2012 elections, provoking outrage amongst the Albanian national minority parties, since this

objectively lowered their parliament representation seats from five to two. As further evidence will show, this decision was the major trigger of the next part of the causal factor – Albanian national minority party recognition of their unfavourable relationship with DPS, and their change in strategy towards ethno nationalism.

Albanian national minority party consolidation and drift towards ethno-nationalism

Upon learning of the Constitutional court's ruling, the then councils' chairmen, Tahir Tahiri stated that this was a deliberate DPS effort (Pejović & Adrović, 2011):

"(...) *da umanje glas autentičnih predstavnika Albanaca u državnoj skupštini: "To je i namjera asimilacija Albanaca i ujedno potpuno neprihvatljivo za nas (...)"*

"(...) to reduce the voice of authentic representatives of the Albanian people in the parliament – It is an effort of assimilation of Albanians (...)"

It's worth noting here that no such accusations against DPS were found prior to this incident, and now they came from all Albanian national minority party leaders. Genci Nimanbegu (leader of FORCA), who alongside with Mehmet Bardhi (DS), Vaselj Siništaj (ACP) and Mehmet Zenka (DUA) uniformly agreed that they would organize protests as their rights are now effectively lower than they were in the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, with Bardhi going so far to state that "Albanians have matured" and that "if one looks at the

changing geography of the region⁴¹, sooner or later there will be an adequate retribution” (Pejović & Adrović, 2011). The other leaders later claimed that this was a statement coming out of anger rather than an open threat of call for regional interventions of Albania and/or Kosovo (Ibidem.). The contents of the stance however, and other minority parties approving of it signals a general shift in the narrative of Albanian national minority parties towards ethno-nationalism.

That DPS’ decision was motivated by the desire to simply limit the Albanian national minority parties’ representation in the parliament, as claimed by Albanian national minority politicians, was additionally recognized by the US State Dept. Human Rights Report on Montenegro (2012, p. 23), where they explicitly stated this⁴². They also stated that the Constitutional Court was “widely criticized for sluggishness, inefficiency, and lack of transparency” (Ibidem, p. 12).

After dissolving the Council, DPS remained uninterested in any of the Albanian national minority party issues until the dramatic decline of voters occurred in 2012. Following this poor performance, understood to be influenced by a myriad of factors⁴³ (consequences for incumbents ruling during economic crisis of 2008, breached deadlines of EU accession, and Telekom Affair amongst others) more factors appeared that could further weaken DPS in the coming 2016. Most notably, SNS successor parties which whilst still losing the elections of 2012, and being weak and fragmented, had some of a comeback. After elections were done

⁴¹ Implying the 2008-proclaimed independence of Kosovo, which wasn’t ruled out as going against the UN resolution 1244 in previous years, and effectively led to the establishment of a second Albanian nation-state.

⁴² “To harmonize the electoral law with the constitutional provision for “authentic representation” of minorities, the assembly adopted reforms in 2011 that established a right of representation for any ethnic minority group that won less than 3 percent of the vote or constituted less than 15 percent of the population (the reforms at the same time removed seats previously reserved for ethnic Albanians)”

⁴³

they formed a joint opposition block, named DF. The founding document of DF published in 2012, and signed by now reunited opposition, signalled a new era of uncertainty for DPS. The document was worrisome precisely due to the lack of the until-then pro-Yugoslav and pro-Russian rhetoric⁴⁴. as well as due to one of its signatories was a Bosniak minority party. Another major event was the entry of the official offer of country to join Nato – a decision that DPS favoured, but was now highly controversial amongst Montenegrin population with more citizens (minorities included) being against it, and orthodox population being 2/3 against it. Surveys (e.g., by the Balkan Barometer and CEDEM) showed rising disillusionment with economic management and trust in institutions after 2012. Another major event was the Milo-Amfilohije conflict. There was also the emergence of two Bosniak minority parties that could only contest for voters against DPS (over religious-Muslim population), one of whom had joined DF upon its founding.

With the Albanian National Council defunct since 2011, DPS could now still seek the limited support Albanian minority parties offered individually. Albanian national minority parties were thus again approached by DPS. Nikola Gegaj, national Albanian official of DPS called the Albanian national minority leaders to discuss potential revisions of the electoral law (referring to the much lamented removal of the Council): He stated that while the law is already just according to him, and many other Albanians who vote for DPS, he is certain that DPS is interested in raising Albanian rights to their prime, and that they should all consolidate regardless of own political beliefs in order to pursue EU membership (Lajmenga Ulqini, 2013).

⁴⁴ In 300 and some pages, there was only one reference to any identity issue of Serbs – one stating that Serbian must be restored as country's official language name.

Much has changed in the Albanian pre-election demands however. What remained were demands that Tuzi is brought to realization, the Council was abandoned, and quite a few novelties: New laws regarding culture, education, use of national symbols on public institutions etc. This demands were laid out in a public contract that would prevent co-opting of DPS, and force them to act upon it made by a joined Albanian national minority party initiative.

Following the so far worst elections for DPS in 2016, where with a broad coalition government DPS barely remained in power, the stage was set for the following period:

On top of limited support gross violations in elections were found, and the now united opposition staged the extra-institutional unrest in the country – demonstrating their renewed capacities. DPS would respond by sacking of the identified threats developed in the previous period: namely DF and Orthodox Church in both cases, DPS failed to eliminate its political threats. Country officially also officially joined NATO in 2017, sparking popular protests. If polls were to be believed, if elections would've been held in 2017, the approval for DPS shrunk enough for it to lose even with all viable coalition partners.

Not following through with Albanian pre-election demands would've thus been highly improbable – and all requests made were brought forth.

This is how another amendment on the Law of the Capital City in regards to Tuzi right before the new elections of 2016 (Parliament of Montenegro, 2016): For the first time, Montenegrin public was able to see the agreement made between DPS and Albanian minority parties after their victory in the elections – and in it an article stated that Tuzi must become an

independent municipality from Podgorica by 2018 (Dragaš, 2016). This time expanding the municipality's rights and obligations such as adding its own finances, budget making and more notably defining a territory for it. The slight delay included here was justified from Albanian perspective, since it was aimed that on top of the same agreement, DPS brawls in local elections of Podgorica with Tuzi still attached to it in 2018 local elections, which they did, winning due to the difference in votes Tuzi's dependence provided.

On 27th of November, 2020, Nik Gjelošhaj, a now prominent Albanian party leader and new mayor of Tuzi from Montenegro, posted the following message in Albanian, on his Facebook account (Gjelošhaj: Flamuri shqiptar i obliguar, institucionet mund të gjobitën sipas ligjit, 2020):

“Të nderuar miq, Në prag të festës së Flamurit, me këtë rast i ftoj institucionet publike në komunën tonë që të vendosin flamurin kombëtar me rastin e 28 Nëntorit! Nëse nuk respektohet apeli im, institucionet mund të gjobitën sipas ligjit! NGJ”

“Dear friends, on the eve of [The day of] the Flag, I hereby call upon public institutions in our municipality to raise the [Albanian] national flag on 28th of November! If this plea won't be fulfilled, same institutions could be punished by law! NGJ”

That the request was fulfilled, and that this legal threat actually had real weight, was ensured by the then fresh legal framework on selection, use and public hoisting of national symbols in Montenegro (Ministry of Justice, 2020). Prior to its introduction it was illegal in Montenegro (as it is in Albania for example, to this day) to hoist non-state flags on public institutions. However, what effect and aim these new provisions had is to be tackled in the final part of the causal mechanism.

Manifestation of the ethno-nationalist political discourse

In order to see how the shift in ethno-nationalist political discourse plays out in separating Albanians from the rest of the society, directly related to the erosion of their integration, and in view of the constraints of this study in time, resources and data available, the effects will be observed in two major salient identity issues in Tuzi, the removal of the Tito landmark from Dečić, and the changes in the municipality's football club logo.

With the protracted process of the institution of the municipality of Tuzi from Podgorica ended, and two subsequent local Albanian national minority parties' coalition victories, Tuzi were now in firm hands of their coalition.

Since then, amongst other ones, two significant local decisions have been made officially by the municipality that provoked ethno-national separation between municipality's Albanian and non-Albanian citizens.

Tuzi's Dečić hill had a famous public landmark until 2018, visible from the town and surrounding area: A large white rock "TITO" sign that was painted on top of it in 1946, to commemorate the Yugoslav and Albanian partisan victory over the Italian/German puppet State of Albania that had previously occupied Albanian inhabited towns of Montenegro, including Tuzi.

After what would've been a regular annual renewal by the city, if it didn't fall short of happening in 2018, a group of younger citizens repainted the landmark themselves. Džemal Lekić, DPS' Youth Council of Tuzi leader, and an ethnic Bosniak said that his colleagues and he – have led the action (CdM, 2018):

“Njegujući antifašističku tradiciju ovog kraja, mladi DPS-a Tuzi su akciju pokrenuli u susret 15. decembru, Danu oslobođenja Tuzi, želeći da na taj način daju doprinos poštovanju temeljnih vrijednosti Tuzi - skladu i suživotu koji krase ovaj kraj. Obnavljanjem slova kojima su se generacije ponosile, mladi DPS-a Tuzi su pokazali da primjeri iz prošlosti mogu da

povezuju, a ne da dijele, te odali počast periodu mira i prosperiteta, poručujući da je jedinstvena antifašistička Crna Gora budućnost za koju se zalažu.”

“By cherishing the antifascist tradition of this place, youth of DPS of Tuzi have driven the action in face of 15th of December, Day of liberation of Tuzi, in wish to contribute to the respect of the fundamental values of Tuzi - ethnic cohabitation and cohesion that characterize it. By renewing the letters that made generations proud, youth of DPS of Tuzi have shown that examples from past may drive us together, and not divide us, so we honoured a period of peace and prosperity, and with that saying that a united antifascist Montenegro is a future that they want.”

The message and act were framed as motivated by continuing the traditional antifascist commemoration and preserving a landmark of local multiculturalism. The event was largely uncontroversial until the next day – when the landmark made of stone and 600 meters above sea level, was removed and replaced by a large Albanian flag.

As destroying a public monument or landmark constituted a crime, police was summoned later in the day, but didn't manage to identify the perpetrators. When the police concluded the investigation, failed to find a perpetrator or the landmark, they left the flag in place, as police said in press they “feared renewed incidents” (CdM, 2018).

On the same day Ivan Ivanaj, leader of Democratic Alliance Albanian national minority party, and vice Mayor of Tuzi stated (Camaj, 2018):

“Nuk ka trevë në Mal të Zi që ia ka pa sherrin komunizmit sa Malësia. Por, ata që ne atë kohë ishin dorë e zgjatur e kësaj ideologjie shkatërruese e asimiluese, duket se e kanë përcjellë dashurinë për diktatorin Tito edhe tek pasardhësit e tyre. Titoja ishte ai që masakroi shqiptarët në Tivar, ai që fill pas luftës së dytë botërore masakroi shumë Malësor, ai që

Shqipërinë e donte brenda RSFJ. Turpi i mbuloftë të gjithë ata që po mundohen ta ringjallin këtë monster”

“There isn’t a part of Montenegro that didn’t suffer from communism like Malesia. But, those who used to be at the time the extended hand of that assimilating and destructive ideology look like they have maintained their love for the dictator Tito amongst their youth. Tito is the one who massacred Albanians in Bar, who after the Second World War killed many Malisors and who wanted Albania to be part of SFRY. Those who would want that monster to come alive should be ashamed.”

Statement referred to Tuzi municipality’s Albanian national population as “Malesia” – a name used by the Albanian national minority parties derived from the Albanian cultural-geographic area of Malesia that roughly corresponds to south-east Montenegro and north-east Albania.

The Second World War events in this area are framed as mourning, and defeat of Albanian highlanders living there, and not as a triumph of victors – a theme in other post-communist societies (Krawatzek, 2020).

The massacre of Bar was an epilogue of the prolonged hostilities between Allies (Yugoslav, Albanian and Bulgarian armies) and the Axis (Germans and Kosovo’s Balli Kombëtar) in the Kosovo Operation of 1994, and the subsequent Balli Kombëtar uprising. Where Albanians that were executed, or their membership in the Balli Kombëtar is not given as further context by the statement, except that its a subject of grievance. Following the Allied victory, captured Balli Kombëtar members were brought from Kosovo to Bar, and executed following a trial. But the men who were executed didn’t fare from Tuzi or entire region of Malesia, they were from Kosovo. In fact, Tuzi remained largely unfazed by the Second World War or its subsequent events as can be seen from the lack of military activities here apart form the initial

Italian sponsored Albanian State occupation and subsequent liberation by joint Yugoslav and Albanian people`s armies (Dragović, 1944, p. 523)⁴⁵, as well as lack of evidence that summary executions occurred in Tuzi, which isn`t hard to find like it`s the case for other places where this did happen.

The understanding that Tito wanted Albania to be part Yugoslavia is correct, but this was a joint initiative by both Yugoslav and Albanian side until Tito-Stalin split of 1948, that ended the negotiations due to Yugoslav disassociation from the other real-socialist states. Part of the negotiation and main driver for Albanian interest was the merging of Kosovo with Albania into a combined new federal republic in Yugoslavia, which was then supposed to be reformed into a broader Balkan Federation (Đilas, 1991).

All in all the two attitudes demonstrate a clear conflict of how past is interpreted, and the latter one brings into salience ethno-nationalism in a form of historical revisionism, as anticipated by the literature on these topics.

Another local change of an older local multicultural symbol happened in July of 2024, when the municipality`s football club Dečić got a new logo after 99 years. The change was instigated by the mayor Nik Gjelošhaj.

The change was notable for the removal of the red star, as well as for the change of the colour scheme: from blue, white and red (symbol and colours of the flag of Yugoslavia) to red and black (colours of the flag of Albania). Club`s stadium was also renamed from Yugoslav-era “*Tuško polje*” to Albanian “*Arena Besa*”.

⁴⁵ War-time report of the Army Mayor of Zeta Detachment from 1944, detailing that Tuzi was unimpacted by the liberation of Podgorica, and of the lack of local suport for the Axis; the only Albanian fighters in the 35 thousand strong Axis concentration in Podgorica were ones that came there with Germans, from Albania and are at the moment mercenaries.

The controversy raised by this was much larger, due to the clubs popularity. Fans and former players staged multiple public protests against it dragging the controversy into local political salience still as of the moment of writing this paper.

When framing the protest, Dževdet Pepić, an Albanian civil activist, and one of the organizers of protests stated, while referring to the post of Nik Gjelošhaj (Kijanović):

“Šta je glavna smetnja? Da li je to petokraka? Da li im smeta simbol antifašizma? Hoće li da pokažu da su veći Albanci od nas? Mi imamo crvena krvna zrnca, a neko hoće da ima crveno crna. Ukoliko imate novac i moć [vlasti], formirajte novi klub i dajte mu kakve god hoćete boje. Dečić nije ni crnogorski, ni albanski, ni hrvatski, ni bošnjački klub, već svih nas koji ga volimo.”

“What is the biggest thing that bothers them [with the old design]? Is it the red star? Are they bothered by the symbol of antifascism? We have red blood cells and they would want to have them be red and black. If you have money and power [municipality leadership], form a new club and dress it however you want. Dečić isn't Montenegrin, nor Albanian, nor Croatian, nor Bosniak club, but of all of us who love it.”

Mayor Lindon Gjelošhaj then made another public statement about his decision to change the symbols, where, amongst other things he said how the colours of the old symbol were (Camaj, 2025):

“Ngjyrat që janë përdorur (...) nuk kanë qenë rezultat i vullnetit të lirë të qytetarëve (...) ato shpesh kanë qenë të imponuara nga një sistem që kishte për qëllim kolonizimin ideologjik dhe kulturor, dhe krijimin e identiteteve artificiale që nuk i përkisnin shpirtit të këtij vendi. (...) e ashtuquajtura “trobojkë” – kombinim ngjyrash që edhe sot përdoret në simbolet e disa shteteve fqinje, si dhe të Rusisë, dhe që kurrë nuk ka qenë shprehje e vërtetë e identitetit të

qytetarëve të Tuzit dhe Malësisë. (...) nuk duhet neglizhuar as fakti se stema e vjetër e KF “Deçiq” mbante qartësisht shenja të ikonografisë komuniste”

“Colours used earlier (...) weren’t a people’s choice – they were forced upon it by a regime that was aimed at ideological and cultural colonization, and creation of fake identities uncharacteristic for this place. (...) the so called “tricolour” – a colour combination used today in some neighbouring states, as well as Russia, and which never a true expression of the identity of people of Tuzi and Malesia. (...) we shouldn’t forget that old Club’s symbol bared communist iconography (...)”

The entire statement never explicitly contained anything about what motivated the new colour combination other than generic colour symbolism and “respecting our history and reality”. It did however state that the issue with old colours is their similarity to neighbouring states (Serbia), and Russia’s colours and communist symbol (red star). This however inexplicitly states that the change from implied Serbian (in reality Yugoslav) colours into red and black – colours of the neighbouring state of Albania, is the said respect towards history and reality.

The protestors’ claims, as well as their background also show that their understanding of the divisive nature of these changes is well recognized and condemned.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how Montenegro's multiculturalism minority rights policies, introduced and expanded in the period between 1998 and onwards, failed to succeed in integrating of Montenegrin Albanian national minority. The research shows that the failure of Montenegro's multicultural policies was indeed tied to the established theoretical prepositions of negative or potentially divisive drawbacks of multiculturalism. The causal mechanism explained shaped as a cyclical process, driven by the Democratic Party of Socialists' need for political stability. With policies initially established as a means for the DPS to secure a parliamentary majority, creating a patron - client relationship, where Albanian national parties were dependent on the wills of DPS. This transactional approach to multiculturalism, which prioritized power over genuine integration, ultimately became its undoing, with DPS being the "scorpion that killed the frog" in years it had the most support.

Initially driven by DPS and national minority parties mutual hopes for more optimal election results, they quickly turned south for the later – DPS was only interested in keeping their alliance and instituting for more multicultural framework when and where it best suited this party, and not minority parties or the citizens they represent. As the political landscape shifted, the DPS abandoned this strategic partnership, leaving the Albanian parties in a marginalized and vulnerable position. Faced with fragmentation, loss of voters and uninterested DPS, national minority parties entered a period of reliance on ethno-nationalist politics. This political neglect, symbolized by the state's disregard for the Albanian National Council's authority, forced these parties to pivot from a pro-establishment stance to a more defensive, ethno-nationalist one. When DPS' support shrunk, they were once again interested in appeasing the national minority parties, their negotiations took a turn towards consolidation, transparency and ethno-nationalism. By focusing on ethno-nationalist grievances and consolidating their base, they found a new path to political relevance. This

reveals a critical paradox: policies intended to foster integration can, when implemented for pure power-driven political gain, inadvertently fuel the very forces of separation they are meant to prevent. The result is the emergence of a "parallel society," where political expediency overshadows social cohesion, as it was anticipated in engaged literature on the critique of Multiculturalism. This was observed when the epilogue of new negotiations plagued the following period of political discourse in the country, as evident from two examples in Tuzi, where Albanian national minority parties actively pursued a discourse of national separation.

While restrained by the nature of the issue in time, resources and scope, the causal mechanism established seems supported by the evidence. The uncertainties' lie primarily at the ground of not exploring the lived experiences of ordinary Albanian citizens in relation to the last two steps of the causal mechanism, which would 'we otherwise strengthened it with more empirical evidence, or would've challenged it towards updating. Also arising from the limits of the scope, it's just as uncertain from these results to what extent the political shift towards ethno-nationalism has been embraced by the general population in other, sometime larger areas than Tuzi, Like Ulcinj.

Due to the scarcity of studies on this phenomenon, and the case in question, the paper is leaving with more questions than answering, but the research does opens space for several future lines of inquiry based on itself: Firstly all of the parts of the causal mechanism could be reshaped and updated until plausible forms are found that could be used to support the research with other types of testing. Besides that, how might alternative policy designs, for instance those actually emphasizing multicultural approaches now play out in Montenegro? What else could've influenced the integration dynamics in Montenegro? What role does

citizen-level agency play in negotiating or contesting the boundaries of parallel societal structures? Do citizens also drive parties to further ethno-nationalism, due to the prolonged period of perceived discrimination, of this goes just one way? How sustainable are these parallel arrangements in the long term, particularly in context of Montenegro's ongoing EU integration process? How do Montenegro's experiences compare to those of other multiethnic states in the region that have implemented multiculturalist's frameworks? What influenced them? To what extent do multiculturalists policies, as applied in post-Yugoslav contexts, risk entrenching the very separations they aim to overcome? Finally, future research could address the questions on how did the last part of the causal mechanism play out in Ulcinj, Gusinje, Rožaje and Plav.

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